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Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Community-Based Business Management Training in Bunaken's Tourism Sector

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Abstract: This community service program aims to strengthen the capacity of women-owned micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the Bunaken tourism area through community-based business management training. The program was conducted in collaboration with the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group, which specializes in producing and selling souvenirs to tourists. Involving 20 participants, the program adopted a community-based participatory approach comprising four stages: identification of initial conditions and partner needs, business management training, participatory practice and experiential learning, and evaluation and reflection. The results indicate initial improvements in participants' knowledge and basic skills related to key aspects of business management. Participants actively engaged in discussions and practical activities that connected the training content with their actual business operations in the tourism context. Overall, the program contributed to strengthening women entrepreneurs' preparedness to manage their businesses in a more structured, adaptive, and sustainable manner. These findings highlight the potential of community-based business management training to support the capacity development of women-owned MSMEs in tourism-dependent areas.

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Introduction

Tourism is closely connected to the economic activities of local communities. The development of tourist destinations depends not only on increasing tourist visits but also on the ability of surrounding communities to capture economic opportunities through the provision of tourism-related goods and services (Santoso, 2025). In the context of community-based tourism, local communities are actively involved in tourism development so that its economic, social, and cultural benefits can be distributed more widely. This approach emphasizes community participation and capacity building as important foundations for sustainable tourism development (Khalid et al., n.d.; Kurniawati et al., 2023; Saidah et al., 2023).

Bunaken, located in Manado City, North Sulawesi, is a leading marine tourism destination that has great potential to support local economic development. Marine biodiversity, underwater attractions, and local culture create opportunities for communities to participate in the tourism value chain. These opportunities include the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that provide souvenirs and other tourism-related products and services. The development of tourism facilities and community economic activities, including souvenir kiosks and homestays, further demonstrates the strategic role of

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local businesses in the tourism ecosystem (Umacina et al., 2018). Government initiatives promoting tourism and the creative economy also highlight the importance of local products and community participation in generating economic benefits from tourism (*RKPD Kota Manado 2024*, 2024; B, 2022).

Despite this potential, the initial observations conducted by the service team identified business management challenges among members of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group. Some souvenir business owners still rely on products supplied from outside North Sulawesi, especially t-shirts and tote bags imported from Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Kediri. This dependence creates additional procurement and shipping costs that limit their profit margins. Based on initial information obtained from partners, t-shirts are sold at a price of around IDR 75,000–IDR 100,000 per unit, while procurement and shipping costs can reach IDR 55,000–IDR 80,000 per unit. This condition shows the need to strengthen participants' understanding of business costs, profit margins, product management, and business decision-making. Addressing these issues is important to help women entrepreneurs manage their businesses more systematically and identify opportunities to improve their business performance.

Previous studies and community service activities have highlighted the importance of capacity building for MSMEs operating in tourism destinations. Manoppo et al. (2025), in their study of MSMEs around the Likupang Dua tourist attraction in North Minahasa, emphasized the need to strengthen business management, promotion, branding, and the use of digital media. Kambey et al. (2018) demonstrated the relevance of knowledge sharing in developing MSME innovation capabilities. Research by Mochamad Mochklas1 and 2 (2024) on women-owned MSMEs in Surabaya's culinary tourism sector also reported a positive and significant relationship between business training and business success. These findings suggest that training and knowledge development can support the capacity of women entrepreneurs to respond to business challenges, although the outcomes depend on the content and implementation of the intervention.

Community participation and practical learning are also important in developing sustainable tourism-related enterprises. Saidah et al. (2023) highlighted participatory approaches in strengthening the capacity of tourism village managers, while Kurniawati et al. (2023) emphasized education and community involvement in community-based tourism development. Sukoco et al. (2019) demonstrated the relevance of entrepreneurship training for strengthening business-group management and product innovation. Furthermore, Parasan et al. (2026) reported capacity-building activities involving a women's MSME group in Bunaken through the application of direct-to-film (DTF) technology for souvenir development. Other community service studies have similarly emphasized product innovation and practical training for women entrepreneurs (Prakoso, 2025; Purbasari et al., 2025). Overall, these studies emphasize the importance of strengthening business management capabilities while demonstrating the need for interventions that are able to address the specific management challenges faced by local business actors.

In response to these challenges, this community service activity carried out community-based business management training for the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group. This approach encourages participants to actively engage in discussions, share business experiences, identify management challenges, and connect training materials with the business conditions they face in real life.

This training focuses on the basics of business planning, product management, market and customer identification, business development strategies, customer service, product

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innovation, and decision-making based on market conditions. By connecting the management concept with the participants' daily business activities, this training is expected to support the implementation of business practices that are more systematic and in accordance with local conditions and needs.

The distinctive contribution of this activity lies in its focus on basic business management capacity among women entrepreneurs in Bunaken's marine tourism sector. Unlike interventions that primarily emphasize digital promotion or production technology, this activity places business management as a foundation for identifying business problems, understanding costs and profit margins, managing products, and responding to tourism market opportunities. The community-based approach applied also connects the training process with the experience and needs of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group. Thus, this activity complements various capacity-building initiatives that have been carried out previously by focusing on managerial aspects in business development in accordance with the specific local tourism context.

Based on this background, this community service activity aims to strengthen the capacity of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group through community-based business management training. In particular, this activity aims to strengthen participants' understanding of the basics of business management, encourage the identification of business opportunities and business management challenges, and support the application of business management principles that are more systematic and in accordance with the Bunaken tourism environment. The activity is expected to provide an initial contribution to strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacity and supporting the sustainable participation of local MSMEs in the tourism economy.

Method

This community service activity was carried out at the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group located in the tourist area of Bunaken Island, Manado City, North Sulawesi. Partner groups are MSME actors engaged in the provision and sale of souvenir products for tourists. Most of the group members are women who carry out business activities as part of a family source of income. These characteristics make the partner group have a strategic position in supporting local community economic activities related to the tourism sector.

The community service program was conducted from June to September 2026, covering the preparation, implementation, and evaluation phases. Initial coordination and preparation began on June 30, 2026, while the main business management training session was held on September 4, 2026, on Bunaken Island, Manado City, North Sulawesi, and involved 20 members of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group. The implementation of the activity involved the service team, elements of the government/local partners, and companions who supported the training process. The activity was designed by considering the conditions and characteristics of the participants so that the material was delivered using simple language, examples that are close to daily business activities, and hands-on practice. The training model based on the needs and conditions of partners is also used in various MSME empowerment activities to strengthen participants' knowledge and skills (Susanti et al., 2021; Syamsuri, Nuraini Asriati, 2023)

The implementation of activities uses a *community-based participatory approach*. This approach places MSME actors as the subject of activities, so that participants not only receive materials, but are also involved in identifying problems, discussing business experiences, conducting practices, and formulating the application of materials in their

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business activities (Hamzah et al., 2026). The participatory approach is relevant in community development and community-based tourism because it provides space for communities to be involved in the process of identifying needs and building capacity (Kurniawati et al., 2023; Saidah et al., 2023). In general, the implementation of activities consists of four stages, namely identification of initial conditions, training, practice and participatory discussions, and evaluation. The stages of activities can be explained as follows.

1) Identify the Initial Conditions and Needs of the Partner

The initial stage is carried out through observation and communication with partner groups to obtain an overview of business conditions and problems faced. Identification is focused on business management aspects, types of products sold, consumer characteristics, product procurement patterns, and obstacles faced in running a business. The results of the identification show that business actors still face limitations in business management, including dependence on souvenir products obtained from outside the region.

This stage is used as a basis for determining training materials and methods to suit the real needs of participants. Thus, the material is not given in general, but is directed at the problems faced by MSME actors in tourist areas. The approach of identifying needs before the implementation of the training is in line with the principle of community-based empowerment, namely making the conditions and problems of partners as the basis for determining the form of intervention (Saidah et al., 2023).

2) Implementation of Business Management Training

The second stage is in the form of business management training which is carried out through the delivery of materials, discussions, questions and answers, and providing case examples that are relevant to the business activities of the participants. The material is focused on the basic aspects of business management, including business planning, market and customer introduction, product management, business development strategies, customer service, product innovation, and business decision-making (Esti Setiawati, Salamah, 2023).

The delivery of material was carried out interactively by connecting the concept of business management with the experience of participants in selling products to tourists. The examples used were adjusted to the conditions of Bunaken Craft MSMEs so that participants could understand the relationship between the concepts given and the problems they faced in their daily business activities. The management training model directed at improving business management competencies was also applied by (Syamsuri, Nuraini Asriati, 2023) in resource management strategy training activities for SMEs.

3) Participatory Practice and Learning

After the presentation of the material, participants were involved in simple discussions and practices based on their respective business conditions. Participants were directed to identify business problems, recognize consumer needs, identify product development opportunities, and discuss alternative business management that can be applied.

The practical method is used to ensure that the material does not stop at the delivery of knowledge, but can be translated into the ability of participants to identify and discuss business problems. The service team acts as a facilitator who provides direction, examples, and feedback during the learning process. Learning that combines the delivery of material and practice is also used in women's entrepreneurial empowerment activities to strengthen participants' understanding and skills (Purbasari1 et al., 2025).

4) Evaluation and Reflection of Activities

The final stage involved evaluating the implementation process and immediate outputs of the activity. The evaluation focused on process and output indicators to assess

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participant involvement, the implementation of the training activities, and the relevance of the materials to the participants' business management needs.

Process indicators included participants' involvement in discussions and question-and-answer sessions, their participation in practical exercises based on their actual business conditions, and their responses to the training materials. Output indicators included the participation of 20 members of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group and the delivery of business management training through discussions and practical exercises. The participation of the 20 members was documented through participant attendance records, while photographs provided supporting evidence of the training implementation and participant involvement.

The evaluation was conducted descriptively through observation, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and documentation, following the approach described by Siregar et al. (2025). The evaluation focused on describing participant engagement, responses to the training materials, and the relevance of the discussions and exercises to the business challenges faced by the participants. The findings obtained are used as material for reflection on the implementation of the program and to identify potential areas for further MSME capacity development. The evaluation is limited to documenting the process of implementing activities, participant involvement, and direct outputs from the training.

Result and Discussion

1) Initial Conditions and Implementation of Activities

The Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group consists of entrepreneurial women who sell souvenir products in the tourism area of Bunaken Island, Manado, North Sulawesi. Based on initial observations and communication with partners, several souvenir products, especially t-shirts and tote bags, are supplied from outside the region, including Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Kediri. T-shirts are sold at prices ranging from IDR 75,000 to IDR 100,000 per unit, while procurement costs, including shipping, range from IDR 55,000 to IDR 80,000 per unit. These conditions show the importance of strengthening business management capacity, especially in identifying markets and customers, managing products, providing services to customers, innovating, understanding business costs, and making business decisions. The results of preliminary observations show that partners' business activities mainly focus on product sales, while broader business planning and development aspects still need further attention.

The community service program is carried out through business management training using a participatory approach. The training materials include business planning, market and customer identification, product management, customer service, innovation, business development, and decision-making. Participants are encouraged to connect the training materials with their experience in carrying out daily business activities. This community-based approach is relevant to tourism development because community involvement plays an important role in managing local tourism potential (Kurniawati et al., 2023).

Figure 1 presents documentation of the training implementation and participant involvement. The photographs provide supporting evidence that the activity was conducted and that participants were involved in the training process.

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Figure 1. Documentation of activity implementation and participant involvement

2) Strengthening Basic Business Management Knowledge and Skills

The training introduced participants to basic business management concepts that extend beyond the selling of products. The materials emphasized the importance of planning business activities, recognizing customer needs, managing products, providing appropriate services, considering innovation, and identifying potential business development strategies. These topics were selected in response to the management challenges identified during the initial observation of the partner's business activities.

These findings are consistent with Mochklas (2024), who reported a positive and significant influence of business training on the business success of women-owned MSMEs in culinary tourism areas in Surabaya. This previous study highlights the potential role of training in strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs. In the context of Bunaken Craft, the training provided an opportunity for participants to become familiar with basic business management concepts and consider their relevance to their own businesses.

However, the present activity did not use formal pre-test and post-test measurements or a quantitative assessment of business performance. Therefore, the findings cannot establish the magnitude of any improvement in participants' knowledge, skills, income, or business success. Rather, the contribution of the activity lies in introducing relevant business management concepts and connecting them with the participants' existing business experiences. This initial learning experience can be the foundation for future capacity building activities.

3) Understanding Markets, Customers, Products, and Business Innovation

Understanding market characteristics and customer preferences is one of the important components of training. As entrepreneurs operating in tourist destination areas, Bunaken Craft members serve consumers with diverse preferences and expectations. Therefore, business development needs to pay attention not only to the availability of products, but also the suitability of the product, quality, design, and identity of the tourist destination.

This discussion is consistent with the community service activities reported by Aditha Agung Prakoso (2025) involving a women farmers' group in the Ngentak area of Bantul. The activity emphasized the importance of product innovation in improving the suitability of products for tourism market segments. This provides a relevant reference for considering how souvenir businesses can respond to tourists' preferences and destination characteristics.

For Bunaken Craft, dependence on souvenir products sourced from outside the region provides an opportunity to consider alternative business development strategies. Participants can explore the potential for developing products that reflect Bunaken's local identity and

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meet tourists' needs. Nevertheless, such product development should be understood as a potential direction for future business development rather than an output already achieved through the present training.

Innovation was also discussed as an aspect of business development that does not necessarily require major changes. This can start by making improvements to product design, product variation, packaging, product presentation, and local identity. Purbasari et al. (2025) show the relevance of interactive training that combines theoretical materials and practical activities in strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacity, especially in product packaging and digital catalog development.

Although Bunaken Craft's activities do not quantitatively measure skill improvement or produce a comparable set of documented outputs, this approach can be a useful reference in designing subsequent training that integrates business management knowledge with product development in practice.

In this context, souvenirs can be seen not only as goods sold, but also as products that contribute to the tourist's experience during a visit to a destination. The development of products that have a distinctive local identity can be an opportunity to differentiate the products offered by Bunaken Craft while reducing dependence on products supplied from outside the region. However, to realize these opportunities, advanced practices, product development, and mentoring are needed that are tailored to the group's capabilities.

4) Community-Based Learning, Participant Engagement, and Program Evaluation

The training adopted a participatory approach that encouraged participants to share their experiences, business challenges, and management needs. Discussions and question-and-answer sessions provided opportunities to connect the training materials with the actual conditions of operating souvenir businesses in a tourism area. This approach places participants not only as recipients of information, but also as parties who actively contribute to the learning process.

This approach is in line with the research of Saidah et al. (2023), who applied the Participatory Rural Appraisal approach in capacity building activities for tourism village managers. Their research emphasizes the importance of community involvement in tourism development and capacity building. Similarly, Kurniawati et al. (2023) highlight the importance of education and community participation in community-based tourism development. Sukoco et al. (2019) also demonstrate that community entrepreneurship training can incorporate basic training, workshops, business group management, mentoring, and product innovation development. Overall, these studies support the relevance of participatory learning that connects training materials to the experiences and needs of local business actors.

In the Bunaken Craft program, the discussion process provides a space for participants to connect the concept of business management with their experience in serving tourists and selling souvenirs. Photo documentation, including the images presented in Figures 1–3, is supporting evidence of the implementation of activities and participant involvement. The program involved 20 members of the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group, making participant participation one of the immediate outputs that can be reported.

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Figure 2. Training discussion with participants

The evaluation was conducted descriptively through observation, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and activity documentation, following the approach described by Siregar et al. (2025). The evaluation focused on the implementation of the training, participant engagement, and the relevance of the materials to the business challenges discussed during the activity. These aspects form the basis for reflecting on the implementation of the program and identifying potential needs for further capacity building.

The available evidence supports reporting on the implementation of the training, the participation of 20 group members, and the use of discussion-based learning methods. However, because no quantitative pre-test, post-test, or impact assessment was conducted, these activities could not ensure a percentage increase in participants' understanding or demonstrate a measurable improvement in business performance or revenue. Similarly, specific outputs such as written business plans, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for customer service, or new souvenir designs should only be reported if they were actually generated and documented during the activity. Therefore, evaluations focus on verifiable evidence of implementation and direct outputs of activities, rather than on unmeasured impacts.

Program Challenges, Sustainability, and Contribution to Tourism MSME Development

One of the challenges in the implementation of business management training is the difference in business experience and the level of understanding of participants in management concepts. To overcome this, the training material is delivered in language that is easy to understand and associated with examples from the participants' daily business activities. Connecting the concept with practical situations is intended so that the material is more relevant to the needs of entrepreneurial women who run businesses in the Bunaken tourism area.

The activity represents an initial stage of capacity strengthening and should not be interpreted as evidence of long-term changes in business performance. Saidah et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of sustained community involvement in strengthening the capacity of tourism managers. Similarly, Aditha Agung Prakoso (2025) highlights the relevance of product innovation and marketing strategy development in supporting women's group products in tourism markets. These studies show that further support for Bunaken Craft can be focused on product development, improving the quality of customer service,

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marketing strategies, and strengthening the business network, taking into account the group's priorities and capabilities.

The broader contribution of this program lies in the introduction of business management concepts that are directly related to the experiences and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in a tourism destination. This orientation is consistent with community empowerment initiatives that emphasize training, participation, innovation, and capacity building in MSME development and community-based tourism (Kurniawati et al., 2023; Saidah et al., 2023; Sukoco et al., 2019).

Overall, the program provided an initial opportunity for the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group to engage with business planning, market and customer identification, product management, customer service, innovation, business development, and decision-making. The training's main contribution was to connect these concepts with the participants' business context rather than to demonstrate measurable economic impacts. Further mentoring and practical activities would be needed to support the application of the concepts, assess the development of business management skills, and determine whether subsequent improvements in product quality, customer service, business performance, or income occur.

Conclusion

The community service activity on community-based business management training for the Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group provided an opportunity for participants to learn about basic business management concepts relevant to their business activities in the Bunaken tourism area. The training covered business planning, market and customer identification, product management, customer service, innovation, business development, and decision-making. These topics were discussed in relation to the participants' business conditions and experiences as women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.

The activity provided an initial opportunity to connect business management concepts with the challenges and development opportunities faced by the participants, particularly in understanding tourist needs and considering souvenir products that reflect Bunaken's local potential. The community-based approach encourages participants to share experiences and connect training materials to their business activities.

Overall, the activity represents an initial effort to support the business management capacity of women-owned MSMEs in the Bunaken tourism area. Further mentoring and practical training are recommended to support the application of the concepts introduced, encourage locally distinctive product development, improve customer service, and promote more sustainable business development.

Recommendation

Partner Group (Bunaken Craft MSME Group)

The Bunaken Craft Women's MSME Group is encouraged to gradually apply the business management concepts introduced during the training in its daily business activities. Practical steps may include identifying target customers, recording product procurement costs and selling prices, evaluating product preferences among tourists, improving customer service, and exploring souvenir designs that reflect Bunaken's local identity. The group is also encouraged to discuss business challenges regularly and identify priority areas for improvement based on its available resources and members' capabilities.

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Local Government and Tourism Stakeholders

Local government agencies and tourism stakeholders are encouraged to support the development of Bunaken Craft through targeted business management training, product promotion opportunities, and improved access to tourism-related marketing networks. Practical support may include facilitating. Participation in local tourism exhibitions, connecting MSMEs with souvenir traders and tourism business actors, as well as providing assistance related to product quality, packaging, and local product identity. Coordination between partner groups, local governments, and tourism stakeholders will help align business development initiatives with the needs and characteristics of Bunaken tourist destinations.

Higher Education Institutions and Future Community Service Programs

Universities are encouraged to develop advanced community service programs that combine business management training with practical assistance tailored to the needs of the Bunaken Craft group. Further activities can focus on simple business planning, recording costs and prices, customer service standards, product innovation, and marketing development. Where possible, future programs should include initial assessments and follow-up assessments to evaluate changes in participants' knowledge and skills, along with documentation of practical outputs generated during the activity. This will provide stronger evidence of program outcomes and help identify areas that still need assistance. This community-based training approach can also be adapted for women's MSME groups in other tourist areas, provided that training materials and implementation strategies are tailored to local conditions, business needs, and available resources.

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