

## **ENHANCING DIGITAL AND ENGLISH LITERACY WITH A DIGITAL FOLKLORE CORNER TO PROMOTE TALAWAAN TOURISM VILLAGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This community service aimed to strengthen the community's capacity and potentials of Talawaan Tourist Village by integrating technology, capacity building, and cultural preservation. The program addressed four main issues: low tourist visits, limited digital literacy, low English proficiency, and declining cultural knowledge. To tackle these issues, the community service program proposed digital literacy training, English for tourism workshops, and establishment of both a 3x4 meter folktale reading corner and a digital e-library at [wisatatalawaan.com](http://wisatatalawaan.com). A total of twenty participants joined three training sessions, where they learned to create promotional videos, practiced English communication, and practiced managing digital platforms. The program produced both tangible outputs such as the reading corner, books, QR codes and intangible products such as training modules, website, and multimedia content. Community participation was notably high, with community actively engaged in video production, storytelling, and content uploads. The program generated significant impacts that include improved English communication skills, enhanced digital competence, increased visibility of Tunan Waterfall, and strengthen cultural identity. These outcomes are expected to boost tourism, generate economic benefits, and ensure cultural sustainability. Ultimately, the program positions Talawaan as a model for community-based cultural tourism that successfully combines traditional storytelling with digital innovation.

**Keywords:** Digital Literacy; English for Tourism; Folktales; Reading Corner; Talawaan Tourism Village

### **ABSTRAK**

*Program Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memperkuat potensi wisata Desa Wisata Talawaan melalui integrasi teknologi, peningkatan kapasitas, dan pelestarian budaya. Program ini menjawab empat masalah utama: rendahnya jumlah wisatawan, keterampilan literasi digital yang terbatas, kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang rendah, dan menurunnya pengetahuan budaya. Solusi yang ditawarkan meliputi pelatihan literasi digital, pelatihan bahasa Inggris untuk pariwisata, serta pembangunan pojok baca cerita rakyat berukuran 3x4 meter dan e-library digital di*

*wisatatalawaan.com. Sebanyak dua puluh peserta mengikuti tiga sesi pelatihan untuk membuat video promosi, berlatih komunikasi bahasa Inggris, dan mengelola platform digital. Hasil program mencakup produk fisik (pojok baca, buku, kode QR) dan produk nonfisik (modul pelatihan, situs web, konten multimedia). Partisipasi masyarakat sangat tinggi, terlihat dari keterlibatan aktif dalam produksi video, penceritaan, dan unggahan konten. Program ini menghasilkan dampak nyata seperti peningkatan keterampilan bahasa Inggris, kompetensi digital, visibilitas Air Terjun Tunan, serta penguatan identitas budaya. Dampak jangka panjang diharapkan mampu meningkatkan jumlah wisatawan, pendapatan desa, dan menjaga keberlanjutan budaya. Program ini menempatkan Talawaan sebagai model desa wisata berbasis budaya yang memadukan tradisi dan inovasi digital.*

**Kata Kunci:** Bahasa Inggris Pariwisata; Cerita Rakyat; Desa Wisata Talawaan; Literasi Digital; Pojok Baca

Article History:	
Diterima	: 05-08-2025
Disetujui	: 15-09-2025
Diterbitkan Online	: 30-09-2025

INTRODUCTION

1. Overview of the Present Situation

Most tourists visiting North Sulawesi still focus on coastal attractions such as Bunaken (Singgalen, 2023), even though North Minahasa Regency also has equally beautiful natural tourism potential, one of which is Air Terjun Tunan waterfall located in Talawaan Tourism Village. Despite its relatively affordable entrance fee (Rp. 15,000 for local visitors and Rp. 25,000 for foreign tourists), this tourism destination remains little known and rarely visited (Sondak et al., 2024).



**Figure 1.** Talawaan Tourism Spots (From Left to Right: Tunan Waterfall, The Chapel Tropical View, and Green Village).

Geographically, Talawaan village has a strategic position as it is located only 15 km from Airmadidi (the capital city of North Minahasa regency) and 17 km from Manado (the capital of North Sulawesi province), making it easily accessible. Tunan Waterfall is managed by the village-owned enterprise (BUMDes/Badan Usaha Milik Desa) “Tunan Talawaan”, which handles ticketing, maintenance, and finances under village supervision. Talawaan also

offers The Chapel Tropical View homestay and Green Village pool, but both attract relatively few visitors compared to other North Sulawesi tourist destinations.

Cultural promotion is vital, as folktales attract international tourists and connect them with the community (Pinontoan et al., 2025). Cultural contact with foreign tourists encourages the need for English language practice, while explanations of local traditions further enrich tourist experiences (Shariffuddin et al., 2023). Memorable cultural experiences through storytelling significantly contribute to higher tourist satisfaction (Melani et al., 2025) and foster loyalty, including the likelihood of return visits (Kusnayain & Hussein, 2025). Moreover, the digitalization of folktales not only enhances their educational value but also attracts visitors through engaging multimedia formats (Baruadi & Eraku, 2018).

The program in Talawaan Tourism Village focuses on digital literacy, English for tourism, and cultural preservation through physical and digital folktale reading corners, enabling the community to promote tourism, strengthen identity, boost visitors, and build a sustainable cultural village.

## **2. Identified Problems Faced by Partners and Proposed Solutions**

The identified problems faced by the community are outlined into four. *First*, local residents noted a recent rise in tourist visits, especially after the new bridge improved access to Tunan waterfall (Dtege, 2025). However, tourist numbers at Tunan Waterfall remain low, rising slightly from 1,297 in 2023 to about 1,400 in 2024, far below Bunaken Marine Park's 30,277 visitors (Daeng, 2024). It means, visitors to Tunan Waterfall, Talawaan's main attraction, are still less than 10% of Bunaken's total; *Second*, most residents regularly use social media but lack skills in content creation, video editing, and persuasive promotion, leaving platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube underutilized for promoting Talawaan Tourist Village; *Third*, the majority of the residents work as farmers. Although foreign tourists occasionally visit the village, locals struggle to communicate in English even basic conversation. They are unable to give directions to Tunan Waterfall, the homestay, or nearby eateries, relying instead on body language due to limited English communicative skill; and *Fourth*, senior residents are worried that youth are gradually losing touch with Talawaan's cultural heritage, such as Mapalus and Wanita Terana. A physical and digital folktale reading corner is proposed to engage young people, share cultural values with tourists, and give Talawaan Tourism Village a unique identity not found in other villages.

Based on the problems aforementioned, the solutions offered by the community service team through this program are (1) digital literacy training, (2) English language training, and (3) establishment of a folklore reading corner. Digital literacy training aims to equip the community, tourism managers, and local businesses with digital skills (Wahidah et al., 2022) to promote *Talawaan* Tourism Village. It covers content creation (photo, video, posters), social media marketing (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), and online reputation management.

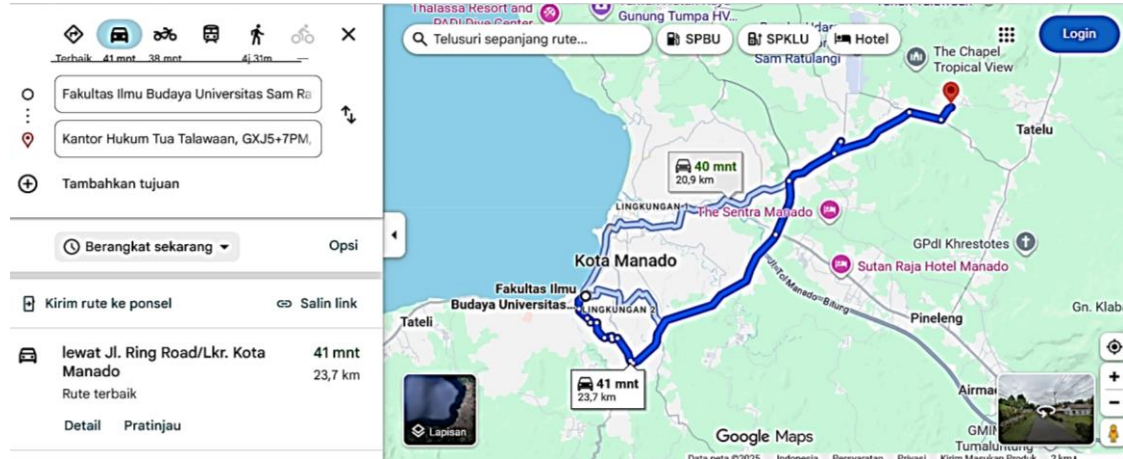
English language training aims to develop English communication skill of the locals to serve international visitors. Participants include homestay owners, tour guides, souvenir sellers, and youth. The training included

materials such as greetings, giving directions, storytelling, tourist service conversations, and role playing with practical simulations (Setiadi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, establishment of a folklore reading corner aims to preserve and promote North Minahasa folktales and culture while enriching tourism experiences. The program included (1) creating a modest but useable reading corner in a strategic place; (2) developing a digital reading platform via a dedicated website ([wisatatalawaan.com](http://wisatatalawaan.com)) featuring folktale e-books, tourism information, ticket prices, and local contacts, and (3) engaging local youth as volunteers for content creation, storytelling, and cultural promotion.

**PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION METHODS**

**1. Location, Time, and Participants**

The training program was held on 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 29<sup>th</sup> of August, and 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 at the Head Office of Talawaan village and Talawaan Square, where the physical reading corner building was built, with both venues about 41 to 42 minutes from the Faculty of Humanities, Sam Ratulangi University. Each session lasted three hours.



**Figure 2.** Google maps of Sam Ratulangi University to Talawaan village.

**Table 1.** Data of Local Participants

No.	Name	Group	Group Distribution for Video Project
1	Dirrel Luky Dotulong	1	Describe Tourism Spots in Talawaan
2	Treyvi Umboh	1	
3	Jenifer B. L. Runtukahu	1	
4	Lady Aurelly Tumundo	1	
5	Audrey Cheish Tumundo	1	
6	Lovely Rosalin Katuuk	2	Coordinator
7	Meiby Anneke Mapaliey	2	Green Village
8	Jeane Luntungan	2	
9	Marsela Setiawan	2	
10	Ariella Majesty Tambesi	2	
11	Filly F. Katuuk	3	Coordinator
12	Queenzhy Gwyneth Nender	3	Tunan Waterfall
13	Princess Mathilda Palit	3	
14	Yolanda Solafide Mandagi	3	
15	Marivel V. Pongoh	3	
16	Sacty Gerald Sumampouw	4	Coordinator
17	Fikky Palit	4	The Chapel Tropical View
18	Timothy Minkid	4	
19	Ghabriel Farrel Kumayas	4	
20	Joel Briellean Katuuk	4	



As shown in Table 1 above, 20 Talawaan locals participated in this program. The twenty participants were divided into four groups, each consisting of five members. Each group was instructed to produce a video lasting between one and five minutes, based on their assigned topic. The videos were required to combine both images and live footage (including subtitles in both English and Indonesian languages), display the names of the group members, and feature suitable background music or audio.

## 2. Program Instruments

The instruments used in this program comprised two main categories: participant evaluation instruments and program facilities. Participant evaluation involved speaking practice through role play to assess English communication skills, video production and uploads on the official website (<https://wisatatalawaan.com/>) as evidence of digital literacy, and observation sheets to monitor participation and progress during training sessions. Meanwhile, program facilities included the official website of Talawaan Tourism Village as a platform for promotion and evaluation of digital content, both digital and physical folktale reading corners as tools for cultural preservation and learning, and training modules alongside learning materials to support digital literacy and English language instruction.

## 3. Program Implementation Stages

The program implementation stages consist of four (4) stages: Preparation Stage, Practice and Application Stage, and Evaluation Stage. The stages are shown in the figure as follows.



**Figure 4.** Flow Chart of Program Implementation Stages.

The Preparation Stage focused on coordinating with stakeholders, designing training modules, preparing the necessary facilities, and recruiting participants to ensure the program's readiness. The Training Stage, participants engaged in digital literacy and English language training sessions, conducted at the village office and community square to provide both formal and practical learning environments. The Practice and Application Stage allowed trainees to apply their newly acquired skills by creating tourism videos, uploading content to the official website and social media platforms, and using the folktale reading corner as a medium for storytelling activities.

During the Evaluation Stage, program progress was assessed through reviews of digital content, monitoring of outputs, and the collection of feedback from both participants and stakeholders. Finally, the Sustainability or Follow-up Stage ensured the long-term impact of the initiative through the handover

of facilities to the community, continuous digital promotion, and efforts to strengthen community independence.

## PROGRAM RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The program trained participants in digital and English literacy while establishing physical and digital reading corners. Skills are evaluated through speaking practice and uploading promotional videos on <https://wisatatalawaan.com/>. It established both a physical and digital folktale reading corner, and delivered combined English for tourism and digital literacy training across three sessions. Training objectives were practical: to improve participants' ability to describe attractions, give directions, create and edit promotional content, and operate the official website ([wisatatalawaan.com](https://wisatatalawaan.com)) as content admins.

### 1. Technological and Innovative Products (Hard and Soft)

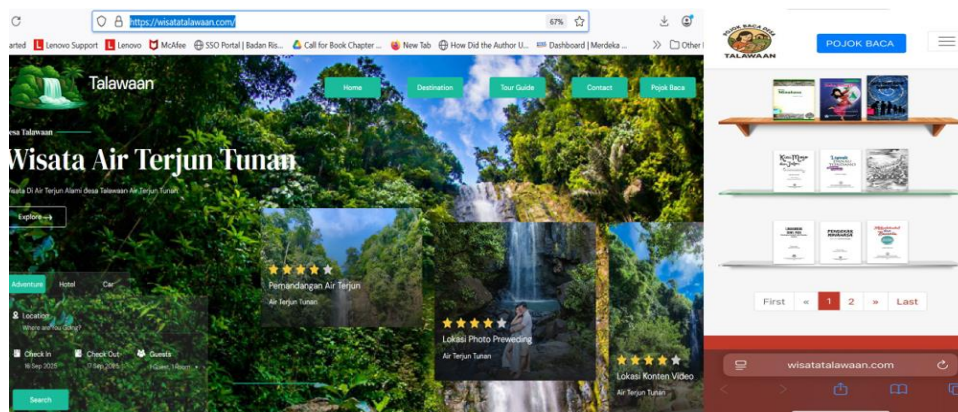
The program produced both hard products and soft products. *Hard Products* include: (a) a 3x4 meter physical folktale reading corner at *Talawaan Square*, fully furnished with 61 printed books, a mini whiteboard, bookshelf, table, two carpets, and comfortable seating; and (b) QR codes installed in four directions of the reading corner, providing direct access to the e-library provided on <https://wisatatalawaan.com/> website.



**Figure 5.** Reading Corner (Physical Form).

While hard products are defined as tangible facilities and equipment, *Soft Products* are defined as knowledge, digital platforms, and skills that include: (a) the creation of tourism village official website <https://wisatatalawaan.com/> with integrated e-library (as shown in Figure 6), tourism information, and video gallery; and (b) Training modules for English for tourism (descriptive texts, adjectives, and giving directions) and for digital literacy (content creation, video editing, and website administration); (iii) four of tourism videos and descriptive texts created by participants and uploaded as promotional content.

This hard and soft products represent technological innovations tailored to Talawaan's local context, merging traditional cultural preservation (folktales in printed books) with digital transformation (QR codes and e-library in the website).



**Figure 6.** Integrated Website (<https://wisatatalawaan.com/>)

## 2. Application of Technology and Innovation to the Community

The program's technology and innovations were directly applied through participatory activities that include: (a) *Digital Literacy Application* where community learned how to transform raw media into promotional content and applied editing skills to create tourism videos; (b) *English Training Application* where community practiced using newly learned adjectives and descriptive texts (Hendriani, 2014) to promote Tunan Waterfall and other tourism sites, culminating in role-play sessions on giving directions to tourists (Dewi et al., 2019); and (c) *Integrated Application in Reading Corner* where physical reading corner doubled as a training space and cultural showcase as well as through QR codes, participants and visitors could test their digital navigation skills by accessing the e-library.



**Figure 8.** English Training and Speaking Practice through Role Play.

Thus, technology was not only introduced in this program but also “practically embedded” in daily use, giving the community confidence to sustain it independently.

## 3. Relevance and Community Participation

The program directly addressed urgent local needs that include *Relevance* and *Community Participation*. Relevance aspect include: (a) responding to low tourist visits by equipping villagers with skills to promote their attractions digitall, (b) answering the problem of limited English proficiency by offering practical tourism communication training, and (c) tackling the erosion of cultural knowledge by creating a dual-format (physical and digital) folktales repository.

In addition to Relevance, the program also emphasized *Community Participation* which was reflected in (a) high attendance rate with majority of



the participants attended three full sessions which each lasting three hours, actively engaging in role plays, digital exercises, and video uploads despite some participants not abling to come three times due to various reasons; and (b) the enthusiasm level of the local youth and ladies assisted in the storytelling and content creation activities ensuring intergenerational involvement and sustainability.



**Figure 7.** Photo Session of Participants and Community Service Team.

In turn, these high level of relevance and community participation demonstrate that the program is not external-imposed but community-owned, strengthening its sustainability for the tourism village and its community.

#### **4. Impact, Benefits, and Productivity**

The program show both immediate and long-term benefits for Talawaan Tourism Village. *Immediate Impacts* show that: (a) the community members are now possessing functional English in terms of describing tourism attractions, giving directions that will improve confidence and effective interactions with international visitors; (b) villagers are skilled in producing and publishing digital tourism contents, creating visibility beyond their local area, and (c) the reading corner has become a new community hub, simultaneously promoting literacy, cultural pride, and tourism engagement for the community.

Meanwhile, *Long-term Benefits* show: (a) improvement in the community's productivity such as in digital promotion and English communicative skill that allow villagers to independently produce promotional materials, reducing reliance on external agencies, (b) development in the tourism village potentials that enhance visibility of Tunan waterfall and nearby homestays that are expected to increase visitor numbers and local income, (c) improvement in cultural preservation through folktales reading activities that are now archived both physically and digitally, ensuring their transmission to future generations and adding unique cultural value to tourism experiences, and (d) improvement in the sustainability with facilities formally handed over to the village and QR or e-library systems in place, the community has the tools to continue without constant outside intervention.

#### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This program combined technology, capacity building, and cultural preservation to strengthen Talawaan Tourism Village as a sustainable



destination. The folktale reading corner and digital e-library became a hub for literacy and tourism promotion, while digital literacy and English training equipped participants to create content, interact with visitors, and manage the village website, boosting visibility and community empowerment. The program directly addressed four key areas that include: (1) technology and innovation i.e. tangible facilities, QR codes, and digital platforms were developed and handed over to the community; (2) community application i.e. participants actively practiced using these technologies through video creation, storytelling, and online uploads; (3) Relevance and Participation i.e. the program responded to urgent local needs (tourism promotion, language skills, cultural preservation) and involved villagers of different ages; and (4) Impact and Productivity i.e. improvements in English skills, digital competence, cultural engagement, and tourism visibility are expected to generate long-term benefits for local economy and identity. Generally, the program significantly transformed Talawaan village into a model for community-based cultural tourism, merging tradition with digital transformation in a sustainable way.

To sustain and expand the program's impact, it is recommended that (1) periodic refresher training in English for tourism and digital literacy be conducted, supported by peer-to-peer mentoring to ensure continuous skill transfer; (2) the village website contents be regularly updated with new folktales, tourism events, and creative media such as vlogs, podcasts, and short documentaries to keep it engaging and relevant; (3) the partnerships with schools, tourism agencies, universities, and local businesses be strengthened to support storytelling events, workshops, and facility upgrades; (4) a simple monitoring and evaluation system be implemented to track website visitors, reading corner users, and tourist arrivals, using community feedback to refine training and promotion strategies; and (5) integrated model of digital literacy, language training, and cultural preservation in other villages across North Minahasa, positioning Talawaan be introduced and replicated as a pioneer in sustainable cultural tourism.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The team would like to express our sincere gratitude to *Direktorat Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat (DPPM) Kemdiktisaintek* for generously sponsoring and supporting this community service program. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to BUMDes Tunan Talawaan, the Talawaan village government, Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group) of Talawaan village, and the entire Talawaan community for their active participation and collaboration. Their collective effort made it possible to successfully implement digital literacy and English for tourism training, establish the folktale reading corner and e-library, and promote Talawaan as a sustainable cultural tourism destination.

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