

Developing Community-Based Tourism Governance in a Peri-Urban Village: A Participatory Approach in Ciwaruga Village

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Abstract

This community service program aimed to strengthen community-based tourism (CBT) governance in Ciwaruga Village, a peri-urban area located at the interface between Bandung City and West Bandung Regency, where tourism potential exists but remains weakly institutionalized. Key challenges included the lack of structured tourism governance, limited community capacity, and fragmented stakeholder involvement. A participatory approach was applied through planning, implementation, and evaluation phases, using participatory mapping, field observations, focus group discussions, and documentation with local community groups, youth representatives, and women entrepreneurs. The intervention focused on capacity building through basic tourism awareness training, experiential learning activities, and facilitated co-creation of tourism products. The program resulted in increased community awareness, improved stakeholder collaboration, and the establishment of initial tourism governance practices. Three thematic tourism packages, namely craft and creativity, culinary heritage, and suburban nature-culture experiences, were collaboratively developed and pilot-tested, reflecting local identity and active community participation. This program demonstrates that a participatory action-based CBT governance approach can effectively activate tourism development in peri-urban villages by strengthening local capacity and fostering shared ownership. The findings offer practical insights and a replicable framework for similar peri-urban communities seeking to initiate inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Community-based Tourism, Tourism Potential, Participatory governance, Sustainable development, peri-urban Tourism.

A. INTRODUCTION

Developing tourism villages (desa wisata) in Indonesia presents a strategic opportunity to empower local communities, preserve cultural identities, and stimulate inclusive economic growth through sustainable tourism practices. These initiatives align with national development goals emphasizing decentralization, community welfare, and environmental stewardship, critical components for achieving equitable development (Ayu Sita Laksmi et al., 2023; Azwar et al., 2023; Hariyanto et al., 2025; Septyandi et al., 2025). A successful tourism village model integrates local wisdom, participatory governance, and collaborative planning, enabling destinations to establish

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distinctive identities in the regional tourism landscape. At the heart of these models is community-based tourism (CBT), which provides an operational framework and a normative foundation grounded in empowerment and equity. CBT emphasizes the active participation of residents in tourism planning and management, ensuring that their aspirations and values shape the development process. This involvement enhances their ownership and fosters environmental stewardship and cultural continuity (Achmad et al., 2023; Chusmeru et al., 2023; Nuriana et al., 2024; N. G. Prawira et al., 2020). In rural and peri-urban areas, integrating local wisdom into tourism initiatives not only contributes to cultural authenticity but also serves as a strategy for poverty reduction and the empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly women (Acharya, 2023; Kusumadewi et al., 2023; M. F. A. Prawira et al., 2025).

Empirical studies confirm that community involvement in tourism yields multi-dimensional economic, social, and environmental benefits, thereby contributing to broader socio-economic upliftment (Basri, 2023; Ginanjar, 2023). Moreover, when implemented effectively, sustainable tourism practices lead to improved infrastructure, enhanced accessibility, and increased local amenities. The engagement of communities in decision-making processes ensures a more equitable distribution of benefits and strengthens community resilience, fostering mutual understanding among stakeholders (Normelani et al., 2023; Suharti et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2024). Participatory governance and stakeholder collaboration have emerged as essential pillars for tourism villages' sustainability and long-term success. Research highlights that initiatives with early and consistent stakeholder involvement better reflect local values and contextual realities, promoting stronger community commitment and social cohesion (Afgani et al., 2021; Bozdaglar, 2023; Fatina et al., 2023; Nasution et al., 2023). This approach is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context, where multi-stakeholder participation has been promoted as a strategy to support tourism recovery and strengthen local economic systems (Rakitovac & Urošević, 2023; Sarim et al., 2023).

Ciwaruga, a peri-urban village located on the border of Bandung City and West Bandung Regency, exemplifies the challenges and opportunities in tourism village development. Rich in transitional natural landscapes, local creative industries, and traditional cultural expressions, Ciwaruga holds considerable untapped tourism potential. However, the village faces structural constraints, including the absence of systematic mapping of tourism assets, low institutional capacity in tourism governance, a lack of packaged tourism experiences, and minimal inter-stakeholder collaboration. These issues have limited its visibility and viability as a tourism destination.



Figure 1. Meeting, Observation, and FGD

Source: Primary Data, 2025

In response, a structured community service initiative was implemented to support the development of community-based sustainable tourism governance in Ciwaruga. Drawing from principles of participatory development and CBT (Hariyadi et al., 2024; Sucia & Belasunda, 2024), the program was designed in three main stages: (1) participatory mapping and identification of tourism potentials; (2) community capacity building through training, tourism module development, and co-creation workshops; and (3) evaluation of tourism readiness and the piloting of thematic tourism packages. The program sought to activate community assets, foster local collaboration, and initiate institutional pathways for sustainable tourism governance within the village's broader development agenda.

B. METHOD

This community service program adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to ensure that the intervention was contextually grounded, inclusive, and oriented toward sustainable outcomes in the development of Ciwaruga as a community-based tourism village. Participants were selected purposively to represent key local stakeholders involved in tourism-related activities, including community group members, youth representatives, women entrepreneurs, and village-level actors with direct engagement in local tourism initiatives. Data were collected through participatory mapping, field observations, focus group discussions, and documentation conducted across the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. The methodological design was organized into three interrelated phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each phase had specific objectives and activities designed to address Ciwaruga's main development challenges, namely limited identification of tourism potential, weak governance capacity, and low levels of community participation.

Planning Phase

The planning phase laid the groundwork by formulating objectives, identifying stakeholders, and designing intervention strategies. Key activities included stakeholder mapping, resource allocation, and problem tree analysis. Early engagement was initiated through meetings with local actors, including the village government, the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), youth representatives, and women-led community groups. These dialogues aimed to foster trust, align goals, and co-create a shared roadmap for tourism governance enhancement.

Implementation Phase

The strategies were operationalized in this phase through a series of capacity-building interventions and participatory fieldwork. First, a comprehensive mapping of Ciwaruga's physical and thematic tourism potential was conducted using field observations, community walks, and interviews. Identified assets included landscape features, traditional arts, culinary products, and creative industries. The program then delivered multi-tiered training sessions on tourism literacy, service quality, experience design, and digital promotion. Tourism experts and academic mentors facilitated these sessions. The phase culminated in the pilot testing of co-designed thematic tourism packages, allowing participants to simulate tourism operations and apply their skills in real-world scenarios.

Evaluation Phase

The final phase involved assessing the program's outcomes and exploring future scalability and institutionalization opportunities. Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach: participant observation, post-training evaluation forms, semi-structured interviews, and participatory reflection sessions. Evaluation criteria included community engagement levels, skill improvement, operational readiness of tourism products, and stakeholder perceptions of long-term sustainability. The findings informed the formulation of follow-up strategies and highlighted key lessons for replication in similar peri-urban contexts.

Table 1. Summary of Community Service Phases, Objectives, and Activities

Phase	Objectives	Key Activities	Stakeholders Involved
Planning	Define goals, strategies, and build trust	1) Stakeholder mapping; 2) Problem identification; 3) Resource allocation, and 4) Consensus-building meetings	Village government, Pokdarwis, community leaders

Implementation	Build capacity and pilot tourism products.	1) Mapping of tourism assets; 2) Basic tourism training; 3) Competency workshops; 4) Co-creation & pilot testing of tourism packages	Community members, facilitators, tourism trainers
Evaluation	Assess outcomes and future potential.	1) Post-training evaluations; 2) Reflection sessions; 3) Stakeholder interviews; 4) Strategic recommendations for sustainability and scaling-up	Entire stakeholder group

Source: Author's elaboration

Data were analyzed using descriptive and thematic approaches to identify patterns related to community participation, governance practices, and program outcomes. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of participant information. No sensitive personal data were collected, and all activities were conducted in accordance with ethical standards for non-clinical community-based research.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Stakeholder Engagement and Initial Response

The initial stage of the program centered on building trust and securing commitment from key stakeholders in Ciwaruga Village. These included the village government, the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and various community representatives such as youth leaders and women entrepreneurs. This early engagement was instrumental in laying the foundation for a participatory governance approach but also served as a diagnostic phase to surface latent aspirations, concerns, and expectations regarding tourism development. Through introductory meetings, informal interviews, and focused group discussions (FGDs), the academic team introduced the concept of community-based sustainable tourism governance, emphasizing the importance of local ownership, cultural preservation, and collaborative planning. These sessions acted as dialogic spaces that allowed stakeholders to express their hopes, limitations, and previous experiences—or lack thereof—in tourism development. Feedback revealed strong enthusiasm from Pokdarwis and local youth, who viewed tourism as a promising pathway for economic and cultural revitalization.

However, a critical insight emerged: despite the enthusiasm, most stakeholders had limited exposure to structured tourism planning and lacked familiarity with sustainable tourism concepts, particularly concerning long-term governance, marketing, and visitor management. The village government recognized the strategic importance of tourism for Ciwaruga's development. However, it acknowledged systemic limitations, including human resource constraints, absence of a formal tourism agenda in the village's RPJMDes (Mid-Term Village Development Plan), and lack of coordination across community groups. The team conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise to address these gaps, identifying actors by level of influence, interest, and potential contribution to

tourism initiatives. This mapping allowed the program to customize interventions, ensuring that training sessions, thematic workshops, and pilot activities aligned with the stakeholders' capacities and readiness levels. For instance, youth participants were targeted for digital tourism training, while women-led home industries were engaged in culinary heritage activities.

Crucially, the village government provided logistical support by facilitating access to village halls for training activities and coordinating community mobilization. This early institutional involvement strengthened program legitimacy and demonstrated a growing willingness to integrate tourism initiatives into broader village development planning. The stakeholder engagement phase extended beyond initial coordination, contributing to a noticeable shift in how tourism was perceived by local actors—from an externally driven activity to a more inclusive, community-oriented initiative. Prior to the program, stakeholder engagement in tourism-related activities was largely informal and fragmented, with limited coordination and shared planning mechanisms. Following the initial engagement phase, local actors demonstrated greater openness to collaborative dialogue and increased awareness of tourism governance as a collective responsibility.

Table 2. Summary of Stakeholder Engagement During Planning Phase

Stakeholder Group	Role in the Program	Engagement Activities	Initial Response
Village Government	Policy support, coordination, and community mobilization	Introductory meetings, logistical facilitation, endorsements	Supportive, committed to collaboration
Pokdarwis (Tourism Group)	Tourism planning, local cultural expertise	FGDs, planning workshops, and local mapping	Enthusiastic, eager to gain new skills
Community Representatives	Participation in training, pilot activities	Informal interviews, community meetings	Open, curious, responsive
Youth and Women's Groups	Innovation, creative content, digital promotion	Engagement in training, culinary, and craft development	Motivated, showed strong creative energy

Source: author's elaboration

Mapping of Tourism Potentials

A core component of the implementation phase was the comprehensive participatory mapping of Ciwaruga Village's tourism assets. This diagnostic and empowering activity enabled the community and facilitators to visualize the village's latent tourism potential across physical, cultural, and creative domains. The process aimed to identify not only "what exists" but also "what

could be", by surfacing narratives, practices, and places with tourism value that had previously gone unrecognized. To ensure contextual relevance and community ownership, the mapping was conducted using a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach, which included: 1) Field observations guided by local informants, 2) Community walks and transect mapping, 3) Informal interviews and storytelling sessions with elders, artisans, and culinary actors, 4) And basic GPS-based geospatial data collection to construct an illustrative tourism node map (see Figure 1). This approach engaged key local actors—Pokdarwis members, youth groups, and village officials—as co-researchers rather than passive informants, which helped to anchor the results in local knowledge systems and foster early ownership over the emerging tourism narrative.

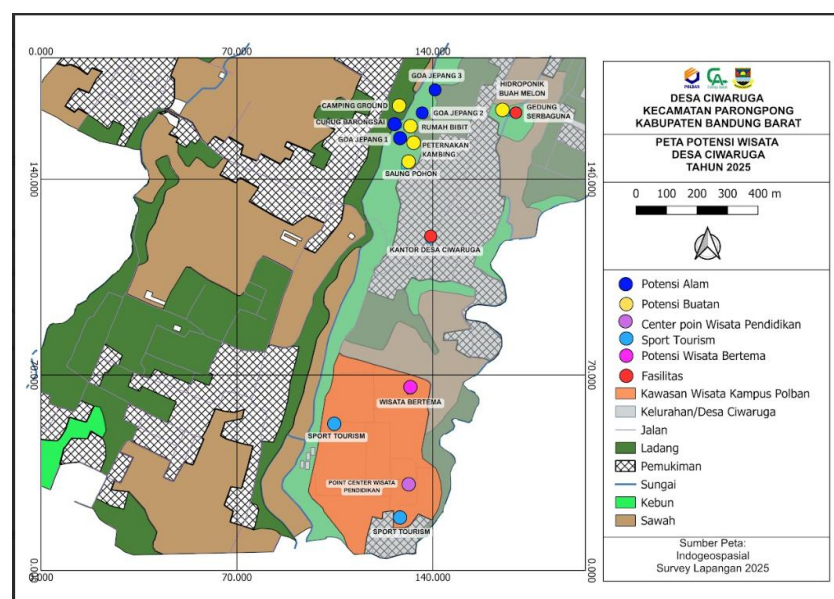


Figure 1. Map of Ciwaruga's Tourism Potential

Source: Primary Data 2025

The findings of the mapping revealed that Ciwaruga harbors substantial potential across four thematic tourism domains, each with distinct resources and varying levels of development readiness:

1. Suburban Landscape Tourism: Ciwaruga's unique position as a transitional space between rural and urban zones offers diverse settings—from paddy fields and forest edges to scenic valley views. These areas are well-suited for agro-tourism, eco-walks, and landscape photography. Community discussions highlighted visitor interest in experiencing nature without venturing too far from the city, positioning Ciwaruga as a "green escape" from urban Bandung.
2. Cultural and Performing Arts: Several local art groups maintain traditional Sundanese performances, including dance and music (e.g., kacapi suling, jaipongan). While practiced in informal settings, these cultural expressions were seen as promising assets for curated cultural

tourism experiences. However, their integration into tourism offerings will require investment in performance management, stage design, and audience facilitation.

3. **Creative Craftsmanship:** Home-based industries producing bamboo crafts, batik motifs, and upcycled art represent strong entry points for workshop-based experiential tourism. These practices embody both tradition and innovation, with the potential to engage visitors in co-creative processes while promoting local micro-enterprises. These sectors showed high community interest and technical readiness.
4. **Culinary Tourism:** Ciwaruga boasts a rich tradition of local snacks and herbal drinks, such as peuyeum, serabi, and wedang rempah. Culinary heritage was identified as a high-readiness area, supported by existing home industries run by women entrepreneurs. The mapping process surfaced several untold food stories that could be packaged as gastronomic experiences with storytelling elements.

In addition to identifying individual assets, the mapping also revealed the potential for designing thematic tourism circuits—linking natural sites, cultural venues, and culinary stops into half-day or full-day experiences. These circuits offer a spatial and narrative structure for future tourism packages, enhancing the coherence and marketability of Ciwaruga's tourism offering. The process also illuminated several structural challenges, including: 1) Lack of signage and interpretation materials, 2) Poor infrastructure in access routes, and 3) Limited promotional tools, especially in digital formats. These gaps highlight the need for targeted interventions in infrastructure development and marketing support during the next stages of program implementation.

Table 3. Summary of Identified Tourism Potentials in Ciwaruga Village

Tourism Theme	Examples of Local Potential	Development Readiness Level
Suburban Landscape	Agro-tourism spots, valley views, walking trails	Moderate
Cultural Arts	Traditional dance, Sundanese music performances	Low-Moderate
Creative Industries	Crafts and recycled art	Moderate-High
Culinary Traditions	Traditional snacks	High

Source: author's elaboration

Before the participatory mapping process, tourism assets in Ciwaruga were perceived as isolated and undervalued local resources. Through collective mapping and discussion, these assets were reframed as interconnected tourism opportunities, fostering a shared understanding of the village's tourism potential. The participatory nature of the mapping was a crucial enabler of community engagement. It shifted perceptions about tourism—transforming ordinary spaces and practices into potential economic and cultural assets. As supported by literature on CBT and community mapping (Basri, 2023; Ginanjar, 2023), such methods empower communities to reclaim

their narratives and recognize their capacity to design tourism on their own terms. This phase provided an inventory of assets and created the foundational awareness and motivation necessary for the next stage: capacity building and co-creation of tourism products. It also served as an internal validation mechanism, helping the community see "what they already have" before aspiring toward "what they could become"

Figure 2. Suburban Landscape (Land and River)

Source: Primary Data, 2025



Community Capacity Building

Following the participatory mapping phase, the program transitioned into a critical stage focused on strengthening the capacity of local actors to initiate, manage, and sustain tourism activities in Ciwaruga Village. In line with the principles of community-based tourism (CBT) and empowerment-oriented development, this phase recognized that successful tourism governance depends not only on resource availability but fundamentally on the community's knowledge, skills, and confidence to act as active agents of change. The capacity-building component was designed to be inclusive, iterative, and context-sensitive, targeting different levels of tourism literacy and practical readiness. Training was delivered over several weeks and structured into three interconnected tiers: 1) Basic Tourism Literacy, 2) Competency Enhancement, and 3) Experiential Learning through Pilot Simulations.

Tier 1: Basic Tourism Literacy

This foundational tier introduced participants to key tourism concepts such as hospitality, visitor services, guiding techniques, service quality standards, and local tourism ethics. This was the first formal exposure to tourism as a structured field for many. Participants developed a shared

vocabulary and foundational mindset required to view their village from a visitor's perspective using interactive methods such as role-plays, storytelling, group discussions, and local case studies. This stage emphasized tourism as not just an economic activity but a form of cultural communication and stewardship.

Tier 2: Competency Enhancement

Building on the basics, the second tier focused on practical skill-building that was aligned with the identified tourism potential. Topics included: 1) Experience design (curating local narratives into tour formats), 2) Storytelling techniques (personalized, place-based narration), 3) Itinerary development, and 4) Small-scale tourism business planning. Participants also received basic training in digital literacy, particularly using social media platforms for tourism branding, content creation, and online promotion—skills especially relevant for engaging younger audiences and attracting urban visitors. University facilitators and tourism professionals used a learning-by-doing model as mentors and trainers. The workshops encouraged participants to prototype tour activities, practice hosting guests, and simulate real-time service delivery.



Figure 3. Workshop and Training

Source: Primary data, 2025

Tier 3: Experiential Learning and Simulation

The third tier culminated in practical simulations where participants applied their skills through mock tours and role-playing exercises. This hands-on experience allowed real-time feedback and reinforced key soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork. The simulations also

functioned as a diagnostic tool, highlighting areas requiring further support (e.g., time management, group coordination, logistics handling). Eighteen (18) community members actively participated in this phase, including representatives from Pokdarwis, local youth groups, and women-led home industries. This diverse participant composition proved a major strength, as it allowed for intergenerational and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange. Women participants, for example, shared insights on culinary tourism and home-based business models, while youth brought creative energy and digital fluency into the training space.

Table 4. Community Training and Capacity Building Summary

Training Level	Key Topics Covered	Participant Groups	Feedback Summary
Basic Tourism Training	Introduction to tourism, hospitality, and guiding basics	Pokdarwis, youth, residents	Very positive; increased awareness
Competency Workshops	Experience design, storytelling, and itinerary planning	Active tourism actors, youth leaders	High engagement; requested follow-up
Digital Literacy	Social media for tourism promotion, branding	Youth, women entrepreneurs	Enthusiastic; eager to continue

Source: author's elaboration

Prior to the capacity-building activities, community participation in tourism was limited to informal roles with minimal confidence in hosting or managing visitors. After the training and simulations, participants demonstrated improved skills, greater confidence, and increased initiative in engaging with tourism-related activities. This phase significantly enhanced the village's tourism readiness, as participants gained technical competence and greater confidence in engaging with tourism activities, representing their community to external audiences. Discussions also emerged around forming a dedicated tourism working group, which could serve as a coordinating body post-program, an early signal of institutional sustainability. More importantly, the capacity-building phase functioned as a bridge between identification and implementation: it empowered local actors to move from recognizing tourism potential to actively shaping tourism products and experiences.

Thematic Tourism Package Development and Pilot

Building upon the previously completed asset mapping and community capacity-building stages, the program entered its most outward-facing and creative phase: developing and piloting thematic tourism packages. This stage aimed to transform Ciwaruga's newly documented tourism

resources into structured, immersive experiences tailored to visitor interests, while remaining grounded in the community's identity, culture, and environment. Crucially, the package development process was conducted through co-creation workshops, a participatory method where community members were not passive beneficiaries but active designers. Participants, particularly those who had undergone training—were grouped based on shared interests and areas of expertise, including craftsmanship, culinary heritage, landscape-based activities, and cultural performance traditions. Facilitated by tourism experts and academic mentors, each group engaged in design-thinking sessions to conceptualize tourism experiences that were integrated: 1) Local storytelling, 2) Interactive visitor engagement, 3) Sustainability considerations, and 4) Market relevance. This participatory design process aligned with the CBT framework by encouraging local creativity, cultural expression, and community ownership, ensuring that tourism products were authentic and viable.

Formulated Tourism Packages

From this collaborative process, three distinct tourism packages were created, each reflecting different facets of Ciwaruga's tourism potential:

1. **Craft and Creativity Tour:** A hands-on, workshop-style experience featuring bamboo weaving, upcycled crafts, and community storytelling about Ciwaruga's creative economy. The tour emphasized sustainability, circular economy practices, and local innovation.
2. **Culinary Heritage Experience:** A gastronomic journey through Ciwaruga's traditional foods such as peuyeum, serabi, and herbal infusions. Participants engaged in interactive cooking sessions, guided food tasting, and oral histories shared by women entrepreneurs and culinary artisans.
3. **Suburban Nature Walk & Cultural Performance:** A guided exploration of Ciwaruga's semi-rural landscapes, featuring natural sites, agro-tourism plots, and local folklore, ending with live traditional dance or music performances by local art groups.

Each package was designed for small group tourism (5–15 participants), with an ideal tour duration of 2–4 days, consistent with low-impact, community-based tourism principles.

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was conducted over two days and involved: 1) Mock visitors (university students, academics, and guests), 2) Community members acting as guides and facilitators, and 3) Real-time simulations of each package in full sequence. Facilitators used structured observation forms and

feedback sessions to assess operational readiness, visitor experience quality, and community performance. This experiential learning approach allowed local participants to apply skills learned during the training phase—from hospitality and narration to time management and logistical coordination.

While the simulations revealed significant enthusiasm and creativity, several challenges were noted, including: 1) Inconsistent time allocation across tour components, 2) Difficulties in narrative delivery, and 3) Need for clearer visitor flow and performance coordination. Nonetheless, these pilots served as a low-risk testing ground and revealed the potential for package refinement and scaling in future phases. The results of the pilot testing, including brief descriptions and characteristics of the developed packages, are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Developed Thematic Tourism Packages

Package Name	Main Components	Target Audience	Community Role	Observations from Pilot Testing
Craft and Creativity Tour	Bamboo weaving demo, craft-making, storytelling	Families, students	Local artisans, youth as guides	Engaging content needs better time control
Culinary Heritage Experience	Cooking traditional snacks, food history, and tasting sessions	Culinary tourists	Local women, home industry owners	Strong storytelling, potential for scaling
Suburban Nature & Culture	Nature walk, local history, traditional performances	Eco-tourists, schools	Local guides, cultural groups	Scenic route, performance logistics needed

Source: Autor's elaboration

Before the intervention, tourism activities in Ciwaruga lacked structured products and visitor-ready experiences. The development and pilot testing of thematic tourism packages marked a shift toward more organized, community-led tourism practices.

Strategic Reflections

This phase marked a translational moment in the program, where tourism potential transitioned into concrete tourism products. It demonstrated that community members could imagine and operationalize visitor-ready experiences rooted in their traditions and landscapes

with the right facilitation. Moreover, the pilot testing served multiple purposes: 1) As a validation tool for product-market fit, 2) As a confidence-building platform for local actors, and 3) As a foundation for future partnerships with tourism agencies, travel platforms, or educational institutions. In CBT literature, co-created and community-led tourism products are considered a hallmark of maturity in grassroots tourism initiatives (Bozdaglar, 2023; Nuriana et al., 2024). Ciwaruga's experience illustrates how participatory design—grounded in local identity—can produce authentic, sustainable, and economically promising tourism offerings.

Evaluation and Reflection

The program's final phase assessed outcomes and a strategic reflection point to explore the long-term sustainability of community-based tourism in Ciwaruga Village. This phase sought to evaluate the effectiveness of activities implemented during the planning, implementation, and piloting stages, while independently capturing community perceptions regarding the relevance, impact, and feasibility of continuing tourism development. To ensure a comprehensive and participatory evaluation process, the team employed mixed qualitative tools, including: 1) Post-activity feedback forms to assess individual learning and satisfaction, 2) Facilitator observations to evaluate behavior change and interaction patterns, and 3) community reflection sessions using structured dialogue formats that encouraged critical thinking and collaborative learning. These tools helped surface tangible and intangible outcomes, providing insights into skill acquisition, confidence building, social dynamics, and institutional readiness.

Key Outcomes

Overall, the program succeeded in achieving its core objectives: 1) Participants demonstrated a marked improvement in tourism literacy, particularly in hospitality, storytelling, and visitor management; 2) The successful development and pilot testing of three thematic tourism packages represented a concrete and replicable output of the program; and 3) Increased community collaboration and cross-sectoral interaction—especially between Pokdarwis, women-led groups, and youth—indicated progress toward inclusive local governance. The hands-on and participatory nature of the activities was frequently cited as a program strength, effectively bridging the gap between abstract tourism concepts and real-world application. Participants reported greater self-efficacy in presenting their village as a tourism destination, and several expressed readiness to take on leadership roles in future initiatives.

Emerging Opportunities

Reflection sessions with stakeholders identified multiple opportunities for program continuity, including: 1) Formalization of the tourism working group into a structured village-level institution, supported by regular coordination meetings and a clear leadership structure; 2) Integration of tourism development into the village's RPJMDes (Mid-Term Development Plan), ensuring that tourism is institutionalized within local policy frameworks; 3) Partnership opportunities with universities, tourism boards, NGOs, and the private sector to sustain technical support, mentoring, and capacity building. Digital platforms—particularly social media and tourism apps—are utilized to promote packages, build online presence, and attract visitors from urban areas. If supported by proper facilitation and advocacy, these opportunities could pave the way for Ciwaruga's transition from a pilot tourism village to a sustainable, community-led tourism governance model.

Challenges and Constraints

Despite the achievements, several structural and operational challenges were identified that could hinder scalability: 1) Infrastructure limitations, including the absence of signage, public rest areas, and basic visitor amenities, may restrict the visitor experience and limit repeat visitation; 2) Digital literacy gaps and lack of training in tourism business management and financial sustainability remain concerns for long-term viability. and 3) Absence of structured follow-up mechanisms creates the risk of burnout among key community actors, particularly if external support is withdrawn prematurely. These findings align with the broader literature on tourism development in peri-urban and rural contexts, which often emphasizes the need for ongoing mentorship, multi-level collaboration, and supportive policy environments (Ismail et al., 2024; A. P. Nasution et al., 2023).

Table 6. Summary of Evaluation and Reflection Findings

Evaluation Aspect	Key Findings
Program Achievements	Increased tourism awareness and knowledge, Successful development of 3 pilot packages, improved community collaboration
Opportunities	Formalization of tourism group, Integration into village planning, External partnership potential
Challenges	Lack of infrastructure support, limited digital skills, and a need for follow-up mechanisms.

Source: Author's elaboration

The reflection phase revealed a strong desire among community members to sustain tourism development and a growing sense of local ownership and pride. This shift in mindset—from seeing tourism as an external intervention to a community-led opportunity—is a critical indicator of long-term impact. It also reaffirmed the importance of creating an enabling environment where community-based tourism can thrive. Such an environment requires: 1) Supportive local policies, 2) Access to capacity-building resources, 3) Platforms for inter-stakeholder collaboration, and 4) Continued external mentorship, especially in the early stages of institutionalization. Ultimately, the evaluation process served as both a closure and a beginning—closing the formal cycle of the program, while initiating a locally rooted commitment to evolve Ciwaruga into a resilient, community-driven tourism village.

Discussion

The outcomes of this community service initiative demonstrate how a structured and participatory approach to tourism development can generate both tangible innovations and conceptual contributions to Community-Based Tourism (CBT), particularly in underdeveloped peri-urban contexts such as Ciwaruga Village. The observed shift from fragmented, informal practices toward more inclusive and community-led processes underscores the importance of early-stage participation and co-design, which are widely recognized as foundational elements of sustainable CBT (Achmad et al., 2023; Fatina et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2024). Furthermore, the engagement process reflects key principles of participatory governance, where legitimacy emerges through deliberation, transparency, and the alignment of shared goals among local stakeholders.

Transformative Potential of Participatory Mapping

A key contribution of the program lies in its pioneering effort to initiate tourism planning from the ground up. Before the intervention, Ciwaruga had not been formally recognized as a tourism destination, despite possessing rich environmental and cultural assets. The introduction of participatory asset mapping allowed the community to reassess the value of its everyday spaces and practices—such as bamboo weaving, culinary heritage, and natural landscapes—as potential tourism offerings. This activity represented more than a technical exercise; it triggered a cognitive shift within the community. Local stakeholders began to see tourism not as an external imposition, but as a platform for self-expression and cultural affirmation. This resonates with previous findings emphasizing the importance of asset-based community development (ABCD) and place-based identity in sustainable tourism planning (Achmad et al., 2023; Chusmeru et al., 2023).

Co-creation of Localized Tourism Products

The co-design and pilot testing of three thematic tourism packages marked another important innovation. Unlike top-down development models that impose externally designed products, this program empowered community members to curate experiences rooted in their strengths, interests, and cultural narratives. The packages—focused on craft-making, culinary traditions, and suburban nature walks—embodied both activities and values: authenticity, sustainability, and inclusivity. This approach aligns with experiential tourism models emphasizing immersive, small-scale, and community-led experiences. It also illustrates how CBT frameworks can be operationalized through concrete, replicable processes that combine training, facilitation, and iterative design.

Integrated Capacity-Building as a Scalable Model

Another significant output was implementing a tiered capacity-building framework, which consists of foundational tourism knowledge, practical skill development, and digital literacy. This multi-level approach effectively addressed the diverse competencies within the community, acknowledging the varying starting points of Pokdarwis members, women entrepreneurs, and youth leaders. This aligns with findings in tourism development literature, which emphasize that skills training, when embedded in participatory processes, accelerates personal transformation and community cohesion (Chusmeru et al., 2023; Ginanjar, 2023; Nuriana et al., 2024). Importantly, the training was not limited to passive knowledge transfer but was embedded within experiential learning, enabling participants to apply their skills in simulated tourism environments. Such an approach is increasingly recognized as a best practice in CBT, particularly in contexts lacking formal tourism exposure (Ginanjar, 2023; Nuriana et al., 2024). Moreover, integrating local storytelling, creative industries, and gastronomy into tourism design highlights the potential of interdisciplinary tourism development—bridging cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, and economic resilience.

Steps Toward Participatory Tourism Governance

From a governance perspective, the program successfully initiated early institutionalization of tourism within Ciwaruga's planning ecosystem. The proposal to formalize a tourism working group and integrate tourism into the RPJMDes (village development plan) reflects a shift toward structured, policy-aligned community governance—a domain often neglected in rural or peri-urban tourism interventions in Indonesia. Although still nascent, these developments attempt to bridge grassroots tourism efforts with formal planning mechanisms—an alignment crucial for sustainability. This is particularly important in transitional zones like Ciwaruga, which are often excluded from rural and urban tourism agendas due to their ambiguous policy positioning (Rakitovac & Urošević, 2023; Wu et al., 2023).

A Model for Peri-Urban Tourism Activation

Perhaps most notably, the Ciwaruga case offers a replicable model for initiating tourism development in peri-urban villages—spaces between rapid urban expansion and rural cultural landscapes. These areas are often overlooked in national tourism strategies, yet they possess unique features: proximity to urban markets, cultural hybridity, and ecological value. The Ciwaruga experience demonstrates how small-scale, community-driven tourism can activate these transitional spaces, offering economic opportunities and cultural resilience. It underscores the value of localized planning, community facilitation, and incremental implementation.

Program Limitations and Future Considerations

Despite its achievements, the program revealed several limitations that must be addressed in future replications: 1) The absence of post-program support mechanisms may limit community motivation and leadership continuity; 2) Infrastructure deficits (e.g., signage, rest areas) and resource constraints (e.g., funding for promotion) restrict scalability; 3) Gaps in digital marketing and financial management skills indicate the need for advanced training and sustained mentorship; 4) There is a potential risk of volunteer burnout without formal structures to sustain momentum and distribute workload. Addressing these gaps will require multi-stakeholder partnerships, ongoing mentorship, and stronger links to district-level tourism networks and market actors. In sum, the novelty of this program lies in its ability to activate a non-tourism village into a tourism-ready community. This was achieved through a grounded, participatory, and scalable model. It bridges the traditional divide between planning and practice, community empowerment and governance, and culture and commerce. As such, the Ciwaruga initiative contributes to local development and the broader discourse on inclusive, community-driven tourism in emerging peri-urban contexts—providing a roadmap for future interventions that seek to be contextual, collaborative, and sustainable.

D. CONCLUSION

This community service program demonstrates that a structured, participatory, and context-responsive approach can effectively initiate community-based tourism development in peri-urban villages such as Ciwaruga. By integrating participatory mapping, inclusive capacity building, and community-led tourism product development, the program addressed key barriers to tourism readiness, including limited asset identification, weak institutional capacity, and low levels of community involvement. The successful development and pilot testing of three thematic tourism packages indicate a shift toward more coordinated and community-led tourism practices.

Beyond local outcomes, this initiative offers practical implications for tourism development in similar peri-urban and rural contexts. The findings highlight the importance of grounding tourism initiatives in local cultural, creative, and culinary assets, while simultaneously strengthening community capacity and early governance structures. Although challenges remain in infrastructure, digital skills, and post-program coordination, the Ciwaruga experience illustrates a replicable and scalable model for activating community-based tourism, provided it is supported by institutional commitment, sustained facilitation, and alignment with village development planning.

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