

Training and Assistance for the Mada Mbuha Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) in Palama Village to Improve the Creative Economy and Village Income

Hardyanti¹, Azra Fauzi², Muarif Islamiah³

^{1,2,3}STKIP Harapan Bima

Email : hardyantiazra@gmail.com

Abstract

Community-based tourism development in Palama Village, particularly in Doro Leme Valley, holds significant potential for enhancing community welfare through participative and sustainable management. This article discusses the implementation of an empowerment program for the Mada Mbuha Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach, which involves training in tourism management, digital marketing strategies, and technology application in tourism promotion. Through PRA, the community actively participates in planning through evaluation, allowing a more adaptive approach to local needs. The program results indicate an increase in the Pokdarwis members' capacity to manage village tourism, optimize technology for promotion, and develop culture-based tourism packages, contributing to the attraction of tourism. However, infrastructure limitations and funding constraints remain challenges for program sustainability. Collaboration with the government and private sector is required to support better infrastructure and accessibility. With a holistic approach, the tourism potential of Palama Village can be realized sustainably, providing positive impacts on the local economy as well as on cultural and environmental preservation.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Tourism Management, Palama Village.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development in Palama Village, especially in the Doro Leme Valley, has great potential to improve the local economy through good village tourism management. With stunning mountain views and unique cultural and natural attractions, the Doro Leme Valley can become a leading tourist destination. Unfortunately, several obstacles, such as limited funding, lack of innovation, and inadequate infrastructure, hinder this progress. Without adequate support, the enormous potential that exists cannot be utilized optimally to promote the welfare of local communities.



Figure 1; Conditions of Tourist Locations

To overcome these obstacles, a structured training and mentoring program is needed for local communities. Through the Participatory

Rural Appraisal (PRA) method, this program aims to empower the community, especially the Mada Mbuha Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), in managing tourism effectively by combining local wisdom and modern technology. The PRA approach emphasizes active community participation in every stage of tourism development, from problem identification to program evaluation, allowing for adjustments based on local needs and perspectives. This method has shown success in supporting the empowerment of tourism communities in various villages, such as Patuguran and Keranggan, which have succeeded in increasing income and creating new job opportunities for local communities [1].

Community-based tourism (CBT) also places great emphasis on the importance of active community participation in tourism development. This participation is considered crucial in building sustainable tourism [2]. In addition, combining local cultural elements with modern marketing techniques, such as digital media, has the potential to increase the attractiveness of tour packages for domestic and international tourists [3]. For example, the use of digital tools, such as QR codes for registration

and social media for promotion, has proven effective in increasing tourist engagement and making visitor management easier [4].

The importance of preserving cultural heritage has also been proven in various tourist villages, such as Pinge and Bawomataluo, which combine cultural preservation with digital technology to create authentic tourism experiences [5]. This shows that the integration of local culture with modern technology can not only attract more tourists, but also support the preservation of high-value culture.

However, challenges remain, including the need for adequate infrastructure and innovation in tourism offerings. Infrastructure problems, such as limited parking areas and suboptimal waste management, can affect the overall tourist experience (Herman et al., 2023). Meanwhile, innovation in the form of developing new attractions and unique cultural events will support tourism sustainability and long-term economic growth [6].

Therefore, the PRA-based program implemented in Palama Village is expected to empower the community in managing village tourism in a sustainable way. By improving tourism management skills and implementing digital marketing strategies, this program not only aims to increase the number of tourist visits, but also creates a positive impact on the creative economy of the Palama Village community. However, the experiences of other villages show the importance of maintaining a balance between cultural preservation and tourism innovation to achieve sustainable tourism growth in the future.

METHOD

This Training and Mentoring Program applies the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method which aims to involve the Palama Village community, especially the Mada Mbuha Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), actively in every stage of the activity. The PRA approach was chosen because it has proven effective in empowering communities through direct participation, where the community is not only a beneficiary but also a decision maker in the village tourism development process. The implementation stages of this program consist of socialization, training, application of technology,

as well as mentoring and evaluation, which are designed to answer local needs and develop relevant skills for Pokdarwis members.

The stages of implementing this activity were designed systematically to overcome the problems faced by Pokdarwis Mada Mbuha. These stages are as follows:

1. Socialization

The initial stage of the program begins with socialization activities which aim to introduce the objectives, benefits and activity plans to all parties involved, including Pokdarwis, village government and the surrounding community. In this socialization, the implementing team explains in detail the problems faced, the solutions that will be provided, and the steps that will be taken to achieve the program objectives. This socialization activity is also intended to ensure a deep understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party, so that the program can run effectively.

2. Training

After the socialization, the program continued with a training stage focused on developing Pokdarwis' skills in managing tourism independently and sustainably. This training covers several main materials, including:

- **Development of Village Tourism Assets:** This training aims to increase the understanding and skills of Pokdarwis in identifying, managing and developing natural and cultural tourism potential in Palama Village, such as cultural attractions, local culinary delights and handicrafts.
- **Digital Marketing Strategy:** Pokdarwis are taught about the use of social media and other digital marketing techniques to expand the reach of village tourism promotions. Focus is given to creating interesting and informative content that can attract the attention of domestic and international tourists.
- **Culture-Based Tourism Innovation:** This material includes ways to create attractive tour packages by combining local wisdom and culture in the village, such as traditional dances or traditional

activities that can be an attraction for visitors.

3. Application of Technology

At this stage, the implementation team introduced website-based digital technology to facilitate tourism promotion. Pokdarwis are trained to operate and maintain a website specifically designed to display tourist information on Palama Village comprehensively. This website is equipped with various features and regularly updated tourist information, which aims to make information easier for tourists to access. In this way, Pokdarwis can utilize technology to increase tourist engagement and reach a wider audience.

4. Mentoring and Evaluation

After training and implementing technology, the implementation team provides regular assistance to assist Pokdarwis in applying the skills they have acquired. This assistance includes monitoring tourism activities, assistance in developing sustainable promotion strategies, and solutions to technical obstacles that may arise. Evaluation is carried out at the end of each stage to measure the level of success of the program and understand the impact that has been produced. The results of this evaluation are not only a benchmark for success, but also a guide for future improvements and a model for other communities with similar challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This training and mentoring program has had a positive impact on increasing the capacity of Pokdarwis Mada Mbuha members in managing community-based tourism in Palama Village. Using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method approach, the results achieved include improving tourism management skills, optimizing digital technology, developing tour packages based on local wisdom, and identifying infrastructure challenges. The following are details of the results and discussion of each aspect:

1. Increasing the Capacity of Pokdarwis in Tourism Management

One of the main achievements of this program is increasing the capacity of Pokdarwis members in managing tourism independently and sustainably. The socialization and training program succeeded in increasing the understanding and skills of Pokdarwis members in managing tourism assets, designing promotional strategies, and maintaining the uniqueness of local culture. Based on the evaluation results, members showed increased understanding in aspects of visitor-friendly tourism services as well as managing tourist attractions based on local wisdom. A similar empowerment program in Bayan Village shows that good tourism management skills can open up new economic opportunities and increase employment opportunities for the local community [7], an achievement that is also expected to occur in Palama Village.

2. Optimizing Technology in Tourism Promotion

The use of digital technology in tourism promotion is an important innovation implemented in this program. With a tourism information-based website, Pokdarwis is able to reach a wider audience and provide comprehensive information about Palama Village tourist attractions. This website is also equipped with various features and access to tourist information for visitors (link: <https://wisata-palama.eye.my.id/>).

Similar initiatives implemented in Sarasah Waterfall ecotourism show that the application of technology can increase the effectiveness of tourism management and strengthen visitor involvement [8]. It is hoped that optimizing this technology will not only expand the reach of promotions, but also make it easier for tourists to access information and plan visits.

3. Local Wisdom Based Tourism Development

This program has also succeeded in encouraging the development of tour packages that combine local cultural elements with modern marketing techniques, thereby creating unique tourist attractions. Development of local wisdom-based tourism packages including cultural attractions, such

as traditional dances and handicrafts, which are integrated into digital promotions through social media and websites. The results of this program are in line with the experiences of Pinge and Bawomataluo Villages, where the combination of cultural elements and modern technology has proven successful in creating authentic and attractive tourism experiences for tourists[9]. Thus, this culture-based development not only maintains cultural heritage but also increases the tourist attraction of Palama Village for domestic and international visitors.

4. Infrastructure Challenges and Limited Funds

Even though this program has succeeded in achieving most of its planned goals, infrastructure challenges and limited funding remain the main obstacles in developing Palama Village tourism. Access to the Doro Leme Valley is still difficult, as well as the lack of facilities such as parking areas and waste management, can affect the overall tourist experience. The empowerment program in Bahu Palawa Village also experienced similar obstacles, where limited infrastructure hampered community empowerment and social inclusion efforts (Herman et al., 2023). To overcome this challenge, collaboration is needed with the government and other stakeholders to improve infrastructure and accessibility, so that tourism development can be sustainable and provide long-term benefits for the community.

5. The Impact of the Creative Economy on Community Income

This program also has a positive impact on the growth of the creative economy in Palama Village. The training provided not only increases tourist visits, but also increases demand for local products such as handicrafts and typical village culinary delights. This increase is reflected in people's income, which also increases along with the increase in the number of tourist visits. In line with reports (Richards & Wilson, 2006), a tourism-based creative economy has great potential in increasing people's income and encouraging economic growth in rural areas.

That way, this program not only focuses on tourism development, but also supports the welfare of society as a whole.

The success of this PRA-based training and mentoring program highlights the importance of participatory approaches and the use of technology in empowering tourism communities. The PRA approach which emphasizes active participation has proven to be a key factor in improving the skills of Pokdarwis and building a sense of community ownership of village tourism. Optimizing digital technology, such as promotional websites, also has a positive impact in increasing marketing reach and attracting more tourists. Apart from that, the development of local culture-based tourism packages creates a unique and authentic attraction for Palama Village.

However, developing tourism in this village still faces significant challenges in terms of infrastructure and limited resources. To achieve more optimal results, more intensive collaboration between society, government and the private sector is needed to improve infrastructure that supports tourist accessibility. With this collaborative effort, the great potential of Palama Village can be realized in a sustainable manner, providing a positive impact on the local economy, as well as strengthening cultural and environmental preservation.

CONCLUSION

The PRA-based training and mentoring program has succeeded in empowering Pokdarwis in managing and promoting the tourism potential of Palama Village. Digital technology makes a major contribution in expanding tourism promotion and increasing the number of visitors. Although this program has succeeded in achieving most of the planned goals, there are infrastructure constraints and limited funds that need to be considered for the sustainability of this program. Collaboration between government, society and the private sector is needed to realize sustainable village tourism development.

SUGGESTION

To support the sustainability of this program, it is recommended that Pokdarwis

continues to strengthen skills in technology management and creative marketing. Apart from that, training related to sustainable tourism management needs to be carried out so that Palama Village tourism can maintain its attractiveness without sacrificing cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability. The involvement of the government and the private sector also needs to be increased to improve infrastructure that supports tourist accessibility to Palama Village.

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