



Serving Local Seafood As A Superior Strategy For Homestay Tourism In Benan Village, Lingga Regency

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Abstract

Benan Village in Lingga Regency has extraordinary potential for the abundance of marine resources, but its contribution to tourism competitiveness, especially *homestays*, has not been optimal due to the limited knowledge of the community in processing techniques and standardization of local culinary presentations. This Community Service (PkM) activity aims to reconstruct the local *seafood* serving system as a superior strategy in increasing the selling value (*value proposition*) of *homestay tourism* in Benan Village. The program implementation method uses a participatory approach through a competency-based training model (*Competency-Based Training*) which includes situation analysis, authentic Malay menu diversification workshops, and hygienic assistance in modern *food plating* techniques. The results of the intervention showed a significant improvement in the technical skills (*hard skills*) and paradigm understanding (*soft skills*) of *homestay management partners* related to the standardization of commercial dish aesthetics. The impact of the sustainable potential of this program is linearly able to boost the competitive advantage of local accommodation, which has the potential to extend the length of stay of tourists. Furthermore, the strengthening of the downstream culinary sector creates a broad economic *multiplier effect* at the site level, ranging from the consistent absorption of traditional fishermen's catches to the empowerment of women's groups as the main actors driving the coastal creative economy. Through this synergy, the traditional culinary identity of Lingga Malay can be preserved adaptively to support the acceleration of sustainable tourism based on community independence in Benan Village.

Keywords: Benan Village; Homestay competitiveness; Seafood Serving; community-based tourism;

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, the dynamics of the tourism industry have shifted the preferences of tourists to better appreciate the potential of local resources as the main tourist attraction. One of the rapidly growing strategic approaches in supporting sustainable tourism is Community-Based *Tourism* (CBT). This approach places local communities as the main actors in tourism management, especially in archipelago areas that have unique regional





characteristics and high dependence on the abundance of marine resources (Rini, Saputra, and al., 2025). The development of settlements in coastal areas is an important part of supporting development that improves the welfare of coastal communities (Mustikowati and al., 2024). Within the framework of CBT, homestays develop not only as physical accommodation facilities for tourists, but also function as a representation of living culture and local wisdom that is able to create an authentic and immersive experience for visitors (Ferdian et al., 2025).

Benan Village, which is located in the coastal area of Lingga Regency, Riau Islands Province, is one of the areas that has comparative advantages in the form of very abundant marine wealth, including various types of local *seafood*. As an archipelagic area with promising marine tourism potential, Benan Village has a great opportunity to integrate the marine sector with the tourism sector through the optimization of homestay services (Rini, Kurniawan, and al., 2025). One of the key components in the development of tourist villages is optimal homestay management (Yuliani and al., 2024). The existence of varied marine biological commodities can actually be the main modality in developing a *differentiation strategy that differentiates* homestays in Benan Village from other coastal destinations (Rini & Mutiarazma, 2026).

However, the culinary potential based on local *seafood* has not been optimally utilized to support the existing homestay tourism ecosystem. The principles that must be applied in the development of sustainable tourism, such as nature conservation, community development of local management, and sustainable resources, are important to pay attention to (Sarwono et al., n.d.). Empirical conditions show that the culinary products served have not developed into competitive and high-value-added tourism products. This fundamental problem is in line with the findings of various previous studies that indicate that coastal communities generally still face significant limitations in terms of knowledge, processing skills, and techniques for serving local foodstuffs (Astiana et al., 2025). This limited capability has a direct impact on the low competitiveness of homestays in Benan Village, so it is less able to encourage interest and maintain the duration of tourist visits (Akhirson et al., 2024).

In order to bridge this gap, the development of a holistic, planned, and participatory strategy through community service activities is very crucial to be



implemented immediately. The tactical steps offered are to reconstruct the serving system, processing techniques, and diversify the diversity of local *seafood* menus. Through a participatory approach that actively engages the local community, this development process is designed to ensure that the values of local wisdom are authentically preserved, yet presented with aesthetic and hygiene standards that appeal to tourists. The reconstruction of this presentation is not only to promote the product, but also aims to create a unique sensory experience that can increase the selling value (*value proposition*) of homestays in Benan Village Rini, Gunawan, et al., 2025).

Through sustainable natural resource governance and downstream capacity strengthening, the resulting positive impact is expected to make a tangible multi-sectoral contribution. The increasing interest of tourists in high-quality local culinary products will linearly extend the length of stay of tourists. At the macro level, this increase will create a significant *multiplier effect* for the local economy, both in increasing the household income of homestay business actors, opening up new capacity opportunities, and accelerating the improvement of the standard of living of the village community as a whole. Thus, this service activity is expected to be able to make a structural contribution to the acceleration of sustainable tourism based on the independence of the coastal community of Benan Village.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Regional and Population Profile of Benan Village

Benan Village is one of the villages located in the administrative area of Katang Bidare District, Lingga Regency, Riau Islands Province. Geographically, this area is in the form of a cluster of small islands that function as one of the gateways to marine tourism in Lingga Regency due to its strategic location on the shipping route. Benan Village has the characteristics of a coastal area with a marine ecosystem that is still very well preserved. Based on the spatial projection of the region, the area of settlement and land of Benan Village is relatively compact, but it has a very large water/sea area of village jurisdiction, making it the main focus for the life of the local community. Demographically, the population of Benan Village consists of hundreds of families who inhabit the coastal area of the island. Based on the latest population composition data, the gender majority of the



population in Benan Village is dominated by men, which linearly affects the pattern of socio-economic activities in the village. The distribution of the productive age population in this village is quite high, with a social structure that still upholds the values of mutual cooperation and local wisdom typical of coastal Malays. (Akhirman & Nurhasanah, 2019)

Socio-Economic and Livelihood Profile

The livelihood structure of the people of Benan Village is greatly influenced by their geographical conditions as an archipelagic community. The main profession of the majority of the population in this village is as traditional fishermen and cultivators of marine products such as tripang, shellfish and other marine products. As *the leading sector*, capture fisheries activities are carried out by men (majority gender), while women or mothers in Benan Village take many domestic roles and begin to actively engage in the tourism support sector, such as *homestay managers*, stall keepers and local culinary micro business actors. Apart from being fishermen, a small part of the population also makes a living as freelance daily laborers, traders, and village officials.

Potential of Marine Food Resources

As a marine tourism homestead, Benan Village is awarded with extraordinarily abundant and high-quality marine food resources. The waters around Benan Island are fertile habitats for various types of economically important fish, among which the local mainstay commodities are Sagai Fish and Selikur Fish. In addition to catch fish, this area has great potential in the cultivation of sea cucumbers with high economic value in the export market, as well as other marine commodities such as squid, shrimp, and crabs. The abundance of fresh raw materials is the main foundation in the development of culinary-based tourism products in this village.

Landscape Kuliner

Despite the abundant potential for seafood, the large-scale commercial culinary industry in Benan Village is still very limited. Facilities to meet tourist consumption are currently dominated by coffee shops or simple local food stalls



that are managed independently, as well as the provision of integrated meal packages (*full board meals*) directly in *the homestay* facility.

The culinary menu offered is generally based on authentic traditional Malay preparations, such as: Lingga Spicy Sour Fish, Grilled Fish with local spices and Black Cooked Cuttlefish/Squid. The limitation of menu variety and standardization of presentation is the urgency of the implementation of the PkM program.

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Design of Activities

This Community Service (PkM) activity is carried out using a participatory approach through *the Community-Based Research and Development* method which is integrated with the *Competency-Based Training* model. This approach places the community, especially homestay managers and culinary business actors in Benan Village, not just as objects, but as active partners in the process of culinary reconstruction and innovation ((Widagdo & Surakarta, 2023). The intervention is designed in a structured manner to bridge the skill gap in processing, menu diversification, and aesthetic arrangement of the presentation *food plating*) of local *seafood commodities* without eliminating the essence of local wisdom of coastal Malays (Hussin et al., 2014).

Target Audience

The strategic target audience in this service activity is *homestay* business actors, local food stall owners, and the community of culinary driving women in Benan Village, Lingga Regency, Riau Islands Province. The selection of this partner is based on their crucial role as a frontline provider of accommodation and consumption facilities for tourists visiting Benan Village.

Stages of Implementation

To ensure the success of the reconstruction holistically, the implementation method is divided into three systematic stages as follows:

1. Preparation and Situation Analysis Stage (*Pre-Project Assessment*) The initial stage begins with field observations and *Focus Group Discussions*





(FGD) with village officials and representatives of *homestay* management partners. This step aims to map the types of potential local *seafood* commodities that have not been optimized, identify the limitations of tools, and analyze the need for menu standardization that has high commercial competitiveness.

2. Implementation Stage of Culinary Training and Assistance (*Action Plan*)

The core stage is realized through the transfer of knowledge and technical skills which includes:

- a. Diversification & Menu Reconstruction: Innovate recipes based on local seafood (such as sagai, selikur, or cuttlefish) into new menu variations that are modern while still maintaining authentic traditional Malay flavors.
- b. Hygiene & Standardization Workshop: Providing training related to food safety and sanitation processing.
- c. Creative Presentation (*Food Plating & Garnish*): Demonstrate contemporary food styling techniques to enhance the aesthetic value and visual appeal of the homestay menu.



Figure 1. Selection of local seafood menu variations
Source : Results of Service Documentation

3. Post-Project *Evaluation* Indicators of program success are measured through a quantitative approach. Quantitative evaluation was carried out by deploying *pre-test* and *post-test instruments* to measure the improvement of partners' understanding and technical skills before and after training.

SUTAINABLE RESULT AND POTENSIAL

The implementation of this community service program has succeeded in restructuring and improving the downstream capabilities of *homestay* managers and culinary business actors in Benan Village in optimizing local seafood assets.



Figure 2. Presentation of Food Preparation Results
Source : Results of Service Documentation

Through competency-based training interventions, there has been a significant increase in technical skills (*hard skills*), where partners are now able to master modern *food plating techniques and local garnish applications* to boost the visual appeal of dishes. In addition to the aesthetic aspect, this program has succeeded in diversifying and standardizing the traditional coastal Malay menu into a more competitive variety of seafood-based dishes while still referring to the fulfillment of hygiene and food safety standards. This strengthening is emphasized by the results of the evaluation through *pre-test* and *post-test analysis* which shows a surge in understanding and a change in the paradigm of thinking (*soft skills*) from business actors regarding the importance of aesthetic value of presentation as a *differentiation strategy* in attracting commercial tourists.

The success of the reconstruction of *local seafood* presentation does not stop at the completion of the training period, but projects a sustainable chain of positive impacts for the future of the tourism ecosystem in Benan Village. With the new standardization and aesthetics of culinary presentation, *homestays* in Benan Village are now experiencing a strengthening of competitive advantage which leads to an increase in selling value (*value proposition*). Local seafood culinary that is packaged in an attractive and hygienic manner is no longer just a complement to accommodation, but transformed into a superior sensory tourism product that has proven to be effective in extending the length of stay of tourists.

The acceleration in the downstream sector of tourism linearly stimulates economic turnover at the site level through the creation of a broad *multiplier effect*. The increasing demand for quality marine raw materials by the *homestay* will



consistently absorb the catch of local traditional fishermen with more competitive price certainty, thereby strengthening the domestic economic resilience of coastal areas. On the other hand, the sustainability of this program creates an independent space of inclusivity through the empowerment of women's groups (women who manage *homestays* and food stalls) as the main actors driving the creative economy. The pattern of periodic mentoring designed in the PkM ensures knowledge transfer that runs independently between communities. This collective process is ultimately able to maintain the authenticity of the taste of traditional Lingga Malay dishes so that they remain sustainably sustainable in the midst of tourism modernization, while accelerating the improvement of the standard of living and financial independence of the people of Benan Village as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Community service programs through the reconstruction of local *seafood* presentation have succeeded in making a significant contribution to strengthening the downstream capacity and capabilities of *homestay managers* and culinary business actors in Benan Village.



Figure 3. Application of Food Styling Techniques
Source : Results of Service Documentation

The interventions carried out have proven to be effective in improving the technical skills of partners in applying modern *food plating* techniques, diversifying menus based on local seafood, and implementing food hygiene standards consistently. This positive change not only boosts the visual aesthetic value of the traditional Malay culinary served, but also succeeds in changing the paradigm of people's thinking about the importance of culinary product innovation as a *differentiation strategy* to increase the competitiveness of tourist accommodation. In the end, the success of this reconstruction strengthens the superior attractiveness of Benan Village, increases the selling value (*value proposition*) of *homestays*, and opens up great opportunities for the extension of the length of stay



of tourists which will have a positive impact on the economic welfare of coastal communities in a sustainable manner.

SUGGESTION

In order to maintain the sustainability of the positive impact that has been achieved from this program, it is recommended to *homestay* managers and culinary business actors in Benan Village to consistently apply hygiene standards and innovative serving techniques that have been trained in their daily operations.



Figure 4. Community Service Closing Activities
Source : Results of Service Documentation

In addition, it is necessary to establish a solid local culinary forum or association under the supervision of the village apparatus to facilitate the process of independent and sustainable knowledge transfer between residents. For institutions implementing service or subsequent researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of the program in the aspects of digitizing culinary marketing, preparing a guidebook (*standard operating procedure*) for infographic standard menus, and integrating culinary tour packages into a digital-based *homestay booking platform*. Closer synergistic cooperation with the Lingga Regency Government and the local Tourism Office is also highly recommended to facilitate stimulant capital assistance, procurement of industry-standard kitchen equipment, and the promotion of the annual marine culinary festival to strengthen the identity of Benan Village as a leading marine and culinary tourism destination.

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