

Institutional Strengthening and Community-Based Tourism Development in Lubuk Lukum

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Abstract

Lubuk Lukum Bathing Tourism Area in Balai Gadang Village is a nature-based tourism destination with local wisdom that experienced a decline in activities after a flood disaster, resulting in decreased tourist visits and local business income. The main issues include weak institutional capacity of the tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis), limited product diversification, lack of financial record-keeping, and low utilization of digital technology for promotion. This community service program aims to support tourism recovery through institutional strengthening, development of local-based culinary products, and implementation of digital promotion. The method used is a participatory approach through stages of socialization, problem identification, application of technology and innovation, mentoring, and evaluation. The results show improvements in Pokdarwis organizational structure and roles, diversification of culinary products such as banana-based desserts and taro chips, implementation of simple financial bookkeeping, and development of promotional media through a website and QR code-integrated tourism map. In addition, environmental conservation efforts were carried out through fish restocking and tree planting as part of strengthening conservation-based tourism attractions. The implication of this program indicates that a participatory approach combined with economic, institutional, and digital aspects can serve as an initial strategy to support sustainable community-based tourism recovery and development.

Keywords: Community Based Tourism; Institutional Strengthening; Local Culinary Development.

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Introduction

Community-based tourism is an approach that positions local communities as the primary actors in the management and development of tourist destinations. This approach is considered capable of improving community well-being while preserving environmental sustainability and local culture (Lejeune & Richards, 2003). In the context of regional development, this approach is also important because it creates opportunities for community involvement in the planning, management, and utilization of tourism resources in a more equitable and sustainable manner (Okazaki, 2008).

The Lubuk Lukum Bathing Area in Balai Gadang Village, Koto Tengah Subdistrict, Padang City is a nature-based tourism destination with significant potential for development. This area not only offers river tourism but also features local wisdom in the form of the “larangan” fish conservation practice, which serves as a unique attraction for tourists. The “Ikan Larangan” initiative is a community-based conservation practice in which local communities safeguard fish populations in river areas by refraining from indiscriminate fishing and preserving aquatic habitats. This practice is jointly managed by local communities with support from tourism managers and the Pokdarwis (Community Based Tourism Group) through local regulations that emphasize a ban on fishing, maintaining river cleanliness, and preserving the area as a tourist attraction. This practice holds conservation value because it helps maintain fish populations, preserve river ecosystems, and strengthen community awareness of sustainable local resource management (Ostrom, 1990).

However, following the floods that struck the area in November 2025, tourism activity declined. Based on preliminary observations and information from partners, the floods washed away several business stalls and disrupted tourism support facilities along the river. These conditions led to a decline in visitor comfort, disruption of business operations, and a reduction in Lubuk Lukum's appeal as a tourist destination. Quantitative data on the number of stalls before the flood, the number of stalls affected, the number of tourist visits before and after the flood, and changes in business owners' income. However, interview results with partners indicate that business owners experienced a decline in sales activity after the flood due to a decrease in tourist visits. Therefore, a support program is needed to help restore tourism activities through institutional strengthening, the development of local culinary products, digital promotion, and the reinvigoration of the roles of business operators and the Pokdarwis in destination management.

In addition to the impact of disasters, other challenges faced by the community include weak tourism management institutions, limited business product innovation, and suboptimal professional business management. Many business operators have not yet implemented even basic financial record-keeping, making it difficult to control business income and expenses (Kasmir, 2016). On the other hand, the use of digital technology in tourism promotion remains very limited, even though digitalization plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness of tourist destinations and expanding marketing reach (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

The urgency of this community service initiative is based on the need to restore tourism activities and the local economy in an integrated manner. The recovery of tourism areas requires not only physical improvements but also strengthening the community's capacity to manage businesses, develop products, and utilize technology in promotion. Therefore, a participatory and sustainable empowerment approach is required (Chambers, 1994).

Based on an analysis of this situation, this community service initiative aims to support the recovery of the Lubuk Lukum bathing area through four main approaches: strengthening the Pokdarwis as an institution; developing culinary businesses based on local ingredients; utilizing digital technology for tourism promotion; and enhancing tourism attractions based on environmental conservation. The problem-solving plan involves providing guidance to business owners in the areas of production, business management, and marketing, as well as providing guidance to Pokdarwis on organizational strengthening, tourism area management, the development of digital information media, and environmental conservation through fish restocking and tree planting.

Additionally, this initiative integrates environmental conservation efforts through the release of protected fish species and tree planting to ensure the sustainability of nature-based tourism attractions. This approach aligns with the concept of sustainable tourism, which emphasizes a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects. (World Tourism, 2020). Thus, this community service initiative is expected not only to provide short-term solutions for the recovery of the tourist area but also to foster the development of a community-based tourism management system that is more self-reliant, adaptive, and sustainable.

Method

This community service initiative was carried out in the Pemandian Lubuk Lukum bathing area, Balai Gadang Village, Koto Tengah Subdistrict, Padang City. The activity design employs a participatory approach, in which the community is actively involved in every stage of the activity, from problem identification to program evaluation (Chambers, 1994). This approach was chosen because it is considered effective in community empowerment activities oriented toward local needs.

The target audience for this activity consists of two main partner groups: local food business owners and the management of the Lubuk Lukum Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). Seven food business owners were willing to actively participate in the mentoring program, while the others initially focused on repairing their flood-damaged stalls. Meanwhile, the Lubuk Lukum Pokdarwis has 20 members, but only 8 were actively involved in the mentoring activities. Consequently, the mentoring activities were focused on partners who were ready and actively participating in the program so that the empowerment process could proceed more effectively and sustainably (Sugiyono, 2017).

The program ran for 20 days and involved students as field facilitators. The students were divided into several small groups and assigned to two main partners local food business owners and the Lubuk Lukum Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) based on the focus of the mentoring. This division was designed to ensure that the mentoring process was more targeted, intensive, and tailored to the needs of each partner.

During the program's implementation, activities began with outreach and initial coordination with all partners to ensure a shared understanding of the program's objectives and activity plans. Following that,

issues were identified through field observations, interviews with culinary business owners, and discussions with the Pokdarwis management. For culinary business partners, the mentoring focused on developing products based on local ingredients particularly processed banana and taro products simple financial record-keeping, strengthening business management, and developing promotional media and digital content. Meanwhile, for the Pokdarwis partners, the mentoring focused on institutional strengthening, the division of roles among board members, coordination of tourism area management, the development of QR code-based tourism maps, and environmental conservation activities through fish restocking and tree planting. At the end of the program, an evaluation was conducted to assess the program's initial achievements, implementation challenges, and the need for continued mentoring.

The materials and tools used in this activity included local food ingredients such as bananas and taro as the main ingredients for culinary product development, as well as simple equipment for the production process. Additionally, a business ledger was used as a simple financial record-keeping tool. In terms of technology, digital devices such as laptops and mobile phones were utilized for developing a tourism website, creating promotional content, and integrating QR Code-based tourism maps.

The tools and innovations developed in this project include a Lubuk Lukum bathing area map integrated with QR codes and a website as tourism information platforms. This system is designed to make it easier for visitors to access information about tourist sites, business stalls, and local attractions digitally. Additionally, a simple cash-book-based financial record-keeping system was developed to enhance business owners' ability to manage their finances independently. In addition, this initiative also utilizes fish fry and tree seedlings as part of efforts to preserve the environment and enhance nature based tourism attractions in the Lubuk Lukum bathing area.

The activities were carried out in several stages, including program outreach, identification of partners' challenges, training and guidance on culinary production, guidance on basic financial record-keeping, development of digital promotional media, institutional strengthening of Pokdarwis through focus group discussions (FGDs), environmental conservation activities, and evaluation of the results of the activities.

Data collection techniques were conducted through field observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Data collection was conducted through field observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Observations were conducted to assess the physical condition of the tourist area, culinary business activities, the condition of supporting facilities, and tourism service patterns in Lubuk Lukum. Interviews were conducted with local culinary business owners and Pokdarwis administrators to gather information regarding post-disaster challenges, the decline in tourist visits, production constraints, financial record-keeping, promotion, and destination management. FGDs were used as a platform to discuss key issues and collaboratively formulate solutions in a participatory manner, particularly regarding the institutional strengthening of Pokdarwis, the development of culinary products, digital promotion, and the management of the tourist area (Moleong, 2018).

Data from observations, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and activity documentation were then analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. Field findings were grouped based on the program's main themes: the initial conditions of the tourist area, challenges facing culinary businesses, business management, digital promotion, the institutional framework of Pokdarwis, and the enhancement of environment-based tourist attractions. Changes in the partners were identified by comparing the initial conditions with those observed during and after the mentoring (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

Result and Discussion

This community service activity yielded several achievements related to economic recovery and the strengthening of tourism management in the Lubuk Lukum Bathing Area. The results obtained encompassed aspects of production, business management, marketing, and the institutional framework of the Pokdarwis.

Strengthening Production and Diversifying Local Culinary Products

The results of the program show that five culinary entrepreneurs who actively participated in the mentoring program have successfully developed culinary products using local ingredients such as bananas and taro. Through the mentoring, the entrepreneurs created four product variants: chocolate-flavored banana fudge, tiramisu-flavored banana fudge, savory crispy taro, and spicy crispy taro. This diversification serves as a first step toward enhancing the appeal of local culinary products to tourists.

Improvements in production skills are evident in the entrepreneurs' ability to consistently replicate the product-making process, use more uniform ingredient measurements, follow simple recipe standards, and maintain flavor consistency across all product variants. Additionally, the entrepreneurs are beginning to understand the importance of standardized recipes as the foundation for maintaining product quality, especially when marketing their products to a broader tourist audience.

Additionally, business operators have begun to understand the importance of standardized recipes in maintaining product quality. Direct mentoring has led to improved production skills and consistent product flavor. This aligns with research indicating that product innovation is a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of small businesses (Kotler, P., & Keller, 2016). Based on observations, the developed products have the potential to serve as the culinary identity of the tourist area. Strengthening these local products also supports the concept of community-based tourism, which emphasizes the utilization of local potential as the primary attraction (Goodwin, H., & Santilli, 2009).



Figure 1. Culinary Diversification Products

These findings indicate that the development of community-based tourism depends not only on the presence of tourist attractions but also on the ability of local communities to develop products, manage businesses, and create added value from local potential. Priatmoko, S., Kabil, M., Purwoko, Y., & Dávid, (2021) emphasize that the sustainability of community-based tourism must be viewed from the perspective of local stakeholders, as communities are the primary actors in maintaining the sustainability of the destination and local economic benefits. Thus, the innovation of banana- and taro-based culinary products in this program can be understood as part of a strategy to strengthen the role of local communities in building the identity and tourist appeal of Lubuk Lukum.

This initiative is also consistent with the findings of (Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025), who noted that the empowerment of MSMEs in the development of sustainable tourism villages is influenced by innovation, governance, capacity building, collaboration, and the use of technology. In the context of this program, culinary production mentoring, the standardization of recipes, and the development of digital promotion demonstrate that capacity building for business operators is not only focused on food production capabilities but also on preparing small businesses to become an integral part of the local tourism ecosystem.

In addition to production aspects, the development of local culinary products must also be integrated with digital marketing strategies. Ermanovida, E., Imania, K., Khairunnisyah, T., & Putri (2023) found that strengthening digital marketing among businesses specializing in local cuisine can enhance participants' understanding of the importance of promotion and product innovation as tourism assets. This aligns with the activities in Lubuk Lukum, as the innovations of "pisang lumer" and "talas krispi" do not stop at product creation but are also directed toward supporting destination promotion through digital media, menus, product documentation, and the dissemination of tourism information.

Thus, the achievements in the culinary production aspect of this program cannot be viewed merely as training activities in product making but as part of strengthening the community's economic capacity in the post-disaster recovery of tourism destinations. Liu-Lastres, B., Mariska, D., Tan, X., & Ying (2020) demonstrate that post-disaster tourism development can support community livelihoods and destination resilience when local communities are involved in economic recovery and destination management. Therefore, the development of local cuisine in Lubuk Lukum represents an important initial achievement, although the long-term impact on increased tourist visits and community income still requires further monitoring.

Improving Business Management Through Simple Financial Record Keeping

Business owners have begun implementing simple financial record-keeping using the business cash books provided during the mentoring sessions. These records include income, expenses, and daily balances. Although still in the early stages, business owners are demonstrating a growing understanding of how to manage their business finances.

Interview results indicate that previously, business owners did not keep records regularly and relied solely on memory. Following the mentoring, business owners began to realize the importance of record-keeping to determine business profits. This aligns with the view (Kasmir, 2016) that financial record-keeping is the foundation of sound business management. The implementation of this simple record-keeping system also has implications for improved control over business expenses. With proper record-keeping, business owners can identify unnecessary costs and plan the use of capital more effectively (Mulyadi, 2016).



Figure 2. Simple Financial Recording Assistance

These findings are also consistent with a study by [Atanti, D., & Vendy \(2023\)](#), which explains that training in simple bookkeeping helps MSME owners improve their knowledge and skills in running a business through simple bookkeeping methods that are easy to implement. Furthermore, [Handayani and Handayani, D. L., & Azmiyanti \(2023\)](#) also demonstrate that outreach and training in simple financial bookkeeping can help MSME owners understand the importance of keeping accurate financial records for their businesses. Thus, the use of cash books in this program serves as a first step toward establishing more organized financial management habits among culinary business owners in Lubuk Lukum.

Strengthening Marketing Through Promotional Media and Digitalization

In terms of marketing, business owners were introduced to the use of simple promotional media such as printed menus and information boards. Additionally, students assisted in creating promotional content for social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. The results of these activities indicate that the digitalization of promotions is increasingly recognized as a key strategy for expanding market reach. The use of social media enables local products to be discovered by a wider audience of potential tourists. This aligns with research stating that digital marketing plays a significant role in enhancing the visibility of businesses and tourist destinations ([Buhalis, D., & Law, 2008](#)).

In addition to social media promotions, this program also produced a tourism information website and QR code based tourist maps as key innovations to support the digital promotion of Lubuk Lukum. The website contains general information about the tourist area, documentation of activities, information on local culinary businesses, the “ikan larangan” attraction, and location maps that can be accessed digitally by prospective visitors. The QR code based tourist maps were created to make it easier for visitors to quickly obtain information on locations and tourist attractions via their mobile phones. In the initial phase, website content and QR code map management were handled by students in collaboration with the implementation team; subsequently, the process was transitioned to be gradually managed by the Pokdarwis board as the tourism area’s administrators. Although usage metrics such as website visits or the number of QR code scans have not yet been quantitatively documented, this platform represents an initial achievement in providing more accessible tourism information and supporting the destination’s digital promotion.

These findings indicate that digital promotion can enhance the visibility of destinations and local products. [Ermanovida, E., Imania, K., Khairunnisyah, T., & Putri \(2023\)](#) demonstrate that strengthening digital marketing among businesses specializing in local cuisine can improve participants’ understanding of the importance of promotion and product innovation as tourism assets. Furthermore, [Syarif, F. N., Aditya, A., Kusumasari, A. A., & Prastiningtyas \(2025\)](#) explain that the development of website-based interactive tourism maps can make it easier for tourists to access destination information, navigation features, and visual galleries. Thus, the website and QR Code maps in this program serve not only as promotional media but also as a source of preliminary information to strengthen community-based tourism management. This innovation supports the digital transformation in the rapidly growing tourism sector ([World Tourism, 2020](#)).



Figure 3. QR Code-Based Tourist Map and the Lubuk Lukum Website

Institutional Strengthening and Tourism Management by Pokdarwis

The mentoring activities also focused on strengthening the institutional capacity of Pokdarwis as the primary manager of the tourism area. Prior to the mentoring, the roles of Pokdarwis members were not functioning optimally, and coordination of the tourism area's management still relied on a few active board members. Of the 20 Pokdarwis board members, 8 were actively involved in the mentoring process. Through discussions and focus group discussions (FGDs), the Pokdarwis board members began to reorganize the division of roles according to the needs of the area's management, such as coordinating environmental cleanliness, promoting tourism, managing tourism information, coordinating with business operators, and supporting environmental conservation activities.

The results of the activities indicate improvements in the organizational structure and the division of tasks among members. Evidence of institutional change is evident in the clearer division of roles in the management of the tourist area, the involvement of Pokdarwis in the development of QR code-based tourist maps, and increased coordination between Pokdarwis and culinary business operators in supporting tourism promotion and services. In addition, Pokdarwis was also involved in environmental conservation activities through fish restocking and tree planting as part of efforts to strengthen nature-based tourism attractions. Thus, institutional strengthening was demonstrated not only through discussions but also through Pokdarwis's direct involvement in information management, coordination among business operators, tourism promotion, and area conservation.

Our findings are consistent with [Okazaki, \(2008\)](#), who emphasizes that community-based tourism requires community participation and local institutions capable of supporting sustainable destination planning and management. Recent studies also indicate that institutional strengthening for community-based tourism should focus on enhancing managers' understanding, clarifying roles, and improving organizational capacity to manage local tourism potential. [Nugroho, A. W., Prasetyo, S. I., Candra, I. A., Saputra, R. A., & Putra, \(2023\)](#) explain that guidance on establishing Pokdarwis includes strengthening community understanding of Pokdarwis, forming a governing body, drafting bylaws, and developing work programs. In line with this, [Sandrio, L., Hutagalung, S., Rudiyanto, R., & Seran \(2024\)](#) demonstrate that institutional strengthening and governance of Pokdarwis can be achieved through knowledge transfer, discussions, and practical exercises to enhance community understanding in the development of tourism villages. Thus, the guidance provided to Pokdarwis in Lubuk Lukum can be viewed as an initial step toward establishing a more structured tourism governance system, although institutional strengthening still requires ongoing support to ensure that all board members can participate more actively.



Figure 4. FGD with Pokdarwis regarding Strengthening Tourism Institutions and Management

Enhancing Environment-Based Tourism Attractions

This initiative also helped boost the area's appeal as a tourist destination through environmental measures, such as stocking the river with protected fish species and planting tree seedlings in the areas surrounding the river. Conservation efforts included the release of gariang fish (found only in West Sumatra)

in the Lubuk Lukum river basin and the planting of 100 mahogany saplings in the areas surrounding the river, along the entrance to the tourist area, and at locations requiring reforestation. This initiative aims to preserve the environment, reinforce the practice of protected fish species as a form of local wisdom, and enhance nature-based tourism appeal.

Maintenance of conservation outcomes is managed by the Pokdarwis in collaboration with the local community through regular monitoring of the condition of tree seedlings, the cleanliness of the riverbank area, and the sustainability of the protected fish species practice. Pokdarwis officials play a role in reminding visitors and the community not to fish indiscriminately, to keep the area clean, and to ensure that the planting areas remain well-maintained. With this maintenance mechanism in place, conservation efforts are not merely ceremonial activities but become an integral part of environmentally-based tourism management.

This practice aligns with the concept of community-based resource management, which emphasizes sustainability and the role of local communities in safeguarding shared resources (Ostrom, 1990). Recent study also indicates that community based tourism can support environmental conservation when local communities are involved in the management and maintenance of natural resources. Nuraeni, E., & Kusuma (2023) demonstrate that community-based tourism plays a role in increasing community involvement in mangrove conservation while also providing economic benefits to local communities. Additionally, Ghaderi, Z., Shahabi, E., Fennell, D., & Khoshkam, (2022) explain that tourism can enhance environmental awareness, conservation participation, and the strengthening of community livelihoods. Thus, the release of protected fish and tree planting in Lubuk Lukum can be seen as initial steps toward strengthening conservation-based tourism attractions, although the sustainability of these results still requires ongoing monitoring. These efforts demonstrate that tourism management does not focus solely on economic aspects but also considers environmental and sustainability considerations (World Tourism, 2020).



Figure 5. Environmental Conservation Activities Through Tree Planting and the Release of Larangan Fish

Conclusion

Community service activities in the Lubuk Lukum bathing area have shown initial progress in strengthening community capacity and post-disaster community based tourism management. These achievements are evident through mentoring local food business owners, strengthening business management, utilizing digital promotional media, strengthening the Pokdarwis organization, and enhancing tourism attractions based on environmental conservation.

Based on the results of these activities, business owners have begun to diversify their products using local ingredients, understand the importance of basic financial record keeping, and utilize both conventional and digital promotional media. Meanwhile, Pokdarwis has shown initial progress in organizational management, role allocation, coordination with business operators, and involvement in the management of tourist areas. Additionally, conservation activities such as the release of protected fish species and tree planting have become part of the initial efforts to strengthen environmentally-based tourism attractions.

However, the results obtained are still in the early stages of implementation. Therefore, the long-term impact on increasing the number of tourist visits and community income cannot yet be measured significantly and still requires further monitoring. Ongoing support is needed so that the initial achievements can develop into a more consistent, independent, and sustainable approach to tourism management.

Moving forward, the program's sustainability will be ensured by transferring management responsibilities to community partners. Management of the website and QR code-based tourism map will be entrusted to the Lubuk Lukum Pokdarwis board, particularly those members actively involved in the mentoring activities, so that tourism information, activity documentation, and promotional content can be updated independently. Meanwhile, culinary business owners who have participated in the mentoring program are responsible for continuing to produce dishes made with local ingredients, maintaining recipe standards, and implementing simple financial record-keeping through a business cash book. The Pokdarwis board also plays a role in coordinating tourism promotion, maintaining the cleanliness of the area, managing

relationships with business owners, and carrying out conservation activities such as the care of protected fish species and the saplings that have been planted.

Higher education institutions play a role in providing ongoing, periodic guidance, while local governments and the community are expected to support the program's sustainability through facilitation, coordination, and network strengthening. With this division of roles, the program's outcomes do not end once students have completed their activities, but can be continued by partners as part of efforts to strengthen the independent management of the Lubuk Lukum Bathing Area.

Author Declarations

Author Contributions

All authors contributed to the implementation of the community service program and the preparation of this manuscript. The first author contributed to the conceptualization of the program, coordination of community empowerment activities, data collection, and manuscript drafting. The second author contributed to field mentoring, documentation, data analysis, and manuscript revision. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the implementation of this community service program or the publication of this manuscript.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence tools were used only to assist in language refinement, grammar checking, and manuscript formatting. The authors remained fully responsible for the content, data accuracy, analysis, interpretation, and final version of the manuscript.

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