

Strengthening Tourism Village Governance through Community Participation for Sustainable Development

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Abstract. Sustainable tourism development requires community-based management of tourism villages that is grounded in local potential. Sewu Kembang Tourism Village faces challenges related to weak institutional capacity, limited human resources, and suboptimal utilisation of tourism assets. This community service programme aims to strengthen tourism village governance through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which positions the community as the main actor throughout the intervention process. The PAR method was implemented through four iterative stages: participatory problem identification and potential mapping, collaborative action planning, action implementation through training and technical assistance, and participatory reflection and evaluation. The programme involved local communities, Pokdarwis, village government, and universities as collaborative partners. The findings indicate significant improvements in human resource capacity, institutional strengthening of Pokdarwis, and increased community participation in tourism management. These improvements were measured through pre- and post-tests, performance observations, and the application of newly acquired skills in destination management practices. The results demonstrate that PAR is an effective approach for fostering community empowerment and supporting the sustainability of tourism village development.

Katakunci: Desa Wisata; Partisipasi Masyarakat; Pariwisata Berkelanjutan; Pokdarwis.

Abstrak. Pengembangan pariwisata berkelanjutan memerlukan pengelolaan desa wisata yang berbasis pada potensi lokal dan partisipasi masyarakat. Desa Wisata Sewu Kembang masih menghadapi permasalahan berupa lemahnya kelembagaan, rendahnya kapasitas sumber daya manusia, serta belum optimalnya pengelolaan potensi pariwisata. Program pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat tata kelola desa wisata melalui pendekatan Participatory Action Research (PAR) yang menempatkan masyarakat sebagai subjek utama dalam seluruh tahapan kegiatan. Metode PAR dilaksanakan melalui empat siklus utama, yaitu identifikasi dan pemetaan masalah secara partisipatif, perencanaan aksi bersama, pelaksanaan tindakan

melalui pelatihan dan pendampingan, serta refleksi dan evaluasi partisipatif. Kegiatan melibatkan masyarakat, Pokdarwis, pemerintah desa, dan perguruan tinggi secara kolaboratif. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan kapasitas sumber daya manusia, penguatan kelembagaan Pokdarwis, serta meningkatnya partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengelolaan desa wisata. Peningkatan tersebut diukur melalui pre-test dan post-test, observasi kinerja, serta penerapan hasil pelatihan dalam praktik pengelolaan destinasi. Pendekatan PAR terbukti efektif dalam mendorong kemandirian dan keberlanjutan pengelolaan desa wisata.

1 Introduction

Nglurah Village in Tawangmangu Subdistrict, Karanganyar Regency, is one of the areas with great potential for community-based tourism development. This village is widely known as a centre for highland ornamental plants. In addition to its agricultural potential, Nglurah also has a rich local culture, mountainous natural landscapes, and community groups such as farmer groups and Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Groups) that have historically played a role in village tourism activities. Community-based tourism development is an important strategy in empowering and building the welfare of local communities (Komariah et al., 2018). Active community involvement in tourism area management plays an important role in achieving sustainable development (Asy'ari et al., 2021). With these characteristics, Nglurah has a strong foundation to develop as a competitive and sustainable tourist village. The concept of sustainable tourism can only be achieved if the local community plays an active role in its development (Permatasari, 2022).

However, various obstacles still hinder the optimisation of this tourist village's development. Human resource capacity in managing tourist destinations is still limited, especially in terms of service management, tour package development, and visitor management. The institutional structure of Pokdarwis has not been running effectively due to weak internal coordination, minimal division of roles, and the lack of a systematic planning system. Community participation in tourism governance is relatively low, resulting in many local potentials that have

not been fully utilised. This challenge is exacerbated by the low digital literacy of tourism stakeholders, which has an impact on the lack of innovation in destination promotion and marketing. Many tourist villages in Indonesia face stagnation due to weak local institutional capacity and an inability to optimise their tourism potential (Kusma, 2020).

This situation highlights the urgency of implementing community service program as a strategic intervention to address the gap between potential and management. The selection of Nglurah Village as the location for the activity was based on the social readiness of the community, the wealth of untapped tourism potential, and the real need for professional assistance in the areas of management, tourism product development, and digitalisation.

The novelty of this community service program lies in its integration of community empowerment, digital technology application, and institutional revitalisation into a single integrated intervention model. The program not only encourages the development of tourism products based on local wisdom, but also opens up wider access to promotion through the digitisation of village information, including the creation of company profiles, visual tourism content, and online promotion platforms. This development can proceed optimally if supported by careful planning, sound management, and development strategies oriented towards sustainability (Widagdo, 2022). In sustainable tourism, tourism revenue is reinvested to preserve the area and support the welfare of local communities (Irawati et al., 2022). The collaborative approach between universities, village governments, Pokdarwis, farmer groups, and MSME actors has resulted in new synergies that strengthen overall tourism governance.

Thus, this activity not only provides a solution to the problem of managing tourism potential in Nglurah, but also produces an empowerment model that can be used as a reference for other tourist villages that want to build a sustainable tourism system based on community participation. Empowering local communities in tourism management is one tangible example of the positive impact of the tourism sector (Haeruddin et al., 2022). This model emphasises that capacity building, digitalisation of promotion, and institutional

revitalisation are important foundations in developing adaptive, productive, and sustainable tourism villages.

2 Method

The community service program adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which positions the community as active partners throughout the intervention process. The first stage involved participatory problem identification and potential mapping, conducted through field observations, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These activities aimed to capture local perspectives on existing tourism resources, institutional capacity, human resource limitations, and management challenges faced by the tourism village. This stage enabled a contextual understanding of community needs and ensured that the intervention was grounded in local realities and collective knowledge.



Figure 1. Stages of Community Service Activities

The second stage focused on collaborative action planning, in which the research team and community stakeholders jointly formulated strategic programs based on the findings from the initial assessment. This stage emphasized consensus-building in determining priority actions, including strengthening Pokdarwis institutional structures, enhancing human resource competencies, and developing sustainable and digitally oriented tourism management strategies. By involving community members in decision-making, the planning process fostered local ownership and increased the relevance and feasibility of the proposed interventions.

The third stage consisted of action implementation and participatory assistance, carried out through capacity-building activities such as training

workshops, technical mentoring, and hands-on field practices. These activities targeted institutional development, entrepreneurship skills, tourism service quality, and digital promotion competencies. Continuous facilitation ensured that community members were not only recipients of knowledge but also active practitioners capable of applying new skills to manage tourism activities effectively and collaboratively.

The final stage involved participatory monitoring, reflection, and evaluation, engaging community members, academics, and village authorities to assess program outcomes and sustainability. Evaluation focused on changes in community capacity, institutional independence, effectiveness of training and mentoring, and the potential impact on local economic improvement. Through collective reflection, the community identified lessons learned and formulated follow-up strategies, reinforcing the sustainability of tourism village management and aligning with the core PAR principle of cyclical learning and continuous improvement.

3 Results

The implementation of these community service activities has shown significant progress in improving the capacity and independence of the tourist village community. The planned, tiered, and continuous mentoring and training processes have produced a number of concrete achievements, both in terms of human resource competencies, institutional strengthening, and the utilization of tourism support facilities and infrastructure. The program achievements can be seen in the following table, which illustrates the relationship between program components, activity indicators, and a brief description of the achievements obtained during the implementation of the community service program.

Table 1. Components/Indicators and Brief Achievement Descriptions

Components / Indicators			Brief Description of Achievements			
1	Quantitative	Data	/	The activity	was	
	Measurable Indicators			attended by	25	
				participants in	4	
				meetings.		

2	Summary of Key Program Results	Increased understanding among participants and the formulation of initial concepts for tourism development.
3	Behavioral Change / Community Capacity	The community is becoming more active, participatory, and able to recognize local potential.
4	Improvement of Tourism Village Institutions / Pokdarwis	A better organizational structure accompanied by improved coordination.
5	New Product Development & Tourism Attractions	The development of tour package ideas and identification of new spots.
6	Number of Participants & Frequency of Meetings	Twenty-five active participants took part in four activities.

One of the important achievements of this activity was the emergence of stronger synergy and collaboration between the local community and the new management structure of Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) as the official managing institution of Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang. Through intensive mentoring, participatory discussions, and organizational governance strengthening, the community began to show increased awareness, responsibility, and a sense of belonging towards the sustainability of their tourist village. The new Pokdarwis management now acts as a coordination center and the main driving force behind local tourism activities, capable of involving various elements of the community in the planning, implementation, and promotion of tourism. This integration between the community and institutions is the main foundation for developing an effective, transparent, participatory, and long-term tourism management system. Focusing on utilizing the local community's potential as the basis for implementing empowerment and assistance programs (Rif & Amin, 2024).

In addition, field assistance activities also resulted in a more focused Pokdarwis work plan based on local potential, such as the development of nature tourism, agrotourism, and cultural tourism, thereby becoming a major attraction and strengthening the position of Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang as a sustainable community-based

destination. The emphasis on product innovation and digital marketing encourages the transformation from traditional business models to more modern ones, enabling MSME players to directly apply the results of assistance to their product development (Yusuf et al., 2024). Another achievement of this activity is the renovation of the tourist information center and training to increase the capacity of the community in managing tourism potential, which has had a real impact on the development of Nglurah Village. Improvements to more representative tourist facilities, followed by an increase in community skills in service and promotion, have made this destination more organized and attractive to visitors. As a result, there has been a gradual increase in tourist visits, showing that a combination of infrastructure improvements and human resource strengthening can increase the attractiveness and confidence of tourists in this tourist village.



Figure 2. Renovation and arrangement of the central information and tourist direction signs

Furthermore, these community service activities have had a positive impact on raising collective awareness among the community of the importance of environmental conservation as an integral part of the concept of sustainable tourism. Through a series of educational and participatory activities, such as environmental clean-up movements, tree planting, and community-based integrated waste management, the community has begun to understand that maintaining cleanliness and preserving nature is not only an individual responsibility, but also the main foundation for the sustainability of attractive and highly competitive tourist destinations. The activity successfully fostered a sense of ecological responsibility and environmental awareness among the community, resulting in collective behavior to maintain the beauty and comfort of the tourist area. This new awareness reinforces the

principle that a clean, green, and well-organized environment is an essential element that shapes the positive image and main attraction of sustainable tourism in Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang.

In addition to raising environmental awareness, community service activities also have a tangible impact on strengthening community capacity in managing tourism based on local potential. Residents are now better able to independently manage tourist attractions, design thematic tour packages that combine cultural, natural, and educational activities, and develop village products that have economic value. These products include processed local agricultural products, creative handicrafts, and regional culinary specialties, which not only enrich the tourist experience but also contribute directly to increasing community income. Thus, these community service activities not only strengthen the environmental aspect but also encourage local economic empowerment and reinforce the concept of sustainable tourism rooted in community participation.



Figure 3. One of the leading products (Wangsul coffee and Ngancar coffee)

From a social and economic perspective, the implementation of this community service program has had a significant positive impact on the local community. One of its main achievements is the formation of creative business groups based on local potential, which serve as a forum for the community to develop various tourism-related products and services. This initiative also encourages entrepreneurship among residents and expands employment opportunities and new sources of income for communities around tourist destinations.

From an institutional perspective, this community service activity has successfully encouraged the establishment of an integrated tourism

information center system that is collaboratively managed by Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), the village government, and local community members. This system not only serves as a means of providing information and services to tourists, but also as a forum for coordination and communication among tourism stakeholders in planning various tourism activities, managing visit schedules, promoting tour packages, and organizing professional guest services. The central information system has been integrated with various digital platforms and social media, enabling broader, faster, and more interactive tourism promotion. This digital integration has become an important tool in introducing Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang to national and international audiences, while strengthening the destination's image as a modern tourism village based on information technology without abandoning local wisdom values.



Figure 4. Website display and visitor statistics

Digital integration through an official website displayed on SmartTVs at information centers makes all of Nglurah's tourism potential available in a more accessible, attractive, and informative format. With a single digital platform that contains destination profiles, cultural agendas, and virtual tours, tourists can get a complete picture before visiting. This digital presentation increases the visibility of destinations, strengthens their professional image, and helps attract tourists more effectively. This is used to manage promotional materials and strengthen the distinctive image of the tourist village, while digital channels help disseminate this image more widely and in a targeted manner through various online platforms (Yoraeni et al., 2025). Digital platforms are easy to share on social media, expanding the exposure of tourist villages. Photos, videos, and virtual tours make destinations feel more alive and convince potential tourists. Prospective visitors can view facilities,

routes, and attractions, making them more confident about visiting. This success is the result of collaboration between academics, village governments, tourism promotion groups, and the community, who together developed a participatory, sustainable tourism village management model focused on economic, social, and environmental balance.

4 Discussion

The implementation of a community service programme focused on optimising the management of community-based tourism villages in Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang, Nglurah, Tawangmangu, has yielded significant achievements in various aspects — social, institutional, economic, and environmental. This programme was carried out using a collaborative-participatory approach, which placed the community as the main actors of development, not merely beneficiaries. This is in line with the concept of Community-Based Tourism, which places the community as the main actors in tourism development (Ilhami & Salahudin, 2021). This approach encourages active community involvement in preserving, developing and utilising local potential in a sustainable manner. Through this participation, communities gain economic benefits while strengthening their sense of ownership of jointly managed tourist destinations.

Table 3. Five pillars of programme success

Activity Stages	Aspects of Discussion	Main Activities Carried Out	Output / Tangible Achievements
Establishment and strengthening of tourism village organisations	Integration between the community and the new Pokdarwis management	Formation of the new Pokdarwis management	The formation of a new Pokdarwis organisational structure

Improvement of human resource capacity	Empowerment and capacity building of human resources	Tourism service management training and basic hospitality training	Increased community competence in tourism management
Revitalisation of facilities and development of an integrated tourism map	Integrated tourist information and map centre	Renovation of the tourist information centre, compilation of manual and digital tourist maps	Availability of tourist information centres and integrated tourist maps
Strengthening networks and collaboration among local tourism stakeholders	The growth of awareness and collaboration among tourism stakeholders	Establishment of a communication forum between tourism stakeholders, implementation of joint activities	Establishing coordination and collaboration between tourism stakeholders
Digitalisation of tourism services and information management	The creation of an integrated central tourism information system	Development of a digital information system based on websites and social media	Availability of an integrated tourism information system

The five main aspects that form the pillars of the programme's success can be examined in greater depth, namely:

Integration between the Community and the New Management of Pokdarwis

Community service activities demonstrate the increasingly strong integration between the community and the new management of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) as the main driving force behind tourism in Sewu Kembang Tourism Village. Community participation is evident through residents' involvement in village deliberations, their contribution of labor in community service activities to improve the tourism environment, the participation of MSME actors

in the development of superior products, and the participation of young people in digital media management and tourism promotion. The process of establishing and revitalizing Pokdarwis is carried out in a participatory manner through village deliberations, involving community leaders, tourism stakeholders, and village government officials. Revitalization is carried out by improving the tourism information center, reorganizing public areas, strengthening the Pokdarwis organizational structure, and refreshing work programs to be more adaptive to the needs of tourists and local potential. The progress of the tourism village is influenced by the synergy between local institutions and the active role of the community in designing and implementing tourism activities (I Nengah Sandi Artha Putra et al., 2022). The new Pokdarwis management plays an important role as the main driver in reviving the community's enthusiasm to optimize tourism potential that had previously not been developed. Through collaboration between administrators and residents, a sense of ownership, social responsibility, and shared commitment to maintaining the sustainability of tourist destinations has grown. The success of this synergy is reflected in the increasing number of participants in Pokdarwis activities, the increase in volunteers involved in managing tourist attractions, and the rise in tourist visits after the assistance program was implemented. Additionally, the establishment of a new work agenda, clearer division of tasks, and the emergence of community initiatives such as the development of photo spots and independent tour packages provide empirical evidence that collaboration between the community and local institutions has a tangible impact on strengthening tourism villages. The implementation of digital technology supported by the village government has become an important instrument in increasing the capacity of tourism managers and expanding the reach of community-based promotion (Setiawan, 2024).

Empowerment and Capacity Building of Human Resources (HR)

Community empowerment is carried out through a series of intensive training and mentoring, including training in tourism product management, creative product design, tourism service management, and digital promotion. These activities aim to improve the community's

competence in managing tourism potential independently and professionally. Empowering the capacity of local communities is a fundamental aspect of realising sustainable tourism, because through the improvement of skills and knowledge, they can become competitive and responsive key players in the development of the tourism industry (Sulistyo et al., 2024). The training program organized through collaboration between Politeknik Indonusa Surakarta, Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta, and Pokdarwis has proven effective in increasing community capacity. A series of activities such as training in tourism product management, creative product design, tourism services, and digital promotion not only expanded the participants' skills, but also encouraged new initiatives in the development of tourism attractions and services. The impact can be seen from the increased ability of residents to manage local potential more independently, professionally, and competitively in the development of sustainable tourism villages. The results of training in Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang show an increase in the community's capacity to develop integrated tourism packages, manage homestays based on local culture, and provide services that meet tourism standards. Synergy between digital strategies and community involvement in the management of sustainable tourism villages (Maulana et al., 2025).



Figure 5. Training and mentoring with tourism stakeholders

Ongoing assistance has helped to foster a creative young generation that is actively developing the potential of their villages through innovation in the fields of culinary arts, crafts and traditional arts.

Integrated Tourist Information and Map Centre

Improvements to physical facilities were realized through the renovation of the tourist information center and the development of a digital tourist map, which was one of the program's strategic achievements. This information center serves as a tourist service center and an integrated promotional tool for tourist villages. Meanwhile, the digital map generated not only contains the locations of major destinations, but also provides information about trekking trails, MSME areas, accommodation facilities, and local culinary spots. Meanwhile, the digital map generated not only displays the locations of major destinations, but also provides information about trekking trails, MSME areas, accommodation facilities, and local culinary spots (Jeniva et al., 2024). The implementation of digital systems in presenting tourism information and data is an important innovation that supports the modernization of tourism villages. This effort facilitates destination management and attracts young tourists who are familiar with technology (Mumtaz & Karmilah, 2022). The implementation of digitalization through interactive tourist maps and SmartTV-based information delivery provides tangible benefits in terms of improving visitor experience. Tourists can quickly and independently access information on destinations, trekking routes, MSME locations, and supporting facilities, making their trips more focused and efficient. From a destination management perspective, this digital system helps Pokdarwis update data regularly, monitor visitor flows, and simplify service processes at information centers. Although this innovation is a strategic achievement, initial evaluations show that the level of utilization of the system by tourists and business operators still needs to be improved through more intensive promotion and guidance on the use of technology. Thus, digitization not only serves as a means of modernization, but also strengthens coordination, information transparency, and the effectiveness of tourism village management.

The Growth of Awareness and Collaboration Among Tourism Stakeholders

The results of the community service activities show significant social changes among tourism stakeholders. Previously,

business activities were carried out separately without coordination between parties. Now, through training, mentoring, and the establishment of a regular communication forum, there is a growing collective awareness to work together in an integrated tourism ecosystem under the coordination of Pokdarwis. Collaboration among tourism stakeholders reflects the implementation of community-based tourism governance, which plays an important role in strengthening the social and economic sustainability of rural communities (Graha Irianto Putra et al., 2025). Collaboration in Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang is evident through the joint involvement of homestay managers, local artisans, art groups, and culinary practitioners in developing an integrated annual tourism agenda. This synergy not only enriches tourism packages and expands promotional networks, but also strengthens the village's identity as a destination oriented towards sustainability. After the community service activities, Pokdarwis and tourism stakeholders compiled an integrated annual agenda through village deliberations. The agenda includes an event calendar, training schedule, and priority tourism packages compiled based on field needs assessments. With this joint planning, the village now has a more focused activity calendar that serves as an operational guideline for tourism throughout the year.

The Creation of an Integrated Central Tourism Information System

The achievements of this community service innovation are reflected in the creation of an integrated digital information system that integrates tourism data and local services. Its development is the result of collaboration between academics, Pokdarwis, and youth groups with technological expertise. The existence of this system accelerates the flow of information and expands the reach of tourism village promotion through online platforms. The implementation of a digital-based tourism information system is a strategic step in strengthening the competitive position of local destinations (Sisephaputra et al., 2025). The implementation of an integrated digital information system in Sewu Kembang Tourism Village was carried out through the development of a website-based platform that contains data on destinations, tourism services, and local products. This development is the result of

collaboration between academics, Pokdarwis, and village youth groups. The system improves access to information for tourists, expands the reach of promotions, and provides a more measurable means of monitoring tourism activities for village managers. Thus, this digitization contributes to the efficiency of destination management and strengthens the competitiveness of tourism villages. With this integrated information system, Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang now has a more modern, efficient, and responsive management mechanism to meet the needs of tourists.

5 Conclusion

This community service activity successfully optimised the management of Sewu Kembang Tourism Village through a collaborative approach based on community participation. This activity not only increased community capacity and strengthened the Pokdarwis institution, but also fostered a collaborative ecosystem that became the main capital in realising sustainable tourism. The creation of institutional synergy, human resource strengthening, tourism product innovation, environmental awareness, and digital information systems became the main pillars of destination sustainability. This empowerment model can be replicated in other tourist villages to strengthen local capacity and improve community welfare. With the solid institutional support of Pokdarwis and an integrated information system, Kampung Wisata Sewu Kembang is now developing into a model of an Independent and Digitally Competitive Tourist Village in the Karanganyar region.

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