

Empowering rural women through Warung Nusa: A community-based tourism program in Denai Kuala

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ABSTRACT

This community service program applies the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to support the design and planning of Warung Nusa, a communal space in Denai Kuala Village, Deli Serdang, North Sumatera. As part of the Kampung Nusa initiative by HAPSARI and the development of Denai Kuala spice tourism village, this program aims to empower rural women through food security, entrepreneurship, and cultural revitalization. The method involved five ABCD stages: preparation, asset mapping, capacity building, implementation, and participatory evaluation. Local assets—such as women's networks, household gardens, cultural stories, and the coastal landscape—were identified and mobilized to support the village's transformation into a Spice Tourism Village (Desa Wisata Rempah). The main output was the co-design and construction of the green Warung Nusa, a communal kiosk made with locally sourced materials and designed for culinary tourism, cultural activities, and community gatherings. Results show increased community participation, enhanced women's agency, and early economic impact through product sales and social events. The conclusion emphasizes that participatory planning and local asset mobilization are key to sustainable rural development. This program demonstrates how service-learning and design collaboration can build meaningful infrastructure while strengthening community capacity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Rumah Nusa Community, our community service partner (or “mitra”), is part of HAPSARI, a women's empowerment organization established on March 14, 1990, in Sukasari Village, Perbaungan District, Serdang Bedagai, North Sumatera. Initially, HAPSARI was named as acronym of the Harapan Desa Sukasari, a children's learning center in the village. In 2000s, HAPSARI changed its acronym into Himpunan Serikat Perempuan Indonesia and its vision is to serve as a platform for collective struggle, strengthening and expanding the grassroots women's movement in Indonesia to advance a society characterized by gender justice, equality, and welfare (Himpunan Serikat Perempuan Indonesia, n.d.). Among the strategic issues the organization continues to address is achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. This effort encompasses enhancing access to resources for economic

empowerment, health, food security, improved nutrition, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture, as well as mobilizing agents of change.

Aligned with its ongoing commitment to empowering women and families, particularly rural housewives, HAPSARI launched the Rumah Nutrisi Keluarga (Family Nutrition House) program, or in short, Rumah Nusa, in 2020. This program seeks to address the food crisis exacerbated by climate change. The strategic approach involves enabling each family to cultivate a supply of non-rice food staples in their own yards. Rumah Nusa is implemented by dividing household yards into three distinct planting zones. Zone I, located in the front yard, is dedicated to growing spices, herbs, vegetables, and fruits that provide essential family nutrients, such as leafy greens, chili peppers, tomatoes, spinach, coconut, guava, papaya, and jackfruit. Zone II, located at the rear of the house, is reserved for food crops that can serve as rice substitutes, such as taro, banana, corn, and cassava. Zone III, situated in the garden, is planted with perennial crops that serve as long-term family savings, including rambutan, durian, and cempedak.

The Rumah Nusa program was initially launched in Denai Kuala village as a pilot initiative. In this village, with a population of 800 households, the Rumah Nusa Community was established. Within a short period, approximately 40 households began cultivating their yards according to the three-zone planting system. Initially developed at the household level, the program later expanded into a village-scale initiative known as the Kampung Nusa program. As the program progressed, the community established partnerships with neighboring hamlets and villages around Denai Kuala. By the end of 2023, in just three years, the Kampung Nusa program had expanded to 27 villages, 16 sub-districts, and 5 regencies—Karo, Deli Serdang, Serdang Bedagai, Tebing Tinggi, and Labuhan Batu—all within the province of North Sumatera. One village in Labuhan Batu Regency, Pondok Batu Village, adopted the Kampung Nusa program as part of its innovation strategy for the Kampung Berkualitas (Quality Village) initiative and to address stunting prevention. This village won the national competition for Quality Family Villages (Nababan, 2023).

Despite these successful stories of the program that has been expanded, the Rumah Nusa program is facing other problems. For example, the processing of ginger and turmeric into tea ingredients has not yet been standardized. It has not registered with the Ministry of Health, or patented. The tea bags produced do not yet have a commercial brand and are therefore not widely marketed. Another issue is the community still lacks a proper space to market its spice products.



Figure 1. Rumah Nusa program (Nusa stands for “Nutrisi Keluarga”):
Cultivating yards with non-paddy plants

In 2024, the Rumah Nusa Community, in collaboration with the Denai Kuala village government, plans to pioneer Denai Kuala as a Desa Wisata Rempah (Spice Tourism Village). This initiative is motivated

by various internal and external considerations. Internally, the Kampung Nusa program in Denai Kuala has effectively met its primary goal of fostering food security at the household level. Given this success, there is a recognized need to expand the program into a more profitable venture to further the next objective of improving community welfare. The development of home-based spice tea products, citronella oil, and plant nurseries (initiated since the program's inception) provides a crucial foundation for planning a tourism-oriented village.

Externally, the geographical location of Denai Kuala supports its potential as a tourism village. The village is situated near several other attractions in Deli Serdang Regency, including Muara Indah Beach, Monkey Beach (Pantai Monyet), Palung Naga Agrotourism, and the Pasar KAMU. The Pasar KAMU (Pekan Sarapan Karya Anak Muda), a one-hectare culinary destination opening every Sunday from 6:00-11:00 a.m., attracts 700–800 visitors weekly, generating a revenue of approximately 48 million rupiah (Gultom, 2021).

The development plan to establish Denai Kuala as a tourism village still faces various limitations. One significant issue is the absence of a designated community center that can function as a communal space—serving as an economic, social, and cultural hub. In May 2024, during the USU team's first meeting with HAPSARI, the organization expressed the need for such a communal space to strengthen their community empowerment efforts. Specifically, they highlighted the necessity for a simple structure like warung or kiosk located in a strategic area, which could serve as a place to sell spices and marine products, as well as a venue for regular coordination and meetings among HAPSARI members.

The Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) team has decided to conceptualize a "growing" tourism village layout that can be realized gradually, featuring a friendly and DIY (do it yourself) design that allows the community to construct and maintain the facilities independently. This concept also aims to incorporate the local characteristics of the Javanese-Sumatran community while considering the tropical climate of the coastal area where the village is located. The proposed concept seeks to create a sustainable tourism village, enhance community welfare and creativity through village tourism sector planning, improve residential quality and infrastructure, facilities, and public utilities that support tourism development, and foster partnerships among the community, government, and private sector in implementing the tourism village planning.

The team plans to design an area of 1.8 hectares as the central hub for the tourism village, which will serve as the primary commercial area to attract visitors. This area, named Warung Nusa, embodies the concept of traditional warung or kiosk as a communal space of the village. The location of Warung Nusa is situated among existing houses without displacing or relocating any of these structures. This area will feature culinary tourism focused on spices (including tea, snacks, etc.), sales of spice seedlings and plants, demonstrations of spice tea production, performances of traditional arts by children, and more.

In general, communal space refers to areas that are shared and used collectively by a community or group of people. These spaces are typically open to everyone within a particular group, and they serve as a place for social interaction, shared activities, and collective experiences. Drawing on a citywide survey of 39 urban neighborhoods and a qualitative case study of a neighborhood in Guangzhou, China, this research addresses how communal space, social capital, and neighborhood attachment jointly shape neighborhood participation (Zhu & Fu, 2017).

Communal space is related with promoting place-based social relations (the social-capital mechanism) and nurturing place attachment (the intrapsychic mechanism). It points to the significance of communal space as a civic focal point in community building and place making. Bai et al. (2023) investigate rural public spaces with cultural significance using morphological, cognitive, and behavioral

data, reveal that communal areas serve as hubs for social interaction and cultural expression. The Warung Nusa as a communal space implements the concepts of green architecture considering accessibility, social interaction, shared resources and maintenance, and sense of belonging.

2. METHODS

The method we use in planning and designing Warung Nusa as a communal space is Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD is an alternative approach to traditional needs-based development strategies, focusing on recognizing and building upon existing community strengths and assets (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). ABCD emphasizes the importance of local resources, including human, natural, economic, social, physical, cultural, and spiritual assets (Al-Kautsari, 2019). It emphasizes the creation of policies and activities involving the capacities and skills of neighborhood residents. ABCD comes from the recognition that development of an entire community can only take place if residents are able to invest their gifts and themselves in the process. The efforts dedicated to the development of the community will be successful only if there is a clear understanding of the internal assets and capabilities of the community. Connecting all local assets of the neighborhood is one step towards rebuilding communities (García, 2020). This approach aims to shift the focus from external aid to internal community-driven solutions and development. ABCD is a strengths-based approach that redefines the way communities view themselves, from being needy to being capable and resourceful. By focusing on what communities have rather than what they lack, ABCD empowers people to create sustainable, community-driven change (Hessin, 2015). Instead of concentrating on community deficits or needs, ABCD emphasizes community assets as the foundation for growth and empowerment. The authors discuss practical applications of ABCD in various contexts, highlighting how communities can mobilize their inherent capabilities for social, economic, and environmental improvements (Setyawan et al., 2022). The approach is grounded in asset theory, social capital theory, and community capacity theory. Implementation of ABCD involves asset identification, community mobilization, and asset-oriented planning (Ma et al., 2024). According to Adinugraha et al. (2024) there are five steps in ABCD approach:

Preparation and Planning

Initiate a preliminary analysis to evaluate the village's social, economic, and cultural dynamics. This process should involve the collection of secondary data, conducting initial interviews with local leaders, and field visits to gain a comprehensive understanding of the environment and key stakeholders. South et al. (2024) and Chupp et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of co-design and contextual analysis when planning community-based research. Drawing upon insights from this contextual analysis, formulate a service plan that delineates goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines for proposed activities. Additionally, the plan should establish explicit communication and coordination protocols with the community and other relevant stakeholders.

Community Asset Identification and Mapping

Facilitate workshops and focus group discussions to identify both tangible assets (such as land, infrastructure, and facilities) and intangible assets (including skills, knowledge, social networks, and cultural heritage) within the community. Rialny and Anugrahini (2022) explore the application of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach in Untung Jawa Island Tourism Village, highlighting how the community leveraged its inherent assets—such as social, human, financial, environmental, technological, physical, and spiritual capital—to maintain resilience and work towards sustainable development during a period of significant adversity. The community identified and utilized various forms of assets such as social capital which is strong networks among families, neighbors, and organizations like Pokdarwis

(Tourism Awareness Group) facilitated coordinated efforts. The outcomes of this asset mapping process will inform the design of empowerment programs tailored to the unique strengths of the village.

According to [García \(2020\)](#) and [Mustoip et al. \(2022\)](#), community asset identification and mapping is the most crucial part in ABCD approach. Despite individuals, associations, and institutions, other assets like land and the physical environment, exchange, and culture and stories are very important to identified and mapped.

Capacity Building and Training

Implementing training sessions aimed at enhancing the community's capacity to effectively manage and utilize their assets. Topics may encompass project management, small business operations, microfinance, marketing of local products, and other pertinent technical skills. Providing ongoing support to individuals or groups engaged in empowerment projects, which may include field visits, consultation sessions, or supplementary workshops designed to enhance skills and bolster community capacity. This is in line with [Asni et al. \(2024\)](#) focus on applying ABCD in entrepreneurship, supporting community self-reliance, and offering training in business practices.

Implementation of Empowerment Programs

Assisting the community in the planning and execution of projects that leverage local assets, such as economic ventures, public infrastructure initiatives, cultural preservation efforts, or environmentally focused activities that align with community resources and needs. Encouraging the establishment or strengthening of community institutions, such as cooperatives, business groups, or civil society organizations, to facilitate the implementation of asset-based projects. Forge partnerships with local government entities, non- governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector organizations, and educational institutions to support these initiatives, thereby providing additional resources, funding, expertise, and networks essential for program success.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reflection

[Rippon & South \(2017\)](#) report that one of the best evaluation methods is participatory involving residents. It is used to ensure that activities align with the established plan and meet predefined goals. The community began developing its own metrics for success (e.g., number of visitors, repeat customers), reinforcing the idea that ABCD evaluation should be co-defined, not externally imposed. This supports findings by [Kariuki \(2014\)](#) that participatory evaluation enhances long-term sustainability by embedding learning in the community itself.

Monitoring methodologies may include field visits, beneficiary interviews, and the collection of performance data. Participatory evaluation involves community members in assessing the successes and challenges of the program. This collaborative reflection aims to extract lessons learned that can enhance the outcomes of future initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation include systematically documented of the processes and outcomes, including best practices, challenges encountered, and solutions implemented. Disseminate these findings through reports, seminars, or community discussions to share knowledge and insights with other communities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preparation and Planning

During the planning phase, a major challenge was aligning the vision of the Rumah Nusa program with the broader community's readiness for transformation into a desa wisata rempah (spice tourism

village). This gap revealed the importance of pre-engagement assessments and trust-building—critical elements in the ABCD process (Ma et al., 2024). Initial resistance stemmed from unfamiliarity and lack of confidence among villagers. To overcome this, we used participatory visioning and story-based communication techniques. This approach allowed us to initiate co-planning and increase stakeholder ownership, aligning with García (2020) emphasis on embedding local voice early in the process.

On June 18, 2024, the USU Team, consisting of six members, including two lecturers (Salmina and Samerdanta) and four students, visited the HAPSARI office located on Jl. Mh. Thamrin, Lubuk Pakam, Deli Serdang Regency North Sumatera Province. The PkM team visited the HAPSARI office for a discussion on the programs to plan and prepare for a master plan. The discussion was attended by Sri Rahayu, the current leader of HAPSARI and others seven members. The discussion generated several ideas include: (1) The Desa Wisata Rempah (Spice Tourism Village) masterplan will focus on its spice products, in line with the Rumah Nusa and the Kampung Nusa program as ongoing projects designed by HAPSARI; (2) This year (2024) the program focuses on designing a communal space where HAPSARI members and the whole community can display and sell spice products as well as place for socializing, educating, and empowering the community; (3) The planning of spatial organization, layout, and design to enable visitors to experience the village's unique spice characteristics, beginning with the mapping of assets in Denai Kuala Village. This includes determining the location to be used for the pilot project; (4) Local community of Denai Kuala must be trained to be a good host of a tourism destination, this means they might need workshops, training, and classes; and (5) Social media will be utilized as a promotional tool to ensure that the village is accessible and reachable to a wide audience.



Figure 2. Preparation and planning with HAPSARI members at the HAPSARI office

Community Asset Identification and Mapping

The asset mapping process revealed a broad array of both tangible and intangible resources. These included informal women's networks, household spice gardens, coastal geography, and cultural narratives such as the legend of the Ular River. Initially, many residents did not perceive local stories, social groups, or environmental features as developmental assets. Through facilitated workshops and storytelling sessions, community members gradually came to recognize the strategic value of these resources. This aligns with García (2020) and Adinugraha et al. (2024), who assert that ABCD's strength lies in reframing community identity from one of need to one of resourcefulness. As Qiaoyu et al. (2024) note, asset mapping should encompass emotional and cultural values, not just physical infrastructure. However, the process also revealed challenges such as asset fatigue, where the burden of leadership disproportionately falls on a few active women, risking burnout and limiting broader community engagement. The USU team identified and mapped the village's asset. This included:

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Individuals, associations, and institutions. It can be stated that there is no individual who stands out as a dominant leader for the women and young girls in Denai Kuala Village. Almost all activities, including the Rumah Nusa program, are carried out collectively within both formal and informal associations. The formal institution in the village is the HAPSARI group, which regularly holds meetings once a month at the home of the HAPSARI Chairwoman, Sri Rahayu. Informal associations include gatherings such as mutual savings groups (*arisan*) and religious study groups (*perwiridan*). Nearly all members of the HAPSARI are also participants in these informal associations. The women and young girls are considered valuable assets. It is essential to design regular meetings to enhance participation, foster unity, and create a shared vision on how to develop Denai Kuala into a spice tourism village.

Land and the physical environment. Denai Kuala village features distinctive sandy soil, typical of coastal villages, located near the beach. While the sandy soil may not be favorable for agricultural yields, its uniqueness presents potential for development. In addition to the sandy terrain, the village is home to the Ular River, which continues to be used by local fishermen as a route for their sea voyages. The view from the bridge over the river, with fishing boats docked along its banks, is a scenic attraction that holds potential for supporting the village's tourism development. Beyond the sandy soil and river, the village is also in close proximity to several popular tourist destinations, such as Muara Indah Beach, Monkey Beach, Palung Naga Agrotourism, and the Pasar KAMU.

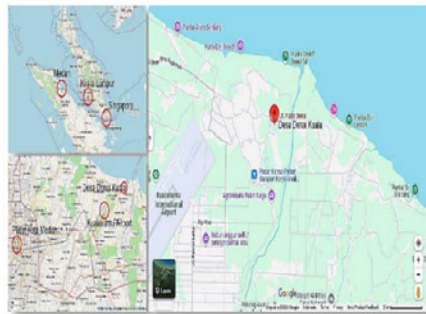


Figure 3. Beaches, Pasar KAMU, and Ular river as land and the physical environment asset of Denai Kuala village



Figure 4. Ular River Bridge and boats belong to fishermen

Exchange. Exchange is how money flows through a neighborhood. In addition to being a producer of spices, the village is also known for its marine products, particularly shellfish and crabs. The local population, primarily fishermen or seafood vendors, often sell their goods at small shops or along the roadside. Apart from seafood vendors, another significant economic opportunity for the village is the absence of a sufficiently large coffee shop that could serve as a community gathering center. According

to interviews conducted with the women in the village, in the afternoons after work, most of the men travel to neighboring villages to have coffee and relax.

Culture and stories. Denai Kuala Village possesses several interesting cultural assets, such as the unique Javanese-Sumatran culture, which differs slightly from the Javanese culture found on the island of Java. The Javanese community in this village is descended from workers brought to North Sumatra during the Dutch colonial era to work on Dutch-owned tobacco plantations. Stories about the plantations, the migration of Javanese people to Sumatra, the Ular River as a transportation route for plantation goods, the beach, and myths about life at sea, along with other local narratives, are valuable assets that should be further developed.

Capacity Building and Training

On July 28th, 2024, an online training session titled Ibu Mandiri, Ibu Berjualan (Independent Mothers, Selling Mothers) was conducted by Lazuar Ramadhan, Head of Trading and Sales at Kopi Kenangan. Ramadhan covered several key points, including: (1) The potential for women's entrepreneurship to increase household income; (2) Sales strategies, such as the importance of the seller's attitude, product selection, product display, and pricing; and (3) Promotion techniques, which can include using social media or creating compelling narratives. Ramadhan provided the example of a successful coffee seller who shared a story about sourcing their coffee from a remote, distant location. He concluded that customers are attracted not only by the product itself but also by the story behind it. The stories of the Ular River and Palung Naga could serve as potential promotional tools for the village.

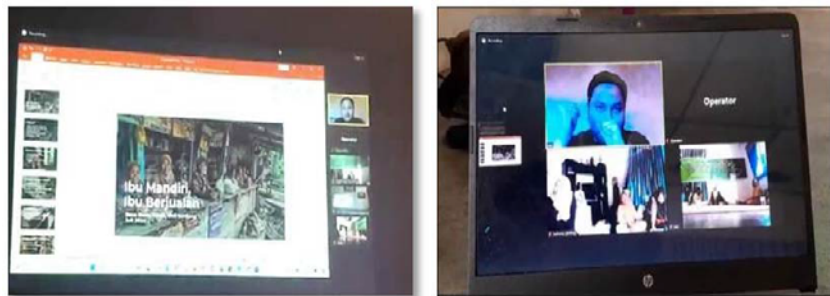


Figure 5. Online training session titled Ibu Mandiri, Ibu Berjualan (Independent Mothers, Selling Mothers) conducted by Lazuar Ramadhan, Head of Trading and Sales at Kopi Kenangan

In addition to the Ibu Mandiri Ibu Berjualan training, the USU team introduced the village's masterplan design and the Warung Nusa concept using 2D and 3D visuals, as well as videos. The village masterplan was developed with a green architecture concept (Zolfani & Zavadskas, 2013), prioritizing the use of locally available natural materials, cost-effective and low-maintenance construction, natural lighting and ventilation, wide eaves in the architectural style, and careful consideration of vegetation, plants, trees, and overall greening. The communal space is based on local wisdom such as gotong royong (work together as a team) which is essential for strengthening community unity, thereby improving both community safety and environmental sustainability (Asmal & Latief, 2023).

One notable outcome was the renaming of the communal space from "Omah Kampung" to "Warung Nusa" after community members pointed out that the former term was overly Javanese and did not reflect the ethnic diversity of the village. This act of renaming demonstrates how capacity building under ABCD extends beyond technical skills to encompass cultural sensitivity and symbolic inclusion.

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As [Asmal and Latief \(2023\)](#) emphasize, community spaces must reflect local identities to foster social cohesion. The process empowered women not only economically but also socially, strengthening their roles as community change agents.



Figure 6. Presenting proposal of architectural design of Warung Nusa and the discussion about it at Head of HAPSARI's house in Denai Kuala village



Figure 7. Architectural drawing of Warung Nusa, designed and developed by USU Team using green architecture concept

The communal space design, named Warung Nusa (was Omah Kampoeng), includes the division of spaces such as entrance, parking area, seed warehouse and storage, spice tea area (area for spice plants and experiencing the process of making spice tea), food area (area for culinary activities), and mini stage (for cultural dance performances and arts). Key points discussed regarding the design: (1) Improvement of area boundaries: Since the design will be implemented in phases, the first phase will focus on a space yard between two houses. Therefore, the boundaries of the area to be designed need to be adjusted to clearly define the scope for the initial phase; (2) Placement of ketapang trees: Strategic locations for the planting of ketapang trees within the site are needed to enhance the natural, shaded environment as well as maintaining sustainable environment; and (3) Relocation and division of the dining area: The dining area, which was originally planned in a single location, will be divided into two

sections: one in the front and the other in the back of the yard. This is aimed at optimizing space and improving visitor comfort.

Implementation of Empowerment Programs

The implementation phase marked a significant milestone in translating the community's collective vision into tangible outcomes. Central to this phase was the construction of the Warung Nusa kiosk, a 100- square-meter community space developed in accordance with the collaboratively co-designed master plan. Although financial limitations have imposed restrictions on the overall scale and scope of the project, the team strategically emphasized sustainability and cultural authenticity by utilizing locally sourced, environmentally friendly materials. For instance, traditional materials such as rumbia leaves (a type of palm leaf commonly used for thatching) were creatively repurposed to serve as roofing, showcasing an effective blend of resourcefulness and respect for local heritage.

Community involvement was not limited to passive observation; rather, women from the community played an active, hands-on role throughout the process. Their contributions extended beyond manual labor—they provided valuable input and practical suggestions to optimize the kiosk's functionality and aesthetic appeal. This collaborative approach fostered a profound sense of ownership and pride, aligning closely with the principles outlined by [Rahayu et al. \(2022\)](#), who emphasize that the success of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) initiatives is strongly linked to communities' proactive engagement in both design and execution phases.

Moreover, the implementation process catalyzed emergent innovations that extended the utility and cultural significance of the kiosk. Beyond serving as a traditional food stall or marketplace, the Warung Nusa evolved into a dynamic cultural hub where traditional dance performances and storytelling sessions took place. These activities not only enriched the local tourism experience but also strengthened social bonds and preserved intangible cultural heritage. Such developments underscore the adaptive capacity of community-led projects, where flexibility in implementation nurtures innovations deeply rooted in local customs and identity.

The implementation of the program culminated in a soft launch of Warung Nusa, which was first constructed on November 7th, 2024 (Figure 10). The Warung Nusa kiosk serves as more than just a physical structure; it is envisioned as a vital catalyst for community empowerment, particularly for women. Traditionally, warungs (small local shops or food stalls) in many Indonesian communities function as important social and economic spaces where women often play central roles as entrepreneurs, cooks, and vendors. The establishment of this kiosk thus taps into existing cultural practices while providing a formalized platform that can expand these roles in meaningful ways.



Figure 9. Handing over architectural drawing created by USU Team

Figure 10. Construction phase of Warung Nusa

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Firstly, the kiosk creates direct economic opportunities by offering women a place to generate income through selling homemade food, crafts, and other local products. This income generation not only supports household economies but also fosters financial independence and confidence among women. The kiosk's design, which integrates culturally relevant and sustainable materials, reflects a community identity that women helped shape, further encouraging their ownership and stewardship over the space. Moreover, Warung Nusa acts as a community gathering spot, providing women with a safe and familiar environment where they can meet, share experiences, and exchange knowledge. This social dimension is crucial in building networks of support, mentorship, and collective action, which are key factors in sustainable empowerment (Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2022). By hosting activities such as traditional dance performances, storytelling, and cultural workshops, the kiosk promotes cultural pride and revitalizes community heritage, allowing women to take leadership roles as cultural custodians and facilitators (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Handing over “Warung Nusa – Nutrisi Keluarga” signboard and two red tents

Importantly, the kiosk's multi-functionality supports capacity building. Women involved gain skills in business management, customer service, marketing, and event coordination. These transferable skills enhance their employability and open pathways to broader participation in community development initiatives beyond the kiosk itself. Additionally, the experience of contributing to the design and execution phases nurtures leadership qualities and a sense of agency. Finally, the Warung Nusa kiosk embodies the ABCD philosophy by utilizing community assets such as skills, knowledge, and local resources to create sustainable development pathways. Empowering women through this initiative not only benefits individual households but also strengthens the social fabric and resilience of the entire community. As women become active agents of economic and cultural vitality, the kiosk symbolizes a grassroots model for inclusive development and social innovation (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Warung Nusa soft opening

Monitoring dan Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation in community development projects are crucial for ensuring accountability and effectiveness, although they have limitations (Kariuki, 2014). Monitoring and evaluation were conducted through monthly Zoom meetings and in-person visits, allowing for continuous assessment of both financial performance and social impact. Women involved in managing Warung Nusa reported increased self-confidence, social recognition, and entrepreneurial ambition. These outcomes highlight that empowerment under ABCD is multidimensional, affecting both economic and psychosocial domains. However, marketing emerged as a persistent challenge. The community's limited exposure to digital promotion suggested a need for further training in areas like social media marketing. Reflective sessions revealed that storytelling—such as linking products to heritage and local myths—was particularly effective in attracting customers. As Rippon and South (2017) argue, evaluation in ABCD should prioritize narrative as much as numerical indicators, ensuring that the community's voice remains central in assessing impact.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Warung Nusa project in Denai Kuala demonstrates the potential of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) as a strategic approach to rural community empowerment and sustainable tourism planning. By focusing on existing local assets—such as the Rumah Nusa program, cultural heritage, social networks, and natural resources—the initiative successfully fosters a sense of ownership and collective identity among community members. The design of Warung Nusa as a communal space promotes social interaction, economic collaboration, and cultural expression, thereby strengthening the village's capacity to become a thriving Spice Tourism Village. This study confirms that community-driven development, supported by participatory processes and capacity-building efforts, can address challenges related to economic diversification and market access while preserving social and environmental values. The Warung Nusa case underscores the importance of aligning development initiatives with local aspirations and contextual realities. It offers a replicable model for other rural communities seeking to balance heritage conservation, social welfare, and economic sustainability in their development pathways.

Although the community service program has achieved meaningful progress, several areas still require further development. The USU team recommends continued implementation and refinement of the village tourism master plan to ensure long-term sustainability. Among the proposed next steps are capacity-building initiatives such as training on spice product management, hands-on workshops for processing spices into food and handicrafts, and strategic efforts to establish networks that can expand Warung Nusa's marketing and distribution channels. Strengthening digital presence is also crucial; Warung Nusa is encouraged to establish social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to increase visibility, engage a broader audience, and promote community-based tourism and local products more effectively. These suggestions aim to enhance the economic resilience of Denai Kuala while maintaining its cultural and environmental integrity.

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