

Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Melalui Optimalisasi Pariwisata Pendidikan

**Studi Kasus Program Pengabdian Awardee Kelurahan LPDP UGM di Desa Kalipucung,
Kabupaten Semarang**

Community Empowerment through Optimization of Educational Tourism

Case Study of LPDP UGM Awardee Program in Kalipucung Hamlet, Semarang Regency

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji implementasi dan dampak program pemberdayaan masyarakat "Awardee Merakyat" yang dilaksanakan oleh Kelurahan LPDP UGM di Dusun Kalipucung, Kabupaten Semarang, pada tanggal 1-3 November 2024. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan metode *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (PRA), studi ini menekankan partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengembangan pariwisata pendidikan sebagai strategi pemberdayaan desa yang berkelanjutan. Program ini berfokus pada penguatan kapasitas lokal melalui penyuluhan pendidikan (sosialisasi beasiswa), pelatihan kewirausahaan (pembentukan merek dan pemasaran digital untuk produk lokal), pengembangan organisasi pemuda (Karang Taruna), promosi kesehatan, dan penyediaan infrastruktur pendukung pariwisata. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam motivasi, keterampilan, dan kepemilikan masyarakat atas sumber daya lokal, yang menjadi landasan transformasi Kalipucung menjadi desa pariwisata pendidikan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa model pemberdayaan partisipatif dan berbasis konteks dapat menjadi kerangka kerja efektif untuk pengembangan pedesaan yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan, dengan potensi replikasi di lokasi lain dengan penyesuaian konteks.

Kata Kunci: Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Pengembangan Pemuda, Pariwisata Pendidikan, Pengembangan Partisipatif, Kewirausahaan Pedesaan

ABSTRACT

This article explores the implementation and impact of the "Awardee Merakyat" community empowerment program conducted by Kelurahan LPDP UGM in Dusun Kalipucung, Semarang Regency, from November 1-3, 2024. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method, the study

emphasizes community participation in the development of educational tourism as a sustainable village empowerment strategy. The program focused on strengthening local capacity through educational outreach (scholarship socialization), entrepreneurial training (branding and digital marketing for local products), youth organizational development (Karang Taruna), health promotion, and provision of tourism-supporting infrastructure. The findings reveal significant improvements in community motivation, skills, and ownership over local resources, laying the groundwork for Kalipucung's transformation into an educational tourism village. The study concludes that participatory and context-based empowerment models can serve as effective frameworks for inclusive and sustainable rural development, highlighting the potential for replication in other localities with contextual adjustments.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Youth Development, Educational Tourism, Participatory Development, Rural Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Community empowerment is a strategic approach in sustainable development that places the community as the main subject in the process of social, economic and cultural transformation. This concept emphasizes on increasing individual and collective capacity to identify local potential, formulate needs, and make decisions independently in managing their resources. Basically, community empowerment aims to empower communities to take control of their own lives and develop into an independent and empowered entity ([Stoeffler, 2018](#)). The subject of community empowerment is the community itself which is intended to get a stimulus in order to increase their assets and capacity in managing resources, partners and networks so that later they can control the resources they have independently ([Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024](#)). In a community empowerment, the aspect of sustainability is something that must be an important concern, how later the community can develop independently until sustainably empowered is the ultimate goal of a long process within the scope of empowering and empowering ([Indra Priambada et al., 2021](#); [Suryono & Faraz, 2020](#)).

One sector that has great potential in supporting rural community empowerment is education-based tourism. Educational tourism, also known as *edutourism*, is a form of packaging an attraction that combines learning with tourism ([McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017](#); [Rifkin, 2003](#)). This activity involves visiting various locations to gain knowledge about local culture, history, environment, and people ([Falk et al., 2012](#)).

In the development of education-based tourism, the three main keys that drive it include *learning and personal growth*, *interdisciplinary nature*, and *sustainability*. *Learning and personal growth* in educational tourism refers to a learning experience that is not only cognitive, but also emotional and personal. Through direct involvement in tourism

activities that contain educational value, tourists have the opportunity to broaden their horizons, increase empathy, and deepen their understanding of local values such as mutual cooperation, local wisdom, and the dynamics of community life. Educational tourism is *interdisciplinary* because it combines various disciplines in one series of experiences. In one package of activities, tourists can learn aspects of history, cultural anthropology, ecology, agriculture, entrepreneurship, and social education. This cross-disciplinary approach will encourage a richer and deeper integration of knowledge. *Sustainability* is an essential component in educational tourism because it ensures the continuity of benefits for local communities and tourists in the long term, covering social, economic and environmental dimensions.

In educational tourism, visiting tourists are offered to engage in hands-on learning activities that can increase their understanding of various things such as mutual cooperation, culture, and the diversity of livelihoods that exist in the local community ([Lawson & Kearns, 2014](#)). With this concept, it will create a holistic understanding for tourists about the tourist destinations they visit ([Bailey & Pill, 2015](#); [Lawson & Kearns, 2014](#)). Educational tourism is not only a means of recreation and learning, but also able to drive the local economy, strengthen cultural identity, and increase community participation in village development ([Suryono & Faraz, 2020](#)). In this context, village tourism is not only an economic space, but also a space for learning and social transformation.

Kalipucung Hamlet, administratively located in Genting Village, Jambu District, Semarang Regency. has an altitude of between 800-1100 meters above sea level so that it has a cool daily climate and is suitable for plantation crops, despite the physical condition of the hilly area but this hamlet is quite safe from the threat of disaster, referring to research from ([Salafudin et al., 2025](#)) this area is quite safe from disasters so it is very good for development. Kalipucung Hamlet is an area with a wealth of natural resources in the form of coffee plantations, several types of fruits and vegetables typical of tropical countries, hilly panoramas, and a beautiful village atmosphere. This potential makes Kalipucung a strong candidate to be developed as an education-based tourism village, especially since the local community has started to initiate thematic tourism activities, but has not been supported by strong institutional capacity and promotional strategies.

Seeing these potentials and challenges, LPDP UGM through the Division of Service and Cooperation held a service program entitled "Awardee Merakyat" on 1-3 November 2024. This program is a collaborative initiative between UGM LPDP scholarship recipient students

and local communities that aims to support the optimization of Kalipucung educational tourism through a community empowerment approach. This program includes training to strengthen MSMEs through strengthening local product branding, scholarship education for students, strengthening the capacity of youth organizations (Karang Taruna), as well as health counseling, and providing supporting infrastructure for the Tourism Village.

The approach used in this program is *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (PRA), which is a participatory method that enables communities to analyze their own conditions, identify local potentials, and actively develop joint solutions. Thus, "Awardee Merakyat" is not just a ceremonial program, but a systematic effort to integrate academic approaches with the real needs of village communities in order to strengthen local potential-based development.

This study aims to document and analyze the implementation of the "Awardee Merakyat" program as a model of community empowerment practice in the context of educational tourism development. Through a case study in Kalipucung Hamlet, this article seeks to contribute to the literature on community-based empowerment strategies and informal education in the rural tourism sector.

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (PRA) method, in PRA the main focus is to emphasize the active role of the community as the subject of development. Through this approach, the empowerment process is designed in such a way as to involve local communities directly in the data collection process, as well as the decision-making process ([Abedi & Khodamoradi, 2011](#)). This method is suitable for use in the context of community service because it allows for customization to local needs and creates a sense of ownership of the changes produced.

In the process of program design, a preliminary study is conducted through both secondary data and primary field data. Social mapping plays an important role in community empowerment by facilitating the active participation of local communities in the decision-making process regarding the program to be implemented ([Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024](#)). The social mapping process using secondary data was conducted through information searches through relevant links such as the Semarang Regency Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), Semarang Regency Social Affairs Office, Semarang Regency Community Empowerment Office, and Tourism Office. All information obtained was then summarized in a program plan. As a strengthening and analysis step to ensure that the program is in line with the needs of the community, social mapping was conducted

through direct field surveys. The data collected also served as an evaluation of existing secondary data. After data collection and social mapping were completed, the designed program was then analyzed using the *Action Priority Matrix (APM)* to obtain the best program design results. By analyzing using *APM*, a program can be formulated that is the midpoint between the needs of the community and the capabilities of empowerment actors ([Abubakar et al., 2014](#)).



Figure 1. Action Prioritization Matrix
Source: www.productplan.com

Based on the priority matrix analysis, the program design focused on improving human resources and promotional strategies as an effort to increase the capacity of Kalipucung Educational Tourism. In this research process, the research team amounted to 30 (thirty) people consisting of the Management of the Community Service and Cooperation Division as well as representatives from the BPH (Daily Management Board) and other divisions of the LPDP UGM Village Year 2024. The community service activity entitled "Awardee Merakyat" took place for three days, November 1-3, 2024 at various locations in the Kalipucung Hamlet Tourism Village, Genting Village, Jambu District, Semarang Regency.

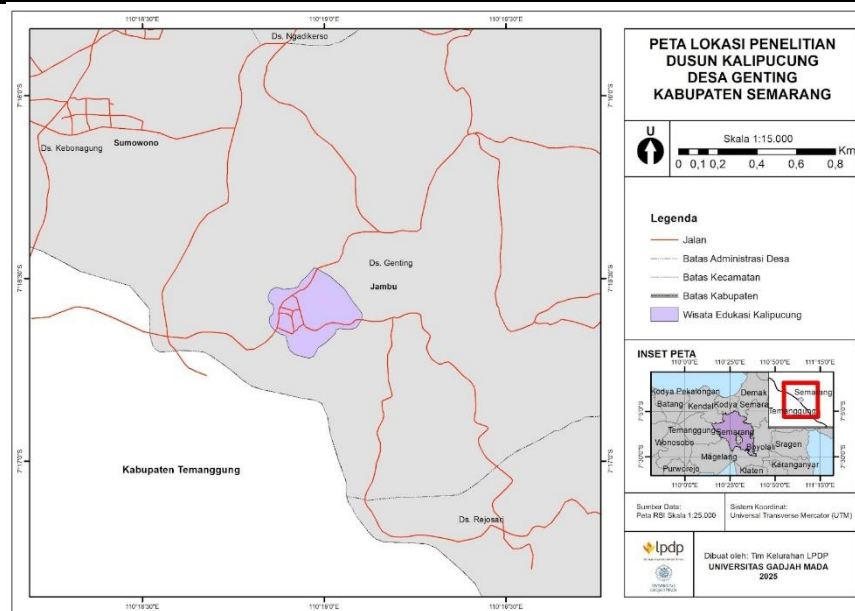


Figure 2. Empowerment location map

Source: Researcher analysis, 2025

The series of activities consisted of 2 (two) main series, namely Training and Socialization (Scholarship Socialization, Local Product Empowerment, Strengthening the Capacity of Youth Organizations, and Health Checks) which were carried out directly during the research and the provision of supporting facilities and infrastructure for Tourism Villages in the form of tangible goods (such as cleaning tools, announcement boards, bookshelves, wall clocks and prayer times) and intangible goods (such as tourism village profile videos and tourism village websites).

A. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The "Awardee Merakyat" program implemented in Kalipucung Hamlet showed a number of significant achievements in community empowerment, both in the aspects of education, entrepreneurship, health, and youth activities. The results of this activity are analyzed based on the achievement of objectives as well as community response and participation during the process.

1. Increased Interest in Continuing Education

The Scholarship Awareness Campaign held as part of the Education Fair successfully sparked enthusiasm not only among high school and vocational school students in the Kalipucung area but also among their parents. The students acknowledged that they previously lacked information about scholarship opportunities for higher education, particularly the LPDP, KIP-College, and other scholarships. Not only the students, but

the parents who participated in the event also benefited from the new information, which provided insights into the future educational prospects facing their children. Observations indicate that after the presentation and discussion sessions, most participants expressed interest in starting to prepare early, particularly in improving scholarship literacy and academic skills. This finding aligns with UNESCO studies emphasizing the importance of access to educational information as a driver of social mobility in rural communities. In efforts to empower villages, education is a vital and non-negotiable factor.. In line with this ([Lestari & Tito Persada, 2024](#)) state that education is the anchor and bridge for social improvement. In this context, community empowerment can proceed effectively if the community environment possesses adequate educational skills, thereby becoming a catalyst for the village's own development. Another fact is that in Kalipucung Hamlet, which has a population of around 500 people, only about 15 people have a bachelor's degree, which is only about 3% and is considered very small. This shows that the aspect of education must be a concern in the development of this hamlet. In-depth interviews with residents revealed that the need for educational information remains a crucial aspect that must be addressed. As more residents pursue higher education, more people will be able to contribute to improving Dusun Kalipucung. One informant stated:

"Generally, there are still many of us as residents of this hamlet who have not pursued higher education, there is a kind of big wall that becomes a barrier because of the information we have not received directly. With this socialization, it is certainly very useful for us, especially parents who have school-age children so that we are also not blind about what the future direction of travel should be, because if there are many people in our hamlet who are pursuing higher education, it is also a fortune for us as villagers. Of course, people who pursue higher education will later become pioneers in the management of our village so that it can excel like other villages that are empowered and developed".



Figure 3. Socialization of education
Source: Researcher documentation, 2025

2. Entrepreneurship Capacity Building

The training on branding and digital marketing for MSME players in Kalipucung Hamlet, particularly among local coffee and salak farmers, emerged as one of the most applicable and impactful activities within the program. Prior to this intervention, most local products were sold in their raw form or packaged using simple materials that lacked visual appeal and market differentiation. During the training, residents were guided to critically identify the unique strengths of their products—such as the distinctive flavor profile of Kalipucung’s coffee and the organic cultivation process of its salak—while also analyzing existing market gaps and opportunities.

Beyond product evaluation, participants were introduced to practical strategies for digital branding, including the use of social media platforms, basic graphic design tools for packaging, and the development of engaging narratives to highlight local identity. This process not only expanded their technical knowledge but also instilled a sense of pride and confidence in presenting their products as competitive commodities. Several participants expressed enthusiasm for creating prototype packaging and initiating online promotion, which had not been considered feasible before.

This training thus represented more than a technical exercise; it marked a significant cultural shift in how the community perceives the value of its local resources. As Korten (1990) emphasizes, genuine community empowerment requires not only skills and resources but also the strengthening of social capital and self-belief. In line with this perspective, the activity served as a catalyst for transforming local

entrepreneurship toward a more innovative, market-oriented, and sustainable direction.



Figure 3: Socialization of Entrepreneurship
Source: Researcher documentation, 2025

3. Capacity Building of Youth Organization (Youth Organization)

Institutionally, Kalipucung Hamlet already had a youth organization in the form of a legally recognized *Karang Taruna*. However, its existence had not yet been maximized, particularly in terms of program implementation and community engagement. Most activities prior to the intervention were sporadic and ceremonial, often limited to annual celebrations or routine social gatherings. Recognizing this gap, the youth organization management training under the *Awardee Merakyat* program was deliberately designed to provide more substantive capacity-building for the young generation.

The training sessions emphasized three main aspects: strengthening the organizational structure, introducing systematic program planning, and fostering basic leadership skills. Through interactive discussions and simulations, participants explored how to design programs that respond to real community needs, while also learning about simple but effective financing mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Moderated by LPDP UGM Awardees of the 2024 cohort, the sessions encouraged critical reflection among the youth leaders about their roles, not only as organizers of events but also as active agents in village development.

The outcomes of these sessions went beyond technical knowledge. They fostered a renewed sense of purpose among the youth, who began to see their organization as

an important stakeholder in the future of Kalipucung's *Desa Wisata*. Several participants expressed enthusiasm to initiate new projects such as creative content workshops, eco-tourism initiatives, and youth-led entrepreneurship programs. Their active involvement during the discussions and follow-up actions indicates that the participatory approach employed was successful in generating a sense of ownership. More importantly, it helped trigger the strategic role of the younger generation as key drivers of innovation and sustainability in village development.



Figure 4. Socialization of Capacity Building for Youth Organizations
Source: Researcher documentation, 2025

4. Health Promotion through Education and Screening

The implementation of healthy gymnastics and free health check services—covering blood pressure, blood sugar, and uric acid—was enthusiastically attended by more than 50 residents, ranging from elderly community members to younger families. The high level of participation demonstrated that when health promotion is packaged in an interactive and accessible format, it is able to bridge generational boundaries and engage a wide spectrum of the community. The lively atmosphere during the gymnastics session, followed by the attentive participation in health screening, reflected the dual function of the activity as both recreational and educational.

Interestingly, several participants admitted that it was their first experience undergoing such medical check-ups. This finding is significant, as it indicates that despite the presence of government health programs, there remain service gaps at the hamlet level—particularly in preventive health monitoring. By providing basic yet essential screening, the program not only offered immediate benefits in the form of

awareness of personal health conditions but also encouraged participants to think more proactively about long-term health management.

Beyond its immediate impact, this activity carried an advocacy dimension. It implicitly emphasized the importance of preventive health as a shared responsibility between health institutions and the community itself. The presence of LPDP awardees as facilitators further reinforced the value of collaborative efforts in health promotion, showing that even small-scale interventions can stimulate community awareness and encourage local stakeholders, such as *Posyandu* cadres and village health workers, to integrate similar initiatives into their regular agendas. Thus, the program functioned not merely as a one-off intervention but as a catalyst for strengthening a culture of preventive health within the Kalipucung community.



Figure 5. Health socialization
Source: Researcher documentation, 2025

5. Improvement of Tourism Village Supporting Facilities

The provision of both physical and non-physical facilities became an integral component in strengthening the foundation of Kalipucung Hamlet as an emerging Educational Tourism Village. On the one hand, tangible items such as cleaning tools, announcement boards, bookshelves, wall clocks, and prayer time indicators served as practical resources that directly improved the daily functioning of community spaces. These facilities not only supported cleanliness and order but also enhanced the accessibility of information and created a more conducive environment for social and educational activities within the hamlet.

On the other hand, the development of non-physical facilities—particularly the production of a profile video and the establishment of a dedicated Tourism Village website—represented a strategic step toward digital transformation and branding. For the first time, the community gained tools to narrate their identity and showcase their potential to a wider audience beyond their immediate locality. Such media platforms allowed residents to present their unique assets, such as coffee plantations and local traditions, in a more professional and appealing way, thereby opening new opportunities for tourism collaboration and market expansion.

More importantly, the existence of these facilities illustrated the program's long-term orientation. Rather than offering temporary solutions or one-off donations, the initiative focused on sustainability and capacity-building. By equipping the hamlet with resources that could be maintained and developed independently, the program encouraged local residents to take greater ownership of their tourism initiatives. In line with the principles of community-based tourism, these provisions underscored the importance of empowering local actors with both the infrastructure and the confidence to continuously innovate. As a result, Kalipucung Hamlet is better positioned to strengthen its image and competitiveness as an Educational Tourism Village in the years to come.



Figure 6. Documentation of the making of the tourism village profile video

Source: Researcher documentation, 2025

B. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the *Awardee Merakyat* program in Kalipucung Hamlet demonstrates that a participation-based empowerment approach can act as a catalyst for the development of a sustainable Educational Tourism Village. What initially began as a series of interventions—ranging from education and training to the provision of facilities—

gradually evolved into a process of fostering community awareness, strengthening motivation, and building capacity to manage local resources more independently and creatively. This shift illustrates that empowerment is not merely about providing external assistance, but about cultivating agency and confidence among local actors.

Through scholarship education and the introduction of the *Merdeka Belajar* concept, students and parents gained access to knowledge that had previously been limited, thereby expanding their aspirations for higher education. Meanwhile, digital branding and marketing training provided local coffee and salak farmers with essential skills to improve product competitiveness in an increasingly digitalized economy. These initiatives were complemented by efforts to revitalize youth organizations, where the strengthening of *Karang Taruna* created an adaptive and innovative organizational structure capable of playing a strategic role in supporting village tourism development.

Health promotion activities, including healthy gymnastics and basic medical check-ups, revealed another important dimension: the necessity of community-based health services as part of inclusive village development. The provision of physical infrastructure—such as announcement boards, bookshelves, and cleaning tools—alongside non-physical resources like profile videos and a dedicated village website, became both symbolic and practical instruments. These initiatives not only enhanced the visibility of Kalipucung but also signaled a long-term orientation toward sustainability.

The use of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method was a decisive factor in ensuring that residents were not treated as passive recipients, but as active participants in dialogue, decision-making, and evaluation. This participatory process cultivated a sense of ownership over every initiative, whether in managing tourism, improving educational aspirations, or raising health awareness. Such ownership is essential for maintaining program sustainability and reducing dependency on external actors.

Furthermore, the program highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration. By bringing together higher education institutions, local stakeholders, and civil society groups, the initiative managed to integrate scientific approaches with local wisdom. When tailored to local contexts, such collaborations generate innovations that are not only relevant but also transformative. For instance, digital marketing training designed around the village's flagship commodities—coffee and salak—did not just enhance economic value, but also strengthened cultural identity and pride.

In sum, the *Awardee Merakyat* program offers a concrete illustration that empowerment strategies, when rooted in both structural and cultural dimensions, can transform rural communities into resilient, adaptive, and competitive villages. The synergy between academics (LPDP awardees), local communities, and participatory methodologies such as PRA has proven to be a powerful formula for village transformation. Moving forward, this model deserves replication in other regions, with appropriate contextual adaptations, as a pathway toward sustainable and community-driven rural development.

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