

# The Role of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in Tourism Development in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, Southwest Papua Province

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## KEYWORDS

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in tourism development in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, Southwest Papua. Using a qualitative approach with Miles and Huberman's interactive data analysis model and SWOT analysis, the study explores the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by Pokdarwis. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants, direct observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that Pokdarwis plays a crucial role in utilizing the tourism potential of Weru Village, including its natural beauty, mangrove ecosystem, and local culture, to create a unique tourist destination. However, major challenges include limited training, lack of infrastructure, and operational funding constraints. Significant opportunities were identified through government programs supporting tourism villages and the growing trend of nature and culture-based tourism. To address these challenges, strengthening Pokdarwis' capacity through training, improving infrastructure, and collaborating with various stakeholders are needed. With the right management strategies, Pokdarwis can optimize Werur Village's tourism potential sustainably, enhance local community well-being, and preserve the environment and culture.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector in driving economic growth and regional development, especially in areas with rich natural and cultural potential. The participation of local communities is crucial in the development of sustainable tourism. One form of this participation is through the formation of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis), which function as the main drivers in promoting and managing tourism potential in their areas. According to Riannada & Mardiyah (2021), Pokdarwis has an important role in increasing public awareness of local tourism potential and encouraging active participation in its development. This is in line with research by Maharani et al. (2022), which shows that the existence of Pokdarwis can increase community involvement in supporting tourism development programs in their areas.

Werur Village, located in Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, Southwest Papua Province, has significant tourism potential, including natural beauty and unique cultural richness. However, this potential has not been fully developed and utilized to improve the welfare of the local community. The formation and active role of Pokdarwis in Werur Village is expected to be a catalyst in the development of local tourism. A study by Junaid and Salim (2019) showed that the existence of Pokdarwis can increase community participation in managing tourist destinations and encourage the development of the tourism sector in the area. This is also supported by the findings of Putrawan & Ardana (2019), which stated that the presence of Pokdarwis can be a solution in bridging community needs with sustainable tourism management policies.

The role of Pokdarwis covers various aspects, from promoting tourist destinations, improving service quality, to preserving culture and the environment. According to Ariza et al. (2024), Pokdarwis plays a role in increasing public awareness of the importance of tourism and encouraging their involvement in sustainable tourism activities. In Werur Village, this role is very important considering that the existing tourism potential requires structured and participatory management to be able to develop optimally. Research by Singgalen (2023) revealed that active Pokdarwis can help create more competitive destinations through efforts to preserve culture and improve the quality of tourist experiences.

However, the effectiveness of Pokdarwis's role in tourism development is not free from challenges, such as limited human resources, minimal access to training, and lack of support from local governments. Research by Indriaty (2024) emphasizes the importance of the role of youth in tourism development activities and the need for support from various parties to increase the capacity of Pokdarwis. A study by Wahyuni (2018) also shows that challenges such as lack of training and mentoring can be overcome through collaboration between the government, community, and private sector to build Pokdarwis capacity more effectively.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the role of Pokdarwis in tourism development in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrau Regency, West Papua Province. By understanding the roles and challenges faced by Pokdarwis, it is hoped that effective strategies can be formulated to optimize their contribution to sustainable tourism development and improve the welfare of local communities.

### **The Role of Pokdarwis in Tourism Development**

Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) has a strategic role in supporting the development of community-based tourism in various regions. As the main driver in managing tourist destinations, Pokdarwis is tasked with increasing public awareness of local potential, promoting destinations, and involving the community in sustainable tourism activities. Research by Junaid and Salim (2019) shows that good organizational governance is very important to support the effectiveness of Pokdarwis in managing Nglanggeran Tourism Village, Yogyakarta. This study emphasizes the need for strong coordination between Pokdarwis, the community, and the government to create synergy in destination development. In addition, Wahyuni (2018) emphasizes the importance of community empowerment strategies in developing tourist villages. This study identifies that increasing community capacity, both through training and mentoring, is a key factor in the success of destination management by Pokdarwis. This empowerment provides local communities with the ability to manage destinations independently and sustainably.

### **Strengthening Pokdarwis Institutions**

Pokdarwis institutions are an important aspect in increasing their capacity and effectiveness. Arisa et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of strengthening Pokdarwis institutions through training, mentoring, and improving managerial skills. This study found that strong institutions not only increase the operational effectiveness of Pokdarwis but also encourage community empowerment in managing tourist destinations. Putrawan and Ardana (2019) in their study of Munduk Village in Buleleng Regency revealed that Pokdarwis plays a role in promoting local tourism, improving service quality, and maintaining environmental sustainability. This shows that Pokdarwis institutions can be the main pillar in developing destinations that are oriented towards sustainability.

### **Optimalisasi Performa dan Branding Destinasi**

Optimizing Pokdarwis performance through the use of information technology and marketing strategies is also a major focus in the literature. Singgalen (2023) explains that the implementation

of an information system based on the 9P marketing mix can improve tourism destination branding and maximize Pokdarwis performance. This shows that adaptation to technology and marketing innovation can strengthen the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Maharani, Hidayati, and Habib (2022) highlight the importance of the role of Pokdarwis in developing creative tourism-based businesses. This study shows that creative initiatives, such as local products and arts and culture, can increase the attractiveness of destinations while boosting the local economy.

### **Economic and Social Contribution of Pokdarwis**

Pokdarwis also plays an important role in improving the economic welfare of the community through tourism development. Riannada and Mardiyah (2021) found that Pokdarwis Kencana in the Osing Kemiren Traditional Tourism Village was able to increase community income through the management of local cultural and tourism attractions. This study shows that community-based management can create significant socio-economic impacts. Indriaty et al. (2024) highlighted the role of tourism-aware youth groups in managing geotourism potential in Gema Village. This study shows that youth involvement through education and training can increase awareness of conservation and sustainable management of local resources.

### **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the Miles and Huberman interactive data analysis model and SWOT analysis to explore the role and challenges of Pokdarwis in tourism development in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, Southwest Papua. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants consisting of Pokdarwis members, local communities, local government representatives, and tourists, as well as direct observation and documentation in the form of activity reports and related policies. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation in the form of descriptive narratives and tables, and drawing conclusions that were verified through method triangulation and member checks. SWOT analysis was used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect the role of Pokdarwis, such as natural tourism potential, limited training, government programs, and competition from other destinations. This approach provides an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the role of Pokdarwis and management strategies that are oriented towards tourism sustainability in Werur Village.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study reveals that the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, plays a central role in local tourism development. Based on the analysis conducted, the main results are grouped based on the dimensions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats using SWOT analysis.

#### **1. Strengths**

Werur Village has significant natural advantages, including white sandy beaches, a well-maintained mangrove ecosystem, and the presence of historical sites such as World War II relics. Pokdarwis members demonstrate high dedication in promoting the destination, through initiatives such as organizing cultural festivals and environment-based ecotourism. Close collaboration between Pokdarwis and the local community supports cultural preservation, such as traditional dance performances and traditional culinary presentations. Social support from the local community is an important supporting factor, creating strong social capital for tourism development.

## **2. Weaknesses**

The study found that Pokdarwis members have limited tourism management and marketing skills, especially in utilizing digital platforms for destination promotion. Lack of training and technical assistance are major obstacles in optimizing the tourism potential of Kampung Werur. In addition, supporting infrastructure such as proper road access, parking facilities, and information boards are still minimal, reducing tourist comfort. Operational funding is also a critical issue, with a large dependence on community self-funding.

## **3. Opportunities**

Government programs to support tourist villages, such as through the Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI), have opened up great opportunities for the development of Kampung Werur. In addition, the increasing trend of special interest tourism, such as ecotourism and historical tourism, provides an opportunity to attract a wider market segment. Kampung Werur also has the potential to develop new cultural-based attractions, such as West Papuan handicrafts and educational tour packages about the mangrove ecosystem.

## **4. Threats**

External challenges include the lack of basic infrastructure, such as adequate public transportation to Werur Village, and the lack of quality accommodation for tourists. Competition from other better-known tourist destinations in Southwest Papua, such as Raja Ampat, is a significant threat. In addition, the negative impact on the environment due to uncontrolled tourist visits is a risk that needs to be addressed with strict regulation and supervision.

The results of the study show that Pokdarwis in Werur Village has a very important role in managing local tourism potential, in line with the research of Junaid and Salim (2019) which emphasizes the importance of organizational governance in destination development. Community involvement in the Pokdarwis program creates a strong synergy between preserving local culture and developing tourism destinations. For example, collaboration between Pokdarwis and local communities in organizing cultural festivals not only increases tourist attractions but also strengthens local cultural identity.

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The great opportunity for tourism development in Kampung Werur lies in the trend of nature-based and culture-based tourism. Research by Maharani et al. (2022) shows that Pokdarwis can be the main catalyst in developing creative attractions based on local culture that provide added value to tourist destinations. This is relevant to the potential of Kampung Werur to develop educational tourism packages based on mangrove ecosystems and historical heritage. On the other hand, the threat of environmental damage due to increased tourist visits requires serious attention. Research by Singgalen (2023) emphasizes the importance of technology-based information systems in monitoring the impact of tourism on the environment. In the context of Kampung Werur, managing tourist visits with strict regulations and technology-based supervision can be a solution to minimize negative impacts on the environment.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that Pokdarwis in Werur Village, Bikar District, Tambrauw Regency, has a strategic role in developing community-based tourism. Pokdarwis has successfully utilized its main strengths, such as natural beauty, mangrove ecosystems, and local culture, to create unique tourist attractions. However, this role still faces a number of challenges, including limited human resources in management and promotion, minimal supporting infrastructure, and limited operational funds. Great opportunities are found through government programs that support tourist villages and the increasing trend of special interest tourism, such as ecotourism and historical tourism. In order for this potential to be optimized, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of Pokdarwis members through training and technical assistance, improve basic infrastructure, and collaborate between Pokdarwis, the community, the government, and the private sector. In addition, tourism management must be carried out by considering environmental and cultural sustainability through strict supervision and regulation. With the right strategy, Werur Village can become a model for a sustainable tourist destination that not only improves the welfare of local communities but also preserves its natural and cultural wealth.

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