



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PANTAI INDAH LAYUR

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ABSTRAK

Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini dilaksanakan di Pantai Indah Layur, Desa Gedongmulyo, Kecamatan Lasem, dengan menggunakan pendekatan participatory action research yang menekankan keterlibatan aktif masyarakat dan pengelola wisata. Program ini dilatarbelakangi oleh besarnya potensi wisata bahari yang belum diimbangi dengan kapasitas manajerial, pemanfaatan pemasaran digital, serta sistem administrasi yang memadai. Tujuan kegiatan adalah meningkatkan kapasitas pengelola wisata melalui penguatan pemasaran digital, pengemasan paket wisata, pengelolaan basis data pengunjung, peningkatan keterampilan sumber daya manusia, dan pengelolaan keuangan sederhana. Sasaran kegiatan adalah Kelompok Sadar Wisata (Pokdarwis) dan perangkat desa sebagai pengelola utama. Metode pelaksanaan meliputi sosialisasi program, pelatihan, pendampingan lapangan, keterlibatan mahasiswa melalui skema Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), serta monitoring dan evaluasi. Kegiatan ini diikuti oleh 40 peserta dan menunjukkan hasil evaluasi dengan rerata skor 4,24 dalam kategori sangat baik, terutama pada peningkatan kemampuan pemecahan masalah. Sebagai rencana tindak lanjut, mitra didorong untuk secara berkelanjutan menerapkan strategi pemasaran digital, memperbarui data pengunjung dan keuangan secara rutin, serta mengembangkan paket wisata melalui kolaborasi dengan pemangku kepentingan lokal dan perguruan tinggi. Program ini diharapkan mendukung pengelolaan wisata Pantai Indah Layur yang berkelanjutan dan berbasis komunitas.

ABSTRACT

The community service program at Pantai Indah Layur, Gedongmulyo Village, Lasem District, was implemented using a participatory action research approach that emphasized active involvement of local communities and tourism managers. The program was motivated by the significant coastal tourism potential that has not been supported by adequate managerial capacity, digital marketing utilization, and administrative systems. The objective of this program was to enhance the capacity of tourism managers through strengthening digital marketing skills, tourism package development, visitor database management, human resource competencies, and basic financial management. The program involved the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) and village officials as key stakeholders. Activities were carried out through program socialization, training, field mentoring, student involvement under the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) scheme, and monitoring and evaluation. A total of 40 participants took part in the program. Evaluation results showed an average score of 4.24 in the "very good" category, indicating significant improvements in participants' skills, particularly in problem-solving abilities. As a follow-up plan, partners are encouraged to consistently apply digital marketing strategies, regularly update visitor and financial databases, and further develop tourism packages through collaboration with local stakeholders and academic institutions. This program is expected to support the sustainable, community-based development of Pantai Indah Layur as a competitive coastal tourism destination.

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INTRODUCTION

Rembang Regency is a coastal region with considerable potential for marine tourism development, including Pantai Indah Layur, located in Gedongmulyo Village, Lasem District. This beach offers natural attractions such as white sand, coastal landscapes, surrounding hills, and unique local historical narratives, positioning it as a potential leading tourism destination in the region (Purnamasari & Priyono, 2024; Santoso et al., 2021). Despite these advantages, the utilization of this potential remains suboptimal. Tourism activities at Pantai Indah Layur are still managed in a relatively traditional manner and have not yet been supported by adequate managerial capacity or systematic development planning.

Based on situational analysis and preliminary observations, several core issues hinder the optimal development of Pantai Indah Layur. First, tourism-supporting infrastructure is still limited, both in terms of physical facilities and supporting management systems, which affects visitor comfort and service quality. Second, the absence of well-designed tourism packages results in low-value-added offerings, causing tourist activities to be short and less economically impactful. Third, digital marketing utilization remains minimal, with promotion largely relying on word-of-mouth communication and unstructured social media usage. Finally, administrative weaknesses are evident, particularly in the recording of visitor data, financial transactions, and operational documentation. These limitations collectively lead to weak destination branding, ineffective marketing reach, and limited economic contribution to the local community (Purnamasari & Priyono, 2024).

The gap between the substantial tourism potential and the limited managerial capacity highlights the urgency of a structured community service intervention. In the context of the digital economy, tourism destinations must adopt digital transformation strategies to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability (Hadi et al., 2025). Kristanti & Budiarsi (2023) emphasize that digital marketing and destination branding are critical to enhancing tourist attractiveness, whereas Hidayat et al. (2023) underscore the importance of e-tourism-based governance in fostering professional and sustainable tourism management. Furthermore, community-based tourism development theory asserts that active community involvement, strengthened human resource capacity, and access to technology are essential to achieving local economic empowerment and long-term sustainability (Falihin, 2025). Therefore, this community service program is urgently needed to address infrastructural, digital marketing, and administrative challenges through a participatory approach, enabling Pantai Indah Layur to develop as a sustainable, community-driven coastal tourism destination.

The objective of this community service programme is to enhance the human resource management capacity of Pantai Indah Layur, strengthen digital-based marketing strategies, and develop tourism packages that meet market needs. More broadly, this activity is expected to increase tourist visits, stimulate economic growth in the Gedongmulyo Village community, and support the achievement of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) programme and the Key Performance Indicators (IKU) for higher education institutions (Murti et al., 2022; Saputra & Hadi, 2022). With this approach, community

service is expected to not only provide short-term solutions but also establish a strong foundation for the sustainable development of community-based coastal tourism.

METHOD

This community service program was designed using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, emphasizing active involvement of the community and tourism managers at every stage of implementation (Goessling, 2025). The program adopted a village-based empowerment model focusing on digital marketing, tourism management, human resource development, administrative systems, and simple financial management. The primary partners of this program were the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) and the Gedongmulyo Village apparatus as the main managers of Pantai Indah Layur.

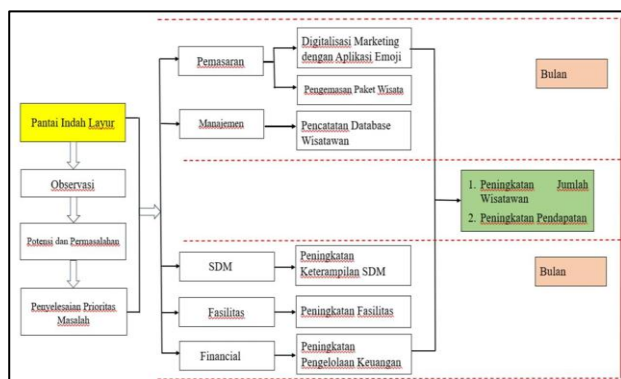


Figure 1. Stages of PKM Implementation

Community service activities at Pantai Indah Layur are designed using a participatory action research approach that emphasises the active involvement of the community and tourism managers at every stage of the activities. This type of community service takes the form of village-based empowerment focused on marketing, management, human resources, facilities, and financial management. The objects of this community service are the tourism awareness

group (Pokdarwis) and the Gedongmulyo Village apparatus as the managers of Indah Layur Beach.

The service mechanism begins with an observation stage to identify existing conditions, potential, and problems faced by partners. The results of the observation are used to prioritise issues, which then form the basis for formulating solutions. The next stage is the implementation of activities, which are divided into several aspects. In the field of marketing, training is provided on digital marketing using the Canva Emoji application, social media optimisation, and the packaging of tourism packages that are tailored to market needs (Pramono & Kambut, 2025; Sumiyana et al., 2022). In the field of management, training on tourist database recording was conducted to improve the quality of visitor administration.

In addition, human resources (HR) aspects are strengthened through training in tourism management skills, including the management of promotional content and tourist services (Rahayuningsih et al., 2024). In terms of facilities, the community service programme focuses on providing assistance in the utilisation and improvement of tourism support facilities. Meanwhile, the financial aspect focuses on improving financial management capabilities, particularly in recording revenue from tourist visits to ensure greater transparency and accountability. The stages of community service activities include:

- 1) Socialising the programme to partners to align goals and commitments;
- 2) Training covering digital marketing, tourism package packaging, database recording, human resource skills, and financial management;

- 3) Assistance, technical guidance to partners in applying the training results in the field;
- 4) Mentoring students through the MBKM scheme to participate in digital content design, data recording, and simple financial management; and
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation, both internal and external, to ensure the achievement of output targets.

To measure the effectiveness of activities, a pre-test and post-test design was applied. The pre-test was administered prior to training to assess participants' initial knowledge and skills, while the post-test was conducted after training to evaluate learning outcomes. The measurement instrument consisted of structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale covering understanding of concepts, application skills, readiness to use digital tools, and problem-solving ability.

- An increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test results;
- Average post-test scores reaching the "good" or "very good" category;
- Participants' ability to independently design promotional content, tourism packages, and basic administrative records.
- Implementation of digital promotional content on social media platforms;
- Availability of simple visitor databases and financial records;
- Increased confidence and autonomy of partners in managing tourism activities.
- improvement in participants' problem-solving skills;

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This article briefly describes the results of community service at Pantai Indah Layur. This service was carried out on Wednesday, 11 June 2025, and was attended by 40 participants, consisting of managers and local residents. The demographic characteristics of the participants are described in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	25	63
	Female	15	38
Age (Years old)	20-30	20	50
	31-40	15	38
	41-50	5	13
Education	Primary School	7	18
	Junior High School	15	38
	Senior High School	18	45
N=40			

Based on the table of characteristics of the 40 respondents, it is known that the majority of respondents were male, namely 25 people (63%), while there were 15 female respondents (38%). In terms of age, most respondents were in the 20–30 age group, numbering 20 people (50%), followed by the 31–40 age group, numbering 15 people (38%), and the rest were aged 41–50, numbering 5 people (13%). In terms of education level, respondents with senior high school/vocational school education accounted for 18 (45%), followed by junior high school education (15, 38%), while those with elementary school education numbered 7 (18%). These findings show that the respondents were dominated by young men with a secondary education background.

Initial Conditions (Before Intervention)

Prior to the implementation of the community service program, the management of Pantai Indah Layur was characterized by limited utilization of digital tools and weak administrative systems. Promotional activities relied primarily on informal word-of-mouth communication and sporadic social media posts without consistent visual identity or messaging. Digital content, when available, consisted mainly of personal photographs uploaded without captions, hashtags, or destination branding, resulting in low engagement and limited outreach.

From an administrative perspective, there was no structured database to record visitor numbers, tourist profiles, or visit frequency. Financial records were also maintained informally, without standardized procedures for recording income from entrance fees, parking, or tourism-related services. These conditions made it difficult for managers to evaluate performance, plan development strategies, or ensure transparency and accountability in tourism management.

Activity 1 (Socialisation of the programme to partners to align objectives and commitments)

The initial stage involved communicating the objectives, benefits, and design of the community service activities to the partners, namely Pokdarwis and the Gedongmulyo Village apparatus. This socialisation aimed to align visions, build commitment, and identify local needs and potential so that the activities carried out would be in line with the field context.

Activity 2 (Training covering digital marketing, tourism package packaging, database recording,

human resource skills, and financial management)

Training in this community service activity was provided with a focus on several key aspects relevant to the management needs of Pantai Indah Layur. First, digital marketing training was aimed at improving partners' skills in utilising social media, websites, and digital platforms as effective promotional tools to reach a wider range of tourists. Second, tourism package design was provided so that the destination could add value through the creation of attractive, integrated tourism packages in line with local potential. Third, training in tourism database recording covers the management of visitor numbers, tourist profiles, and transaction data that can be used as a basis for strategic planning. Fourth, human resource skills improvement is aimed at strengthening service, communication, and conflict management capabilities so that the quality of service to tourists is improved. Finally, financial management training focuses on simple financial recording, cost calculation, and cash management so that tourism businesses can be managed in a more transparent, accountable, and sustainable manner (Astuti et al., 2024).



Figure 2. Training in digital marketing, tourism package design, database recording, human resource skills, and financial management

Figure 2 illustrates the digital marketing training process, where participants practiced designing promotional materials and directly applied them to tourism promotion needs. The image shows hands-on learning activities, emphasizing participatory engagement and skill acquisition rather than passive instruction.

Activity 3 (Assistance, namely technical guidance to partners in applying the training outcomes in the field)

After the training, the community service team provided technical assistance to partners so that they could apply what they had learned in the field. These activities included hands-on practice, feedback, and troubleshooting any problems that arose during the implementation of tourism management strategies.



Figure 3. Technical guidance

Figure 3 documents the technical assistance stage, showing facilitators guiding partners in applying database recording and tourism package planning in real operational contexts. The image reflects the transition from theoretical understanding to practical implementation.

Activity 4 (Guiding students through the MBKM scheme to participate in digital content design, data recording, and simple financial management)

The students involved are directed to actively support partners, including by designing digital content for promotion, assisting with visitor database recording, and assisting with simple financial recording. This not only supports the needs of partners, but also serves as a practical learning tool for students.



Figure 4. Training and Guidance for Partners

Before the program, financial management at Pantai Indah Layur was conducted informally without standardized documentation. Through training and mentoring, partners were introduced to simple financial recording procedures, including income logs, expense tracking, and basic cash flow summaries. Although still at an introductory level, these practices represent an important step toward transparent and accountable tourism management.

Participants demonstrated the ability to independently record daily income and categorize expenditures, forming the basis for a simple financial standard operating procedure (SOP). This improvement aligns with the goal of strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring the sustainability of community-based tourism management.

(5) monitoring and evaluation, both internal and external, to ensure the achievement of output targets.

The final stage is carried out through internal evaluation (by the implementation team) and external evaluation (involving partners and relevant stakeholders) to assess the effectiveness of activities, obstacles encountered, and outcomes achieved. This monitoring is important to ensure that activities run according to plan and to provide recommendations for improvements for the sustainability of the programme.

Table 2. Evaluation Results

Aspek	Average Score
Benefits of Training	4,30
Understanding the features of the Canva application	4,17
Understanding the digital marketing process	4,03
Understanding the operation of digital marketing applications	4,30
Readiness to use the application	4,27
Readiness of application usage skills	4,20
Readiness to complete tasks	4,07
Problem-solving skills	4,57
Total Average Score	4,24
Category	Very good

Based on the assessment results of the training, an overall average of 4.24 was obtained, which falls into the excellent category. This shows that participants felt that the training provided real benefits and was able to improve their skills, particularly in the aspect of digital marketing. The aspect with the highest score was problem-solving skills (4.57), which indicates that participants were able to solve problems independently after

attending the training. Meanwhile, the benefits of the training and understanding of how to operate digital marketing applications received the same high score (4.30), illustrating that the material provided was relevant and applicable. Participants' readiness to use the application (4.27) and their skills in using it (4.20) were also in the excellent category, indicating confidence in practice. Understanding of Canva features (4.17) and readiness to complete tasks (4.07) received lower scores than other aspects, although they were still in the excellent category, so this could be noted for further study of the material in the future. In general, these results prove that the training was effective and able to have a positive impact on increasing the capacity of participants.

CONCLUSION

The community service program at Pantai Indah Layur, implemented through a participatory action research approach, has successfully strengthened the managerial capacity of local tourism managers in the areas of digital marketing, tourism package development, administrative systems, human resource skills, and basic financial management. The program outcomes demonstrate clear improvements in both skills and operational practices, supported by tangible outputs such as structured digital promotional content, simple visitor databases, tourism package formulations, and standardized financial recording practices. The overall evaluation results indicate the intervention's effectiveness in enhancing participants' competencies, particularly problem-solving abilities.

From a sustainability perspective, this program has laid an important foundation for long-term development rather than providing short-term

solutions. The emphasis on capacity building and hands-on mentoring has enabled partners to independently continue digital promotion activities, manage administrative records, and apply basic financial procedures after the program's completion. The introduction of simple yet functional management tools ensures that daily tourism operations can be consistently monitored and evaluated, supporting data-driven decision-making in the future.

Program sustainability is further strengthened through institutional and human resource aspects. The involvement of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) and village officials ensures local ownership of the program outcomes, while the integration of student participation through the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) scheme creates a sustainable knowledge transfer mechanism. This collaboration not only enhances the continuity of digital content production and administrative support but also opens opportunities for ongoing mentoring and innovation driven by academic-community partnerships.

In the long term, the sustainability of Pantai Indah Layur's tourism development depends on the consistent application of digital marketing strategies, regular updating of visitor and financial databases, and continuous improvement of tourism packages in response to market dynamics. Therefore, it is recommended that future programs focus on deepening digital analytics utilization, formalizing financial standard operating procedures (SOPs), and strengthening networking with regional tourism stakeholders. By doing so, Pantai Indah Layur can evolve into a resilient, community-based coastal tourism destination that

contributes sustainably to local economic development.

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