

Synergy between Higher Education Institutions and the Tourism Office in the Development of Community-Based Sport Tourism in Bone Regency

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ABSTRACT

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Community-based sport tourism development is an innovative strategy to support sustainable regional tourism. Bone Regency has strong natural, cultural, and community potential to support the development of sport tourism; however, synergy among stakeholders remains suboptimal. This Community Service activity aims to strengthen collaboration between higher education institutions and the Bone Regency Tourism Office, as well as to enhance community capacity in designing and managing community-based sport tourism initiatives. The implementation employed a participatory and collaborative approach through several stages, including program socialization and coordination, participatory discussions (Focus Group Discussions), sports science-based training, and mentoring in the design of sport tourism products. The results indicate an increased level of community understanding of sport tourism and community-based tourism concepts, along with the emergence of initial ideas for community-based sport tourism products, such as traditional sport attractions, fitness tourism, and small-scale local recreational sports events. Synergy among higher education institutions, the Tourism Office, and the local community proved to be a key factor in supporting participatory and sustainable sport tourism development. This activity is expected to serve as an initial model for community-based sport tourism development in supporting regional tourism in Bone Regency.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the development sectors that makes a significant contribution to regional economic growth, job creation, and the sustainable improvement of community quality of life (Canton, 2021). Over the past decades, the dynamics of tourism have undergone segmentation diversification with the emergence of special interest tourism, such as sport tourism, which integrates physical or sporting activities with tourism experiences into a unified travel experience (Indaro, 2025). Sport tourism not only involves travel to watch or attend sporting events but also includes active participation by tourists in physical or sporting activities at tourism destinations (Mantu, 2019).

Sport tourism has developed into a strategic subsector within the global tourism industry due to its ability to generate multifaceted benefits, including economic impacts through increased tourist arrivals and expenditure, social impacts through community empowerment, and the potential for preserving local culture (Arisman et al., 2024). In

Indonesia, sport tourism has strong momentum for growth, supported by rich natural resources, diverse geographical characteristics, and unique local sporting traditions (Nurhidayati et al., 2025). The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, has positioned sport tourism as one of the high-growth subsectors, which is expected to contribute a significant share to total national tourism expenditure (Windyarto, 2024).

Nevertheless, the development of sport tourism in many regions still faces several challenges, including limited innovation in sport tourism products that are adaptive to local potential, low levels of community involvement in destination management, and insufficient integration among stakeholders in program planning and implementation (Arisman et al., 2024). These conditions often result in sporadic sport tourism development and limit its maximum economic and social benefits for local communities (Arisman et al., 2024).

The community-based tourism (CBT) approach is considered a relevant strategy to address these challenges, as it positions local communities as the main actors in all stages of tourism destination development (Arisman et al., 2024). Community-based sport tourism not only enhances local participation in destination management but also strengthens community capacity to utilize local potential as sustainable tourism attractions (Aisyah et al., 2025).

In Bone Regency, the potential of natural tourism resources, local wisdom, and active youth communities provides opportunities for the development of community-based sport tourism (Junaid, 2019). However, stakeholder synergy involving local government, communities, and higher education institutions has not yet been optimized, resulting in underutilized sport tourism potential as a tool for community empowerment and local economic strengthening. In fact, such synergy is crucial to ensure that sport tourism development is well planned, adaptive, and fully involves local communities (Hasbi & Badollahi, 2019).

Higher education institutions play a strategic role in supporting the development of community-based sport tourism through the provision of scientific expertise, evidence-based training, and facilitation of collaboration among stakeholders (Pitts & Stotlar, 2013). This role is essential in bridging community needs and local government policies in designing sustainable, participatory, and locally responsive sport tourism products.

Based on these conditions, this Community Service Program was designed to strengthen the synergy between higher education institutions and the Tourism Office of Bone Regency, as well as to enhance community capacity in designing and managing sport tourism based on local physical activities and cultural assets. The main focus of this program is community empowerment through a collaborative approach that positions local communities as key agents in the planning and implementation of sport tourism destinations.

Community service studies published in *J-CoDE* have emphasized the importance of participatory approaches and stakeholder collaboration in community empowerment programs (Saputri et al., 2025). However, studies specifically focusing on community-based sport tourism through institutional synergy between higher education institutions and local

government remain limited. Therefore, this program contributes by offering a practical model of collaborative community service that integrates sport science, tourism development, and community empowerment.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This Community Service Program was implemented from June to August 2025 in Bone Regency and involved 35 participants, consisting of representatives from the Bone Regency Tourism Office (5 people), tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis) (12 people), youth communities (10 people), sports communities (6 people), and local community leaders (2 people). The program was conducted through four main stages, namely socialization and coordination, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), sport science-based training, and mentoring in sport tourism product design. Each stage was carried out through participatory methods to ensure active community involvement throughout the program.

This Community Service Program was implemented using a participatory and collaborative approach that positioned local communities as the primary subjects throughout all stages of the activities. This approach is consistent with the principles of community-based tourism (CBT), which emphasize active community participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of tourism development programs to ensure sustainable impacts (Canton, 2021; Mtapuri et al., 2022). In addition, collaboration between higher education institutions and local government served as an essential foundation for ensuring program sustainability and alignment with regional tourism development policies (Putri et al., 2024).

The implementation of the program involved a team of lecturers from the field of Sport Sciences, the Tourism Office of Bone Regency, as well as local communities and community-based organizations, including tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), youth communities, and sport communities. The implementation method was systematically designed and carried out through the following stages.

Program Socialization and Coordination

The initial stage of the program focused on socialization and coordination with relevant stakeholders. The socialization activities aimed to provide an initial understanding of the concept of community-based sport tourism, the scope of the program, and the potential economic, social, and health benefits generated through sport tourism development. At this stage, coordination was also conducted with the Tourism Office of Bone Regency to align the community service program with policy directions, strategic plans, and regional tourism development priorities. These socialization and coordination activities were essential for building shared understanding, joint commitment, and cross-sectoral support, as recommended in collaborative, multi-stakeholder tourism development frameworks (Canton, 2021; Pitts & Stotlar, 2013).



Figure 1. Stakeholder Coordination Meeting

Participatory Discussion (Focus Group Discussion/FGD)

Following the socialization stage, participatory discussions were conducted through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The FGDs involved representatives from the Tourism Office, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), youth communities, sport communities, and local community leaders. The FGD method was selected due to its effectiveness in exploring local potential, perceptions, needs, and challenges faced by communities in the development of sport tourism (Sugiyono, 2020).

The FGDs focused on several key aspects: (1) identifying natural, cultural, and physical activity/sport potentials that could be developed into sport tourism products; (2) mapping development opportunities and constraints, including human resource readiness, infrastructure availability, and policy support; and (3) formulating initial, realistic, and contextually relevant ideas for community-based sport tourism development. The outcomes of the FGDs served as the foundation for designing training materials and community mentoring strategies.

Training and Education Based on Sport Science

Based on the results of the FGDs, the program proceeded with training and educational activities for local communities and tourism groups. The training materials were developed based on sport science principles and adapted to the local context of Bone Regency. The materials covered: (1) basic concepts of sport tourism and community-based tourism; (2) the introduction of safe, inclusive, and recreational physical activities and sports with tourism potential; (3) the integration of recreational sport activities with cultural attractions and local wisdom; and (4) fundamental principles of organizing local-scale sport tourism activities or events.

This training aimed to enhance community knowledge, skills, and confidence in independently managing sport tourism initiatives. This educational approach aligns with the findings of (Gibson, 2013; Higham & Hinch, 2018), who emphasize the importance of building local human resource capacity for sustainable sport tourism development.

Mentoring and Sport Tourism Product Design

The final stage of the implementation method involved intensive mentoring of local communities and tourism groups. Mentoring was carried out through technical guidance in designing initial concepts for community-based sport tourism products, such as recreational sport tourism packages, physical activity trails in natural open spaces, coastal wellness tourism, and culturally based recreational sport events.

In addition, communities were assisted in developing simple activity plans that included types of activities, target tourist segments, role distribution among stakeholders,

and principles of safety and sustainability. An initial evaluation of the proposed concepts was conducted collaboratively with the community service team and the Tourism Office to ensure alignment with market potential and regional tourism development directions. This mentoring process is expected to result in community-based sport tourism product designs that are ready for further sustainable development (Mtapuri et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of Program Implementation

The implementation of the Community Service program focusing on the development of community-based sport tourism in Bone Regency produced several outcomes that were qualitatively observed through field observations, activity documentation, and participatory evaluation with the participants. The participants involved representatives from the Tourism Office, tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), youth communities, sports communities, and local community leaders.

First, there was an increase in participants' understanding of the concepts of sport tourism and community-based tourism. This was reflected in their ability to re-explain sport tourism as an integration of recreational sports activities, tourism experiences, and local cultural values. Participants also began to understand that physical activity and sports function not only as a means of maintaining health but can also be developed into tourism products with economic and social value.

Second, through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities, the potentials and challenges of sport tourism development in Bone Regency were systematically identified. The identified potentials included the availability of natural resources (coastal areas and open natural spaces), the presence of active sports and youth communities, and initial support from the local government. Meanwhile, the challenges included limited human resource capacity in managing sport tourism activities, safety aspects of physical activities, and the lack of integration between sports, culture, and tourism into a cohesive product concept.

Third, the results of the training and mentoring activities indicated that the community was able to formulate an initial design of community-based sport tourism products. These designs included ideas for traditional sports attractions, wellness and active tourism, as well as local-scale recreational sports events. This initial design serves as an indicator that the community has begun to act as the subject of tourism development rather than merely as beneficiaries.

Tangible Outputs of the Program

In addition to increased understanding, the program generated several tangible outputs. First, the participants collectively formulated three initial concepts of community-based sport tourism products, namely:

- (1) traditional sport attractions integrated with local cultural performances;
- (2) wellness and active tourism activities utilizing coastal and open natural spaces; and
- (3) small-scale recreational sport events organized by local communities.

Second, the FGD sessions resulted in a documented mapping of local potentials and challenges, which included natural resource availability, community readiness, safety considerations, and infrastructure limitations. This mapping served as a practical reference for future sport tourism development planning in Bone Regency.

The FGDs revealed that communities perceived sport tourism as a new opportunity to combine physical activity, cultural identity, and economic empowerment. However, participants also acknowledged challenges related to human resource capacity, safety management, and coordination among stakeholders. These findings underline the

importance of continuous mentoring and institutional support in community-based sport tourism development.



Figure 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Activity
Figure



Figure 3. Participatory Mentoring Session

Discussion

The results of this community service program confirm that participatory and collaborative approaches are effective in enhancing community capacity for the development of community-based sport tourism. This finding is consistent with the principles of community-based tourism, which emphasize the importance of active involvement of local communities in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of tourism activities to ensure social and economic sustainability (Canton, 2021).

The increased community understanding of sport tourism reinforces the perspective of (Gibson, 2013), who states that sport tourism is a form of tourism that positions sport activities as an integral part of the overall tourism experience. In the context of Bone Regency, this understanding encourages the community to view recreational sports activities, traditional games, and fitness-related activities as potential tourist attractions that can be developed in accordance with local characteristics.

The community's ability to formulate initial ideas for sport tourism products also supports the findings of (Higham & Hinch, 2018), who emphasize that sustainable sport tourism development must be based on local conditions, consider safety aspects of sport activities, and involve local communities as the main actors. Training based on sports science contributed to providing fundamental knowledge regarding safety principles, inclusivity, and sustainability in sport tourism activities.

The integration of sport tourism with marine tourism represents a strategic finding that broadens the approach to regional tourism development. The utilization of coastal areas as spaces for physical activity and recreational sports supports the concept of active tourism, which not only enhances the quality of tourist experiences but also promotes more optimal and sustainable use of natural resources. This approach has the potential to extend tourists' length of stay and increase the economic value of coastal areas.

Furthermore, the use of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as a tool for identifying potentials and challenges proved effective in exploring community needs and aspirations. This is in line with (Sugiyono, 2020), who argues that FGDs are a relevant method for obtaining contextual data and strengthening participation in community service activities.

More broadly, the synergy between higher education institutions and the Tourism Office established through this program highlights the strategic role of cross-sector collaboration in regional tourism development. Higher education institutions act as providers of science-based mentoring, while local governments play roles in policymaking and program facilitation. This collaboration aligns with the view of (Pitts & Stotlar, 2013), who emphasize the importance of integrating sport, tourism, and destination management to create added economic value and ensure destination sustainability.

Thus, the results and discussion demonstrate that sport tourism has significant potential as an innovative approach to regional tourism development in Bone Regency.

Through active community involvement and synergistic support from higher education institutions and local governments, sport tourism can serve as an instrument for community empowerment, health improvement, and sustainable local economic development.

CONCLUSION

This Community Service Program successfully strengthened the synergy between higher education institutions, the Bone Regency Tourism Office, and local communities in the development of community-based sport tourism. Through participatory socialization, FGDs, training, and mentoring, the program enhanced community understanding and capacity to design sport tourism initiatives based on local physical activities, cultural assets, and natural resources.

The emergence of initial sport tourism product concepts and community action plans indicates that local communities have begun to assume an active role as agents of tourism development. This synergy-based approach demonstrates the potential of community-based sport tourism as an instrument for sustainable regional tourism development. Continuous mentoring and stronger integration with regional tourism policies are recommended to ensure long-term implementation and impact.

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