




Revitalizing coastal economies through the integration of creative economy and culture for the Tongkole fishermen group, Manado

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Abstract

Karang Ria Beach is the sole natural beach in urban Manado, serving as both a public space and a primary livelihood source for local fishermen. Recently, the Tongkole Fishermen Group has faced declining catches, unstable income, and weak management and marketing capacities. This community partnership program aims to empower the group through an andragogic approach involving training, appropriate technology implementation, and continuous mentoring. Interventions focused on creative economy innovations, including cultural performances, creative competitions, decorative installations, and digital marketing strategies. The results showed a significant increase in management capacity and the emergence of new income streams, evidenced by a 520% rise in economic transaction activities. This program proves that integrating cultural creativity and marketing innovation can effectively revitalize coastal economies. Future recommendations include establishing cooperatives and diversifying experience-based tourism to sustain the program's impact.

Keywords: Community empowerment; Creative economy; Fishermen group; Coastal tourism

Revitalisasi ekonomi masyarakat pesisir melalui integrasi ekonomi kreatif dan budaya pada kelompok nelayan Tongkole, Manado

Abstrak

Pantai Karang Ria merupakan satu-satunya pantai alami di kawasan perkotaan Manado yang berfungsi sebagai ruang publik sekaligus sumber mata pencaharian nelayan lokal. Namun, Kelompok Nelayan Tongkole menghadapi tantangan berupa penurunan hasil tangkapan, pendapatan yang tidak stabil, serta keterbatasan manajemen dan pemasaran. Program kemitraan ini bertujuan memberdayakan kelompok tersebut melalui pendekatan andragogik yang meliputi pelatihan, penerapan teknologi tepat guna, dan pendampingan berkelanjutan. Intervensi dilakukan melalui inovasi ekonomi kreatif, seperti pertunjukan budaya, kompetisi kreatif, instalasi dekoratif, serta strategi pemasaran digital. Hasil program menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada kapasitas manajemen dan munculnya sumber pendapatan baru, dengan rata-rata kenaikan aktivitas transaksi ekonomi mencapai 520%. Program ini membuktikan bahwa integrasi kreativitas budaya dan inovasi pemasaran efektif merevitalisasi ekonomi masyarakat pesisir. Pengembangan koperasi dan diversifikasi wisata berbasis pengalaman direkomendasikan untuk keberlanjutan dampak di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Pemberdayaan masyarakat; Ekonomi kreatif; Kelompok nelayan; Wisata pantai

1. Introduction

Indonesia, as a prominent maritime nation, possesses vast potential with 17,502 islands and a coastline stretching over 81,000 km. This geographic advantage translates into a

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massive fishery zone of approximately 5.8 million km², encompassing archipelagic, territorial, and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters (Arianto, 2020). Theoretically, this immense resource should guarantee prosperity for coastal communities. Recent studies by Massiseng et al. (2024) and Muhammad et al. (2023) further emphasize that fishing is a strategic profession capable of driving national economic growth and improving household welfare. However, this ideal scenario is frequently disconnected from the reality of small-scale fishermen who continue to live in economic precarity.

This disparity is evident among the fishermen at Karang Ria Beach, Tuminting, Manado. Despite its modest dimensions, approximately 800 meters long, Karang Ria Beach serves as a vital public space for diverse socioeconomic activities, including small-scale fishing, culinary vending, and recreational services. The Tongkole Fishermen Group, established in 1990, stands as the primary community actor in this area. Initially formed to advocate for boat mooring rights, the group has evolved into a multifunctional community that also provides snacks and recreational amenities for Manado residents who visit for leisure or hydrotherapy.

Nevertheless, the economic stability of the Tongkole group is currently under threat. Rohim et al. (2025) highlight that environmental and market conditions are no longer conducive to traditional fishing models. Climate anomalies and extreme weather patterns have increasingly forced fishermen to remain ashore, severely disrupting their primary income source (Gadzali, 2024). Furthermore, local restaurants have shifted their supply chains toward industrial-scale providers that offer consistent quality and volume through advanced technology, leaving local fishermen with diminished bargaining power and unstable market prices (Sadat et al., 2024; Surbakti et al., 2023).

The challenges at Karang Ria Beach extend beyond fishing activities. The lack of professional coastal management, deteriorating environmental conditions, and a lack of innovative recreational services have led to stagnant visitor numbers and declining revenue. These issues are exacerbated by the absence of planned marketing strategies and a lack of creative economy integration. The core problem lies not in the fishing activity itself, but in the inability to professionally organize and monetize the coastal space as a sustainable and creative tourism asset.

This Community Service (PKM) program aims to revitalize the management of the Karang Ria Beach tourism area by the Tongkole Group through the introduction of creative economy innovations and digital marketing technologies. This intervention aligns with findings by Yamin & Ismaya (2024), who demonstrated the effectiveness of creative training in rural communities, and Suharli et al. (2025), who documented successful value-added seafood product programs. This program seeks to bridge the gap by integrating managerial knowledge with cultural-based creative entertainment and digital facilitation. By formulating solutions through participatory discussions with the Tongkole Group, this initiative is designed to enhance the group's capacity to manage coastal tourism professionally, ultimately fostering a resilient and sustainable coastal economy.

2. Method

To address the multifaceted challenges faced by the Tongkole Fishermen Group at Karang Ria Beach, Manado, this program employs a comprehensive methodological

framework. The intervention integrates Andragogical methods with strategic socialization, training, and the application of Appropriate Technology (AT) (Fuady, 2020). The andragogical approach was selected to facilitate effective communication with adult community members, enhance learning motivation, and ensure a deeper understanding of the revitalizing processes. This method aims to produce functional individuals capable of not only navigating the dynamic changes of the modern world but also acting as lifelong learners and independent innovators (Fuady, 2020; Hasanbasri et al., 2023; Yahya et al., 2024). Furthermore, the appropriate technology approach is utilized to ensure that the technical solutions provided are specifically tailored to the community's needs and localized coastal conditions (Rinaldi & Ikhwan, 2024).

The program was executed in systematic phases from June 2, 2025, to September 15, 2025. The preparation phase involved finalizing administrative requirements, procuring necessary tools and materials, and consolidating the team's work plan by delegating responsibilities based on individual member expertise. This was followed by the dissemination phase, where the team socialized the professional management of coastal tourism potential and the introduction of creative economy activities. During this stage, the importance of digital marketing and the use of modern promotional media were emphasized to the fishermen group.

The implementation phase combined andragogical instruction with active socialization, focusing on the coordination of creative economy events and the enhancement of visitor attractions. In this stage, the Tongkole group played a participatory role by mobilizing members and actively contributing to the physical preparation of additional beach facilities. Finally, the Monitoring and Evaluation Phase was conducted to track the resolution of identified problems. The primary success indicator for this revitalization program is the measurable increase in the collective income of the Tongkole Fishermen Group through the diversification of their coastal-based economic activities.

3. Results and Discussion

The Community Partnership Program (PKM) for the Tongkole Fishermen Group was conducted from June to mid-September 2025. The program was implemented through a participatory approach, recognizing that this group, originally a traditional collective of hereditary fishermen, possesses a strong sense of togetherness as a primary social asset. The intervention followed a systematic sequence designed to transform this informal collective into a professional coastal management entity.

3.1. Community engagement and andragogical socialization

The initial phase involved a participatory meeting with local authorities, academics, students, and the Tongkole group. Utilizing a participatory meeting method, comprising presentations and open dialogues, the team introduced community-based tourism management, creative economy potential, and digital media utilization. This phase successfully fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders (Wahib & Susanto, 2024). By applying andragogical principles, the team integrated local experiences with modern insights, ensuring that the community did not just receive information but internalized the values of sustainable coastal management (Rinaldi & Ikhwan, 2024; Yahya et al., 2024). The enthusiastic response from the community highlighted the role of academia as a catalyst for local motivation (Figure 1).

Referring to andragogical concepts, the program aimed to internalize coastal management values through strong institutional partnerships (Herlina et al., 2025). The team emphasized that opening the community to external strategic partners is a vital step in diversifying coastal attractions. Furthermore, the team cultivated a critical consciousness regarding creative tourism management, preparing the fishermen to face the challenges of modern tourism. In the era of personalized digital marketing, community-based destinations must provide unique sensations and memorable experiences to remain competitive (Gato et al., 2022; Janjua et al., 2023; Kozak & Correia, 2025).



Figure 1. Socialization and coastal tourism potential briefing

3.2. Practical demonstrations and aesthetic revitalization

The program transitioned from conceptual briefings to practical demonstrations of coastal revitalization. The team provided direct examples of attraction enhancement, marketing techniques, and hospitality services. Members practiced these skills through role-playing and direct interaction with visitors to build technical confidence.



Figure 2. Enhancement of attractions and creative economy activities

As a tangible step toward aesthetic improvement, colorful decorative umbrellas were installed at strategic points to create “Instagrammable” photo spots and resting areas (Figure 2). Previously, Karang Ria Beach was perceived as monotonous and poorly lit after dusk. These installations, placed based on the fishermen’s indigenous knowledge of wave and sand patterns, ensured that the additions were both safe for visitors and durable against coastal erosion.

3.3. Integration of the creative economy

To diversify income streams, the program introduced several creative economy activities. Firstly, Painting and Kanji Workshops that involving the Fine Arts and Japanese Language departments from Universitas Negeri Manado, these activities attracted local youth and their families. The inclusion of international elements, such as a Japanese fellow lecturer, added a global nuance that increased the destination’s marketing value. Second, the program revived the traditional Hasa Dance, an ethnic

performance with transcendental qualities. This cultural asset provides the unique differentiation sought by modern travelers (Wijaya & Trisnawati, 2021).

These activities represent a placemaking design that combines recreation with visual promotion (Petrovski et al., 2025). By integrating local aesthetics and global creativity, the program expanded the market from local to international, reducing dependence on mass tourism (Aji & Faniza, 2024; Prayogi et al., 2025; Wulandari, 2024).

3.4. Evaluation and economic impact

Evaluation was conducted qualitatively through testimonials, as the partners were more comfortable with narrative feedback than quantitative testing (Table 1).

Table 1. Achievement of activity objectives

Informant	Management Aspect	Marketing Aspect
Chairman of Tongkole Group	Shifted from informal interactions to a structured, transparent, and sustainability-oriented organization	Jumped from traditional patterns to creative, digital-based marketing strategies

Quantitatively, the economic impact was profound, with an average transaction increase of 520%, as detailed in Table 2. These results confirm that comprehensive coastal management, integrating facility upgrades and creative innovation, yields significant benefits (King et al., 2025; Priatmoko et al., 2021). The program successfully internalized community-based management principles and established a robust foundation for the Tongkole Group to manage their coastal assets professionally.

Table 2. Increase in economic transaction activities

Informant	Activity	Before	After (Percentage)
Fishermen Group	Daily Visitors	100 people	500 people (500%)
	“Benen” (Buoy) Rentals	50 units	200 units (400%)
	Fried Banana Sales	1 bunch	4 bunches (400%)
	Young Coconut Sales	50 units	150 units (300%)
	Social Event Bookings	1 / week	10 / week (1000%)

4. Conclusion

The empowerment program for the Tongkole Fishermen Group in managing Karang Ria Beach demonstrates that an andragogical intervention, combined with creative economy innovation, effectively enhances the managerial capacity and marketing competence of coastal communities. The primary findings indicate a significant transformation in the fishermen’s group, shifting toward a more professional, transparent, and sustainability-oriented organizational structure. Furthermore, strengthening marketing through digital strategies, art competitions, cultural performances, and visual coastal decorations has successfully created new revenue streams while expanding the destination’s tourism appeal. This intervention underscores that a collaborative approach between universities, local communities, and the government can produce a competitive, community-based tourism management model.

Despite these achievements, this community service program acknowledges certain limitations. Consequently, future empowerment initiatives should prioritize several key areas: first, strengthening the institutional framework of partners through the

establishment of cooperatives or joint business units to ensure long-term sustainability; second, developing experience-based tourism products that remain deeply aligned with local wisdom; and third, replicating similar intervention models in other coastal communities through contextual adjustments. These strategic steps will not only improve the welfare of traditional fishermen but also broaden the contribution toward sustainable tourism development and the comprehensive empowerment of coastal communities in Indonesia.

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Author Contributions

Activity implementation: MGM, GL, RK; Manuscript preparation: MGM; Impact analysis: MGM, GL, RK; Results presentation: MGM, RK, GL; Manuscript revision & editing: MGM.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest related to this article.

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