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Development of Sustainable Tourism Villages through Thematic Community Service Programs in Wonosunyo Village, Pasuruan Regency

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ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program through Community Service (KKN) implements the community service pillar of the Three Pillars of Higher Education. This article presents the implementation of a Thematic KKN (KKN-T) of Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency, from October 2024 to January 2025. The village, on the slopes of Mount Penanggungan, has natural landscapes, historical sites such as Belahan Temple and the Gapura Lanang and Gapura Wadon Temples, and local traditions, yet visitors face limited directional information and inadequate supporting facilities. A participatory approach was applied in four stages: identification of potential and problems, participatory planning, implementation, and evaluation. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and were analyzed descriptively. Ten work programs were implemented in tourism infrastructure, community empowerment, education, and health. They produced a tourism location map, tourism directional signs, revitalized facilities at Belahan Temple with trash bins at three points, 10 RT/RW administrator nameplates, a village hall nameplate, and a reactivated library at SDN Wonosunyo 2 with 57 donated books and 3 posters, and they provided learning assistance, Qur'anic teaching, teaching assistance, and health checks for the elderly. The programs improved access to information about tourist sites and public facilities and were well received by residents and partner institutions. The results show that collaboration between academics, the community, and the village government can strengthen local capacity to manage village resources, while the sustainability of the outputs depends on continued maintenance by village institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Community service is one of the three pillars of Indonesian higher education (Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi), alongside education and research (Amalia, 2024). It is commonly implemented through the Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata, KKN), in which students apply and disseminate the knowledge and technology learned at university while working with communities to identify local potential and solve local problems. Under the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, thematic KKN (KKN-T) allows these activities to be organized around a specific development theme, such as tourism.

Tourism villages (desa wisata) are a widely promoted model for rural development in Indonesia. In a tourism village, visitors do not only enjoy natural scenery but also experience local ways of life, culture, arts, and cuisine, while the village is expected to benefit economically and to conserve its environment and traditions (Ariesta et al., 2023). This model is closely related to community-based tourism, which emphasizes local participation, local control, and a fair distribution of benefits (Okazaki, 2008). Tourism development is considered sustainable when it balances three dimensions: economic

viability, socio-cultural well-being of the host community, and environmental conservation (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). However, community participation in developing countries is often constrained by limited capacity, resources, and institutional support (Tosun, 2000), so external partners such as universities can play an enabling role.

Pasuruan Regency has diverse tourism potential, ranging from nature and cultural arts to religious tourism (Farasastin, 2020). One village with notable potential is Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District. Located at about 700 meters above sea level on the slopes of Mount Penanggungan, the village has a cool, forested environment, historical sites including Belahan Temple and the Gapura Lanang and Gapura Wadon Temples, and a calendar of traditional festivals (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). Most residents work in agriculture, growing corn, peanuts, rice, vegetables, fruits, and medicinal plants such as turmeric, ginger, galangal, and lemongrass; home industries produce cassava crackers (samiler) and herbal drinks. Medicinal plants of this kind have been developed elsewhere as village flagship products (Sarno, 2019).

Despite these assets, observations and interviews at the start of the program in October 2024 identified several problems. Visitors had difficulty locating the temple sites because tourism maps and directional signs were lacking; supporting facilities at Belahan Temple, such as toilets, the prayer room (musholla), signage, and trash bins, were inadequate; and residents raised additional needs related to children's learning support, a shortage of teachers at the local Qur'anic school (TPQ), an inactive school library, routine health monitoring for the elderly, and unclear identification of neighborhood administrators (RT/RW) and of the village hall.

Previous community service reports on tourism villages have mostly described single interventions, such as installing signs or information boards (Ariesta et al., 2023; Nurmita et al., 2023; Susilo et al., 2022). This article documents a KKN-T program that combined tourism infrastructure with community empowerment, education, and health programs within one village, viewed through the lens of community-based and sustainable tourism. The objectives of this article are (1) to describe the participatory process used to plan and implement the program, (2) to describe the results of the work programs, and (3) to discuss their implications and limitations for developing Wonosunyo as a sustainable tourism village.

METHOD

This community service program used a descriptive method with a participatory approach informed by community-based tourism (Okazaki, 2008) and an asset-based perspective, which starts from the resources a community already has rather than only from its deficits (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The program was carried out by KKN-T Group 10 (Tourism theme) of Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency, East Java, from October 2024 to January 2025. Partners included the Wonosunyo Village Government, the RT/RW administrators of Belahan Nongko and Belahan Jowo Hamlets, TPQ Al-'Abdillah, SDN Wonosunyo 2, and the Village Health Post (Puskesdes). The target groups of each program are listed in Table 1.

The local community was involved in every stage, from planning to evaluation, following four stages (Figure 1). (1) *Identification of potential and problems*: students observed the tourist sites and access routes and interviewed village officials and residents to map the village's potential and problems. (2) *Participatory planning*: work programs

were prioritized and agreed upon with the village government and the community. (3) *Implementation*: the ten work programs were carried out together with residents and partner institutions. (4) *Evaluation*: the results of each program were reviewed with the community through observation, interviews, and documentation.

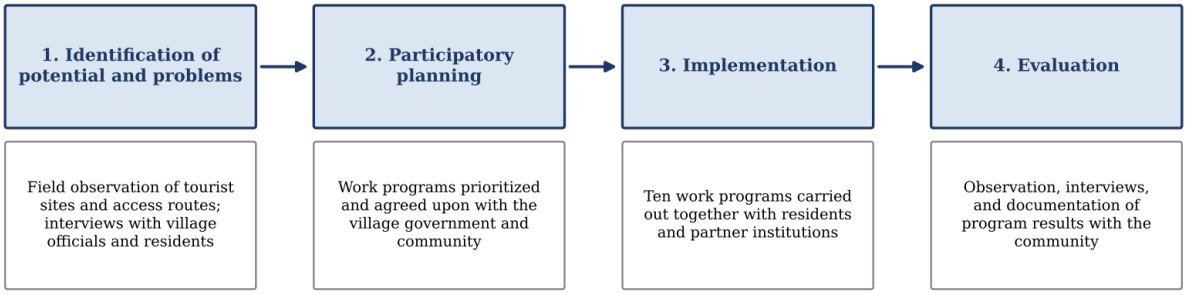


Figure 1. Stages of the participatory KKN-T program in Wonosunyo Village

Data were collected through field observation, interviews, and documentation during program implementation. The data were reduced, grouped by program, and analyzed descriptively, while the outputs of each program were recorded and summarized in Table 1.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The KKN-T Tourism Program was carried out in Wonosunyo Village from October 2024 to January 2025 as part of the community service pillar of higher education, focusing on tourism development, community empowerment, education, and health. Ten work programs were implemented. Programs addressing tourism infrastructure directly improve visitor access and comfort, while programs in education, health, and village information strengthen the well-being and capacity of the host community, which is the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Table 1 summarizes the ten work programs, and each is described below.

Table 1. Summary of the KKN-T work programs in Wonosunyo Village

No	Work program	Location / target group	Main activities	Outputs
1	Installation of tourism location maps	Pos Putih intersection, Belahan Nongko Hamlet; visitors	Map design; installation	Tourism location map installed
2	Installation of tourism directional signs	Route to the Gapura Temple site; visitors	Sign design; installation	Directional signs installed
3	Revitalization of facilities at Belahan Temple	Belahan Temple site; visitors	Deep cleaning; signs to toilets and prayer room; etiquette stickers; trash bins	Cleaned toilets and prayer room; signs; trash bins at 3 points
4	Learning assistance	Children, Belahan Nongko Hamlet	Learning assistance sessions (November 2024)	Assistance with schoolwork and exam preparation
5	Teaching at TPQ Al-'Abdillah	Santri and TPQ administrators, Belahan Jowo Hamlet	Tartila Qur'anic reading, memorization, daily prayers; brief management training	2-hour daily sessions; training for TPQ administrators
6	Installation of village administration boards	Residents of Belahan Nongko Hamlet	RT/RW administrator nameplates	10 nameplates
7	Teaching assistance	School students and teachers	Classroom assistance	Support for classroom learning
8	Health check services for the elderly	Elderly residents; with Puskesdes	Elderly exercise; checks of blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, uric acid; health education	Health checks for elderly participants

No	Work program	Location / target group	Main activities	Outputs
9	Reading corner	SDN Wonosunyo 2 students	Library repair; book donation; reading activities; competition	Library reactivated; 57 books; 3 posters
10	Installation of village hall nameplates	Residents and visitors	Village hall nameplate	Village hall nameplate installed

1. Installation of Tourism Location Maps

A map represents the layout of places and helps people find locations without having to ask others (Yulinar, 2018). Before the program, the lack of information and directional signs made it difficult for tourists to find Belahan Temple and the Gapura Lanang and Gapura Wadon Temples. The students designed an informative tourism location map covering tourist sites, public facilities, and access routes, and installed it at the Pos Putih intersection in Belahan Nongko Hamlet, a strategic junction passed by travelers coming from the Mojokerto and Gempol routes. The map made it easier for visitors to obtain information about tourist destinations and public facilities and increased awareness of the village's tourism potential among residents and visitors.

2. Installation of Tourism Directional Signs

Directional signs facilitate access to specific locations and support smooth, orderly, and safe travel (Susilo et al., 2022); in tourism settings, they also reduce visitor confusion and help promote attractions (Nurmita et al., 2023). The students installed tourism directional signs along the route to the Gapura Temple site so that visitors could find the location without confusion. The installation received positive support from the community, who regarded it as beneficial for tourism development in their area.

3. Revitalization of Facilities at Belahan Temple Tourist Site

Revitalization aims to restore the function and vitality of an area through physical and functional improvement (Firdausyah & Dewi, 2020), and well-maintained facilities are central to visitor comfort and satisfaction (Yulianto & Wijayanti, 2020). Belahan Temple is a historical, cultural, and spiritual tourist site, but its supporting facilities were limited. Three activities were carried out: (a) deep cleaning of the toilets and prayer room and collection and disposal of waste around the site; (b) installation of durable, easy-to-read directional signs to the toilets and prayer room, together with informational stickers on facility etiquette; and (c) placement of trash bins at three strategic points, namely near the entrance, the prayer room, and the toilets. These activities made the site cleaner and its basic facilities easier for visitors to find.

4. Learning Assistance Program

Learning assistance helps learners overcome learning difficulties (Astrini & Mujiburrahman, 2017) and can increase their interest in learning (Prasetya et al., 2019). Many children in Belahan Nongko Hamlet had difficulty understanding school lessons because of limited extra study time and academic support. In November 2024, the students held learning assistance sessions that helped the children with schoolwork and exam preparation in a structured and enjoyable format. The children took part enthusiastically, and the students observed better understanding of the lessons among many of them.

5. Teaching at TPQ (Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an)

TPQ education teaches children Qur'anic reading and Islamic values and plays a role in shaping their religious character (Anwar, 2021; Oktiviana et al., 2023). TPQ Al-'Abdillah in Belahan Jowo Hamlet had a limited number of teachers. The students taught

Qur'anic reading using the tartila method, memorization of short surahs, and daily prayers for two hours each day, grouping the santri by proficiency and using creative media and learning through play. Several santri memorized new prayers and improved their reading fluency. The students also gave the TPQ administrators brief training on scheduling, engaging teaching techniques, and monitoring santri progress so that the activities could continue after the program ended.

6. Installation of Village Administration Boards

Nameplates help residents locate addresses and identify people and places, making navigation and identification easier (Suparman, 2022). Residents of Belahan Nongko Hamlet previously had difficulty identifying their RT (neighborhood) and RW (community) administrators because there were no clear nameplates, which hindered communication between village leaders and residents. The students installed 10 nameplates identifying the local administrators, making it easier for residents to find and contact them and supporting transparency in village governance.

7. Teaching Assistance Program

Teaching assistance involves university students as assistants who support teachers in managing classes, guiding students, and maintaining discipline (Firdausi & Christanti, 2024; Winda & Rimasi, 2023), while giving the university students hands-on teaching experience (Sopiatuzza'rah et al., 2024). Through this program, the KKN-T students helped teachers carry out classroom learning and gained practical experience in classroom management, while the school students showed high enthusiasm during the learning process.

8. Health Check Services for the Elderly

Regular health checks enable early detection of conditions such as hypertension and diabetes and can improve the quality of life of the elderly (Marsanti et al., 2023; Sriwidyastuti et al., 2024). In collaboration with the Village Health Post (Puskesdes) and the local community, the students organized elderly exercise followed by checks of blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and uric acid, together with education on healthy living (Situmorang et al., 2023). The elderly participants took part actively in the whole series of activities, and each received the checks according to their needs.

9. Reading Corner

A reading corner is an attractively arranged book area intended to bring books closer to students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017) and to foster reading interest and literacy (Diza, 2023; Khasanah et al., 2023). The library of SDN Wonosunyo 2 was repaired and reactivated as the school's literacy center, 57 books and 3 posters were collected through donations, and reading activities were held, especially for students who struggled with reading. A closing competition attracted participation from all students and supported the development of a literacy culture at the school.

10. Installation of Village Hall Nameplates

Information boards and nameplates are communication media that help the public locate facilities and access information (Mudawaroch et al., 2022). Unlike Program 6, which identified the RT/RW administrators, this program marked the village hall itself, which residents and visitors previously found difficult to locate because of a lack of visual information. The nameplate made the village hall easier to find and strengthened the hamlet's identity as a center of social and administrative activities.

Discussion

The results of the tourism infrastructure programs (Programs 1–3) are consistent with earlier community service work showing that information boards and directional signs help visitors navigate and improve the visiting experience (Nurmita et al., 2023; Susilo et al., 2022), and that the condition of facilities strongly shapes visitor comfort (Yulianto & Wijayanti, 2020). From a community-based tourism perspective, the value of these interventions lies less in their scale than in the fact that they were low-cost, agreed upon with the community, and built on assets the village already has (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Okazaki, 2008). The education, health, and village information programs (Programs 4–10) complement them by strengthening the capacity and well-being of the host community, which tourism villages depend on.

Community participation in this program occurred mainly at the planning and implementation stages, while longer-term decisions about managing the tourism sites remained with the village. As Tosun (2000) notes, participation that stops at these levels is unlikely to be sustained unless a local institution takes ownership. The benefits of the map, signs, and trash bins therefore depend on regular maintenance by the village, and the training given to the TPQ administrators is one example of efforts to make the programs continue after the KKN-T period.

This program has several limitations. It used a descriptive design without a comparison group, its results were observed over a short period, and it did not measure economic effects such as changes in visitor numbers or income. Future programs should collect baseline and follow-up data on visitor numbers and satisfaction, strengthen a local tourism management institution, and link tourism with local products such as herbal drinks and samiler crackers.

CONCLUSION

The KKN-T program in Wonosunyo Village used a participatory approach to support the village's development as a tourism village. Its ten work programs produced a tourism location map, tourism directional signs, and revitalized facilities at Belahan Temple, together with programs in education, elderly health, and village information that strengthened the capacity of the community. These results show that small, community-agreed improvements to wayfinding and visitor facilities, built on existing village assets, are a practical first step toward community-based tourism, and that collaboration between students, the community, and the village government can strengthen local capacity to manage village resources.

The sustainability of these results depends on ownership by village institutions and continued maintenance. The village government is recommended to assign responsibility for maintaining the facilities, to record visitor numbers and feedback, and to develop tourism packages that link the heritage sites with local agricultural and herbal products. Future KKN-T programs in Wonosunyo can build on these outputs and measure their economic and social effects over a longer period.

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