

Training and Assistance in Developing Tourism Potential of Sumberdem Village as an Effort to Achieve Economic Independence

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Volume

6

Issue

2

Edition

November

Page

781-785

Year

2025

Article History

Submission: 18-09-2025

Review: 23-09-2025

Accepted: 11-11-2025

Keyword

Community Empowerment;
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA);
Educational Tourism;

How to cite

Amalia, N. P., Nurkasanah, E. S., Nabilah, S. H., Harliansyah, P., Sabrina, D. M., Suluchi, R. A., Pransiska, E., Ulinuha, A. W., Azzahra, Y. J., Aulia, N. S., Nauna, A. Z., Sa'diyah, H., & Koesuma, S. N. (2025). Training and Assistance in Developing Tourism Potential of Sumberdem Village as an Effort to Achieve Economic Independence. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, Volume 6(2), 781-785
<https://doi.org/10.32815/jpm.v6i2.2821>

Abstract

Purpose: This program aimed to empower the Sumberdem Village community by optimizing local potential—coffee and lemon products—through tourism development to strengthen economic independence.

Method: The approach used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), involving the community in mapping resources, socialization, training, mentoring, and evaluation. Activities included technical assistance for product processing, tourism management, and digital marketing strategies.

Practical Applications: The program enhanced community skills in product diversification and tourism services, supported infrastructure development, and created new economic opportunities through merchandise kiosks and integrated marketing.

Conclusion: PRA effectively increased community capacity and independence, strengthened village identity as an educational tourism destination, and demonstrated the potential for sustainable local economic growth.



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Introduction

Sumberdem Village, located in Wonosari District, Malang Regency, possesses abundant natural resources and local products, particularly coffee and lemons. These resources have become the foundation for developing thematic villages aimed at transforming Sumberdem into a tourism destination that integrates educational experiences with local product promotion. This initiative seeks to enhance community welfare and foster economic independence through sustainable tourism development.

The concept of thematic villages in Sumberdem emphasizes leveraging local strengths to create unique attractions. Kampoeng Lemon and Kampoeng Kopi serve as flagship programs, offering visitors an immersive experience in agricultural practices and product processing. Kampoeng Lemon focuses on lemon cultivation and its derivative products, such as dried lemon, lemon powder, and syrup, while Kampoeng Kopi highlights coffee processing and tasting activities. These thematic villages not only provide recreational opportunities but also educational value, positioning Sumberdem as a distinctive tourism destination.

Despite its potential, Sumberdem faces significant challenges in realizing this vision. The primary issue lies in the limited skills and productivity of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) within the village. Many residents lack the knowledge and capacity to manage tourism services and develop competitive local products. Without targeted interventions, these limitations hinder efforts to maximize economic benefits and achieve sustainable development goals.

To address these challenges, a community empowerment program was implemented using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach. PRA emphasizes active community involvement in every stage of development, from resource mapping and socialization to training, mentoring, and evaluation. This participatory method ensures that local stakeholders contribute to decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to tourism development.

The introduction of PRA-based empowerment activities in Sumberdem aims to strengthen local capacities, improve product diversification, and enhance tourism management skills. By integrating training, infrastructure development, and digital marketing strategies, the program seeks to create a holistic framework for sustainable economic growth. This initiative not only addresses immediate skill gaps but also lays the foundation for Sumberdem to become a competitive and resilient tourism village rooted in its local potential.

Method

The empowerment program in Sumberdem Village adopted the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach to ensure active community involvement throughout all stages of implementation. This method emphasizes participatory planning and decision-making, enabling local stakeholders to identify resources, analyze problems, and develop solutions collaboratively. The program began with resource mapping to identify local potentials such as coffee and lemon cultivation, existing infrastructure, and community skills. Coordination meetings were held with village officials and community groups to design activities aligned with local needs. The PRA framework guided the inclusion of socialization sessions, technical training, and mentoring to strengthen community capacity.

Training focused on two main areas: (1) product development and diversification, including coffee and lemon processing techniques, and (2) tourism management, covering visitor services, destination management, and digital marketing strategies. Mentoring was conducted to assist participants in applying these skills in real contexts, ensuring sustainability beyond the program period. Evaluation was carried out through participatory discussions and observation of skill application during and after training sessions. Feedback from community members and Pokdarwis (tourism awareness groups) was analyzed qualitatively to assess improvements in knowledge, infrastructure readiness, and economic potential. This iterative process allowed continuous refinement of strategies based on community input.

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Result

The implementation of the community empowerment program in Sumberdem Village began with an initial coordination phase involving village officials, Pokdarwis, and local stakeholders. This stage successfully established a shared understanding of the program objectives and ensured active participation from the community. Through participatory discussions, the team identified key local potentials—coffee and lemon cultivation—as the foundation for developing thematic tourism villages.

Figure 1. Community Service Team



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

The resource mapping process revealed that Sumberdem possessed strong agricultural assets but lacked adequate infrastructure and marketing strategies to support tourism development. This finding guided the design of subsequent activities, which focused on improving both technical skills and supporting facilities. The participatory approach strengthened community ownership of the program, as residents were involved in decision-making from the outset.

Figure 2. Training Session



Source: Private Documentation, 2025.

Training activities were conducted in two main areas: product development and tourism management. In product development sessions, participants learned techniques for processing coffee and lemon into value-added products such as lemon powder, dried lemon slices, coffee blends, and ready-to-drink beverages. These sessions emphasized quality control and packaging standards to enhance market competitiveness. The training also introduced branding concepts to prepare products for broader distribution.

Tourism management training targeted Pokdarwis and local entrepreneurs, equipping them with skills in visitor service, destination management, and digital marketing. Participants were taught how to create engaging tourism experiences by integrating educational elements into coffee and lemon processing demonstrations. Additionally, the training included strategies for promoting Sumberdem Village through social media and online platforms, addressing the previously identified gap in digital marketing.

Infrastructure development complemented the training activities by improving physical facilities that support tourism. The program facilitated the construction of merchandise kiosks, renovation of educational spaces in Kampoeng Kopi, and enhancement of pathways and seating areas in Kampoeng Lemon. Decorative lighting and signage were installed to improve the aesthetic appeal of the destinations, creating a more welcoming environment for visitors.

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The program also introduced diversification strategies to strengthen economic resilience. Beyond coffee and lemon products, participants developed souvenirs such as tote bags, keychains, and postcards featuring local branding. These initiatives not only generated additional income streams but also reinforced the identity of Sumberdem as a thematic tourism village. The integration of product sales with tourism activities created a synergistic model for sustainable economic growth.

Evaluation results indicated significant improvements in community skills and confidence. Participants demonstrated the ability to apply new techniques in product processing and tourism management. Observations during mentoring sessions confirmed that Pokdarwis members were actively implementing visitor service protocols and digital marketing practices. Feedback from the community highlighted increased awareness of branding and the importance of maintaining quality standards.

Despite these achievements, challenges remain in sustaining momentum, particularly in advanced digital marketing and financial management. While the program successfully introduced basic strategies, further assistance is needed to optimize online sales and strengthen bookkeeping practices. Nevertheless, the overall impact of the program was positive, as evidenced by increased community independence, improved infrastructure, and the emergence of new economic opportunities linked to tourism development.

Discussion

The implementation of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in Sumberdem Village demonstrated its effectiveness in fostering community engagement and capacity building. By involving residents in every stage of the program—from resource mapping to evaluation—the initiative strengthened local ownership and sustainability. This finding aligns with Mustanir et al. (2019), who emphasize that PRA enhances community independence and participatory decision-making.

The results indicate that skill development in product diversification and tourism management significantly contributed to economic empowerment. Training on coffee and lemon processing enabled residents to create value-added products, while tourism management sessions improved service quality and destination appeal. These outcomes support the argument that community-based approaches are essential for optimizing local resources and promoting rural development (Handayani, 2009; Handoyo & Sudrajat, 2016).

Infrastructure improvements, such as merchandise kiosks and educational spaces, further reinforced the attractiveness of Sumberdem as a thematic tourism village. The integration of physical facilities with branding and marketing strategies reflects a holistic approach to rural tourism development. This is consistent with the notion that sustainable tourism requires both tangible and intangible assets, including community participation and institutional support (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Despite these achievements, challenges remain in digital marketing and financial management. While basic strategies were introduced, advanced skills in online promotion and bookkeeping are still limited. This gap suggests the need for continued mentoring and capacity-building programs to ensure long-term competitiveness. As Strauss and Corbin (2003) note, iterative learning and adaptation are critical for sustaining community-based initiatives.

The discussion also highlights the broader implications of PRA for rural economic resilience. By linking agricultural potential with tourism development, the program created a diversified economic model that reduces dependency on a single sector. This approach not only strengthens local identity but also aligns with sustainable development goals by promoting inclusive growth and community empowerment (Sugiyono, 2008). In conclusion, the application of PRA in Sumberdem Village illustrates how participatory methods can drive social and economic transformation. The program's success underscores the importance of collaboration between communities, local institutions, and external partners in achieving

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sustainable rural development. Future efforts should focus on addressing remaining gaps in digital marketing and financial literacy to maximize the long-term impact of these initiatives.

Conclusion

This community empowerment program in Sumberdem Village successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach in promoting local economic independence. The initiative began by addressing the village's abundant potential in coffee and lemon cultivation and transformed it into a foundation for thematic tourism development. Through participatory planning, training, and mentoring, the program strengthened community skills in product diversification and tourism management.

The main findings indicate that active involvement of residents significantly improved their capacity to process local products, manage tourism services, and adopt basic digital marketing strategies. Infrastructure development, such as merchandise kiosks and educational spaces, complemented these efforts by enhancing the attractiveness of Kampoeng Kopi and Kampoeng Lemon as tourism destinations. These achievements underline the importance of integrating skill development with physical improvements to create sustainable rural tourism models.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remain in advanced branding and digital marketing, which require continued assistance to ensure long-term competitiveness. Future programs should focus on strengthening these areas while maintaining the participatory approach that has proven effective in fostering community ownership and resilience. Overall, the application of PRA in Sumberdem Village provides a replicable model for rural development that combines local resource optimization with inclusive community engagement.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Government of Sumberdem Village, the Kampoeng Kopi and Kampoeng Lemon community groups, BUMDes, PKK groups, and Pokdarwis for their active participation and support throughout the implementation of this program. Appreciation is also extended to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikti Saintek), Universitas Negeri Malang, and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Malang Regency for providing funding, facilitation, and collaboration that contributed significantly to the success of this initiative. Finally, we thank all partners and individuals who assisted in planning, training, and mentoring activities, ensuring the sustainability of community-based tourism development in Sumberdem Village.

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