

## The Role of Transformational Leadership and Communication in Community-based Tourism: The Case of Dieng Culture Festival

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**Abstract:** *Community-based tourism is conceived as a bottom-up tourism management, centered and managed by the local community. Dieng Culture Festival is a tourism event established by the local community in line with the community-based tourism concept. The establishment of this event is possible with transformational leadership and extensive communication performed by the founder of the Dieng Culture Festival and Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa, Mr. Alif Faozi. This research aims to investigate further the role of transformational leadership and communication in the establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival. This research utilized a qualitative and descriptive approach through the perspective of Mr. Alif Faozi. The findings of this research are that the role of transformational leadership and extensive communication is instrumental in the establishment and success of the Dieng Culture Festival. This is because transformational leadership and extensive communication are essential to building strong community participation and providing resources and knowledge from the Dieng local community and external parties that enabled the establishment and success of the Dieng Culture Festival. This research implies that tourism events could also be successfully established by local communities in line with community-based tourism. This could be achieved through strong local leadership and extensive communication with the local community members and external parties.*

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### PENDAHULUAN

With the advance of globalization, tourism has become one of the most important economic sectors in the world, especially in Indonesia. As a multicultural and the largest archipelagic country with a diversity of flora and fauna, Indonesia has become one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the world. From 2000 to 2014, Indonesia experienced a significant increase in foreign tourist arrivals from 5.06 million to nearly 9.43 million tourists. Tourism revenues doubled and reach US\$ 11 billion. By 2019 the tourism sector became the second-largest foreign exchange

source for the Indonesian economy. The tourism sector is also expected to become a new source of growth and complements other economic sector such as manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and fishery (Lesmana et al., 2022; Muryani et al., 2020). One of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia is the Dieng Plateau, located in Central Java Province. The Dieng Plateau has several tourist attractions, such as Arjuna Temple, Bima Temple, Mount Prau, Mount Batur, Sikidang Crater, and Lake Warna (Haty et al., 2023; Irhamna, 2017).

Despite its benefits, the tourism sector could also bring several negative impacts, especially for the local community. Economic gains from the tourism sector usually only accrue to a few privileged groups, such as large investors. This could cause social disparities and local communities could feel left out since they do not enjoy the economic gains from the tourism sector (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021). To help tackle this problem, a concept called community-based tourism was conceived (Cáceres-Feria et al., 2021). Unlike the traditional capitalistic approach of tourism which mainly relies on large investors, community-based tourism is conducted by the local community members. The local community members conducted the planning, managing, and operating of the tourism business (Ernawati et al., 2017). Therefore it could provide the maximum economic benefit for the local community, and also ensure the protection of the local people's cultural identity and the natural environment of the tourist destination (Matilainen et al., 2018). In Indonesia, community-based tourism is performed by the local community group called *Kelompok Sadar Wisata* or *Pokdarwis*. These groups are responsible for implementing programs related to tourism development in the local community and also managing the *Desa Wisata* (a village community that conducted tourism service) (Hanani et al., 2021; Umam et al., 2022). Besides managing the *Desa Wisata*, the local community group could also initiate an event to attract tourists as part of community-based tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kim et al., 2015). In Dieng, the local community group (*Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa*) conducted an event called *Dieng Culture Festival* since 2010. This festival consists of several features, such as traditional arts, cultural carnival, and cultural arts (Kusumastuti & Priyantini, 2017; Rosilawati et al., 2021). The establishment of *Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa* and *Dieng Culture Festival* could be achieved through leadership and extensive communication from local Dieng leader Mr. Alif Faozi.

The implementation of community-based tourism and the creation of tourism events requires the presence of leadership and extensive communication. This is because strong community participation is required in the community based-tourism (Chin & Noorashid, 2022; McGehee et al., 2015). Thus leadership is required to build strong community participation and provide direction and structure for community-based tourism (McGehee et al., 2015). Community-based tourism and tourism events also require a partnership both within the community and outside the community. For this purpose, besides leadership, extensive communication needs to be established with community members and outside parties (Xu et al., 2017). Thus the role of communication is also crucial for the development of community-based tourism and the creation of tourism events. In this context, communication plays an important role in community engagement in knowledge and skills exchange, maintaining support for community-based tourism from local community members, bringing local tourist programs and initiatives to life, and involving local community members in planning and decision-making of tourism business (Chin & Noorashid, 2022). Because of this, transformational leadership is considered more suitable for community-based tourism, since transformational leadership requires extensive communication and could better foster community collaboration (Cohrs et al., 2020; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; McGehee et al., 2015). The important role of leadership and communication in community-

based tourism has been mentioned in several researches. McGehee et al. (2015) explained the central role of leadership in rural tourism development in the United States and Haiti. Xu et al. (2017) mentioned the role of community leadership in rural tourism development in rural China. Chin & Noorashid (2022) also explained the role of leadership and communication in the development of community-based tourism in Brunei Darussalam.

Several researchers have explained the role of leadership in community-based tourism. McGehee et al. (2015) explained the central role of leadership in rural tourism development in the United States and Haiti. Xu et al. (2017) mentioned the role of community leadership in rural tourism development in rural China. Other researchers have explained the role of leadership and communication in community-based tourism. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) explained the role of transformational leadership and extensive communication with external parties for the success of community-based tourism in Thailand. Chin & Noorashid (2022) also explained the role of leadership and communication in the development of community-based tourism in Brunei Darussalam. While several researchers have explained the role of leadership and communication in community-based tourism, the role of leadership (especially transformational leadership) and communication in the establishment of tourism events in the context of community-based tourism has not been explored further. Thus, this research takes a different approach by looking at the role of transformational leadership and communication in the establishment of tourism events (Dieng Culture Festival) in the context of community-based tourism through the perspective of the local leader (Founder of Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa and Dieng Culture Festival Mr. Alif Faozi), and this served as the novelty for this research. This research aims to investigate further the role of transformational leadership and communication in the establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival. This research also aims to contribute to the evolving community-based tourism and event tourism literature. The remainder of this research is structured as follows. Section Two contains a review of the literature; Section Three discusses the research method for this research, while Section Four contains the result and discussion of this research. Finally, Section Five provides a conclusion and recommendations for this research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Community-based Tourism

The tourism sector is mainly managed conventionally, with the more traditional firm-based, top-down approach (Matilainen et al., 2018). Thus the benefit from the tourism sector is mostly enjoyed by large investors. This causes several negative impacts, especially for the local community, such as social disparities and local communities could feel left out since they do not enjoy the economic gains from the tourism sector (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021). The firm-based tourism sector sometimes ignores the local communities and also causes environmental and cultural damage due to its tendency of prioritizing profitability (Yasir, Firdaus, et al., 2021; Yasir, Firzal, et al., 2021). To address this problem, the concept of community-based tourism is conceived. This concept could be traced back to the 1985 publication of Peter Murphy's *Tourism: A Community Approach* (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014).

Unlike the conventional tourism sector, community-based tourism has a bottom-up approach, thus centered and managed by the local community. Community-based tourism is comprised of some locally owned enterprises that leverage the local culture and rural or natural settings as attractions and heavily include the community in the planning and execution of the business (Ernawati et al., 2017; Rosilawati et al., 2021). Community-based tourism aims to provide

the maximum economic benefit of the tourism business for the local community, and also protect the local culture and natural environment (Matilainen et al., 2018; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2019). Therefore community based-tourism is seen as one of the promising tools for community development and poverty alleviation (Rosilawati et al., 2021).

Community-based tourism has several characteristics, namely: a) local control over the management and administration of tourist firms, including the creation and distribution of their revenues; b) local ownership and control over tourism resources; c) local involvement in tourism planning processes (Cáceres-Feria et al., 2021; Lindstrom & Larson, 2016). In Indonesia, community-based tourism is performed by the local community group called *Kelompok Sadar Wisata* or *Pokdarwis*. These groups consist of several members of the local community and are responsible for implementing programs related to tourism development in the local community. *Pokdarwis* has a vital part in the implementation of community based-tourism by creating and managing the *Desa Wisata* (a village community that conducted tourism service) and local events such as *Dieng Culture Festival* (Hanani et al., 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kim et al., 2015; Umam et al., 2022).

### **Leadership and Communication in Community-based Tourism**

Community participation is an integral part of community based-tourism (Lindstrom & Larson, 2016). Through community participation, community based-tourism could empower the local community, ensure the control of tourism resources by the local community, raise the local community's voice in the decision-making process, and provide the local community with equitable economic benefits from tourism business (Xu et al., 2017). Thus, weak community participation could cause a community-based tourism project to fail (Zagarkhorloo et al., 2021). Because of this, the role of leadership and communication becomes vital to mobilize strong community participation in the community based-tourism (Chin & Noorashid, 2022; McGehee et al., 2015). Leadership is the process of utilizing one's abilities in a position that benefits the community (McGehee et al., 2015).

There are two prominent types of leadership, namely transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is leadership in which a leader motivates his or her followers through exchanges of something valuable for the followers, such as a promotion in exchange for increased productivity. Transformational leadership is leadership in which a leader establishes an emotional connection with the followers to motivate them (McGehee et al., 2015; Robbins & Judge, 2013). In the context of community-based tourism, community participation for community-based tourism needs direction and structure from strong local leadership. These leaders could play an important role in building community collaboration, developing a partnership both within the community and outside the community, and maintaining local control over the tourism business (Xu et al., 2017). For this purpose, local leaders need to engage in communication with community members and outside parties.

Thus besides leadership, the role of communication is also crucial for the development of community-based tourism. In this context, communication plays an important role in community engagement in knowledge and skills exchange, maintaining support for community-based tourism from local community members, bringing local tourist programs and initiatives to life, and involving local community members in planning and decision-making of tourism business (Chin & Noorashid, 2022). Because of this, transformational leadership is considered more suitable for community-based tourism, since transformational leadership requires extensive communication

and could better foster community collaboration (Cohrs et al., 2020; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; McGehee et al., 2015). Previous research such as Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) also mentioned the important role of transformational leadership in the success of community-based tourism in Thailand.

The important role of leadership and communication in community-based tourism is further mentioned in some research. McGehee et al. (2015) explained the central role of leadership in rural tourism development in the United States and Haiti. Xu et al. (2017) mentioned the role of community leadership in rural tourism development in rural China. Chin & Noorashid (2022) also explained the role of leadership and communication in the development of community-based tourism in Brunei Darussalam.

### **Event and Tourism**

Event has served as one of the primary element of tourism. Event tourism is systematic event planning, creation, and promotion to promote scheduled events as tourist attractions and for place marketing, image-making, and development of the tourism destination (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Thus an event serves to attract tourism to the destination (Kelly & Fairley, 2018). An event could also serve as a tool to create a positive destination image. In addition, tourists who participated in the event tend to stay longer in the destination, and many also travel in groups, thus increasing the number of tourists arriving with a longer time to stay (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kelly & Fairley, 2018). Even though an event has a vital part in the tourism sector, and could bring positive impacts, such as increasing the income and job opportunities of the local population, an event could also create negative impacts, such as traffic congestion and increasing security issues (Kim et al., 2015). Thus an event needs to receive substantial support from the local community to ensure its success (Kim et al., 2015; Qi et al., 2023).

Mega-events (such as FIFA World Cup) or other events organized by the government or private companies, sometimes do not always acknowledge and receive substantial support from the local community due to their top-down approach (Kim et al., 2015). In the context of community based-tourism, this concept offers an alternative to conventional events, in which an event is organized with a bottom-up approach through the local community initiative. The local community plays an important part in planning, managing, and operating the event itself (Ernawati et al., 2017).

In Indonesia, several famous tourism events are organized by the local community, such as Jember Fashion Carnival and Dieng Culture Festival. Jember Fashion Carnival is initiated by the local entrepreneur Dynand Fariz in 2002. This carnival is inspired by Fashion Week in other countries and Rio Carnival. Dieng Culture Festival is initiated by Mr. Alif Faozi and Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa in 2010 and consists of several features, such as traditional arts, cultural carnival, and cultural arts (Kusumastuti & Priliantini, 2017; Proborini, 2017; Rosilawati et al., 2021)

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study was performed in November 2021. In this study, researchers chose to use qualitative methods. In the qualitative method, the researchers would focus on the analysis of data and information that are descriptive and not readily quantifiable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Because of its exploratory nature, the researcher chose the qualitative method. Thus, the researchers could find out more about the how aspect of the phenomenon (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Considering this research is a qualitative study, the data obtained in this study are in the

form of soft data, namely in words (Neuman, 2014).

The data comes from interview scripts, field notes, news articles, and other official documents. To analyze the data in this study, the researchers applied a descriptive method. The descriptive method is a method that is applied to discover and describe the characteristics of the research object (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Therefore, the researchers aim to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the Dieng Culture Festival. In this study, researchers will use two data collection techniques, namely observation and interviews. Observation is a data collection method in which the researchers observe people or events in the work environment and record the information, while the interview is a data collection method in which the researchers ask for information verbally from the respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

For this research, researchers made observations about the Dieng Culture Festival. Interviews were conducted with respondents to provide specific information regarding the Dieng Culture Festival. The researchers conducted structured interviews, in which the researchers list every question that will be asked to the respondents (Yin, 2016). In this interview, the researchers have no control over the answers of the respondents, therefore the respondents are free to provide answers. The research respondent for this research is Mr. Alif Faozi (Founder and Leader of Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa). Mr. Alif Faozi was chosen for this study since he was knowledgeable about this topic. To complete the data from observations and interviews, the documentation data was also collected from the Internet. After conducting research and obtaining data, the data will be analyzed to find a description of it.

This study uses the analysis method from Miles and Haberman model (Yin, 2016). There are three stages used in the process of processing and analyzing qualitative data, namely: (1) Data reduction, in which the data that has been collected will be coded according to their similarities and dissimilarities; (2) Data presentation, in which the data will be presented in the form of research narrative; (3) Conclusions withdrawal and verification, in which the researchers present the conclusion of the research and verify the findings with triangulation techniques (Yin, 2016). To ensure the validity of the data, researchers used triangulation techniques. Triangulation is a technique in which researchers would take multiple measures to study the same phenomenon. The researchers would apply one kind of triangulation, namely the triangulation of data, in which the researchers would collect data from several resources (informant and secondary sources) and compare them (Neuman, 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Underdevelopment of Dieng Tourism

Dieng is a tourist destination located between the Banjarnegara and Wonosobo Regency in the Central Java Province, Indonesia. The name of Dieng comes from Old Javanese words: *di* means "place" and *hyang* means "ancestors" or "gods", literally "*Dihyang*" means "place of the ancestors" or "place where the gods reside" (Irahamna, 2017). Dieng is the highest plateau in Java Island with an elevation of  $\pm 2000$ m and several volcanic edifices. This destination has several tourist attractions, such as Hindu Temples (Arjuna Temple, Bima Temple, Gatotkaca Temple, and Dwarawati Temple), mountains (Mount Sikunir, Mount Pakuwaja, Mount Pangonan, Mount Prau, Mount Pagerkandang, and Mount Batur), craters (Sikidang Crater, Sileri Crater, Sibanger Crater, and Candradimuka Crater), lakes and waterfalls (Cebong Lake, Lumping Waterfall, Warna Lake, Merdada Lake, and Sedringo Lake), and stones (Stone of View Ratapan Angin and Lancip Stone) (Haty et al., 2023; Rosilawati et al., 2021).

During the ancient era, Dieng was a religious center with around 400 temples. This is due to the ancient Javanese belief that god resides in the mountain (Irhamna, 2017). During the brief British Colonial Period, Dieng was visited by British Colonial Governor Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1815. During the Dutch Colonial Period, Dieng was further explored by several archeologists such as J. Kinsbergen and H. L. Melville (Haty et al., 2023; Irhamna, 2017). After the Indonesian Independence, Dieng began to be seen as a potential tourist destination. In 1970, Dieng was officially established as a tourist destination by the Governor of Central Java Province (Prasetyo & Suryoko, 2018).

Despite its potential, Dieng during the early 2000s is still considered a secondary tourist destination in Central Java Area. Many tourists still preferred to visit other tourist destinations in Central Java Area, such as Yogyakarta and Borobudur Temple. Many tourists visit Dieng only after visiting Yogyakarta or Borobudur Temple, making it a secondary choice for tourists to visit. Tourists also mainly flocked to Dieng only during special holiday events, such as Eid al-Fitr or New Year's Eve. During other times Dieng is mostly deserted and only a handful of tourists come to Dieng. Tourists also tend not to stay in Dieng, but only visit Dieng for a couple of hours and then return to another city such as Yogyakarta or Semarang. All of these problems limit the benefit of the tourism sector for the local community. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*Since I was still a little kid, I have seen local and foreign tourists come to Dieng. However, at that time, only a few tourists came to Dieng. Dieng is mostly packed only during special holiday events, such as Eid al-Fitr or New Year's Eve. After those events, Dieng is mostly deserted again. Even during the weekend, only one or two cars can be seen visiting Dieng. Also, only a handful of tourists decided to stay at Dieng, mostly staying at Yogyakarta, and visited Dieng just for a couple of hours before returning to other cities, such as Jakarta. During 2005 and 2006 I visited Yogyakarta and Borobudur Temple. Unlike Dieng, these tourist destinations are always full of tourists. Dieng is still considered a secondary destination by many tourists. They would rather visit Yogyakarta and Borobudur Temple first, and only later visit Dieng.*

Because of the underdevelopment of the tourism sector, the local community mainly relies on the agriculture of several crops, such as potatoes and vegetables for their economic activities. Besides limiting the income of the local community, this condition also means a limited opportunity for the local youths, causing juvenile problems in the community. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*In the past many of the youths in Dieng do not have any jobs. They mostly only helped their parents in the field only for a short amount of time every day and usually finished after 9 AM. Afterward, they mainly do nothing, only sitting on the roadside and doing silly things such as guessing the license plate number of the passing cars. Does it come with odd or even numbers? Does the end number 0, 1, 2, or 9? This guessing later involves gambling among youths, and youths often fight among themselves because of this gambling problem. Since I am one of the leaders of the local youth community (known as Karang Taruna), I was often asked to mediate the conflicts among the youths here.*



Source: Mr. Alif Faozi Own Documentation  
Picture 1. Mr. Alif Faozi (On The Right) and His Family

### **The Establishment of *Pokdarwis***

As the leader of the local youth community, Mr. Alif has already possessed leadership skills, with transformational leadership as his leadership style. As a transformational leader, Mr. Alif has a vision for his community. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*I realized that the root of the local youth problem in this community is the youth do not have any substantial jobs. Thus it is imperative to develop and rejuvenate the tourism industry in Dieng to provide good employment for the local youth.*

A transformational leader usually pushes and advocates for innovation in his or her community (Men, 2014). However, for a successful implementation of innovation, adequate resource and knowledge is required. Since small communities sometimes lack resources and knowledge for innovation, the support of external parties becomes imperative. Thus a transformational leader needs to engage and communicate with external parties to acquire the necessary resources and knowledge (Dewi & Ginting, 2022; Gumusluoğlu & Ilsev, 2009). In the context of Mr. Alif, Mr. Alif first sought assistance from the local Banjarnegara Regency Government Tourism Body (*Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Banjarnegara*). As stated by Mr. Alif:

*Since I was very determined that the local youth should be the initiators of tourism development in Dieng, I utilized the local Karang Taruna community as the vehicle for this initiative. Thus I went to the local Banjarnegara Regency Government Tourism Body and asked if the local government could assist the Karang Taruna community. Through my personalized communication with the local government members, the local government is willing to assist the Karang Taruna community in tourism development. For this purpose, they asked me to create a*



*specialized local community organization for tourism development, called Kelompok Sadar Wisata or Pokdarwis. They also provide me with guidebooks to establish Pokdarwis in my local community.*

Since the establishment of *Pokdarwis* became a prerequisite for further local government assistance, Mr. Alif worked with the *Karang Taruna* community to achieve this objective. Thus besides communication with external parties, communication with local members of the community is also played an important part in the successful implementation of innovation in the local community (McGehee et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2017). For this purpose, Mr. Alif utilized personalized communication through face-to-face dialogue among the *Karang Taruna* community members, since this particular type of communication is very effective and one of the hallmarks of transformational leadership (Jensen et al., 2018). As stated by Mr. Alif:

*To establish Pokdarwis, I created a new and unique objective for the Karang Taruna community. While usually the purpose of the Karang Taruna community only encompasses casual activities for the youth such as managing local sports competitions, my Karang Taruna community performed something more serious (i.e. establish Pokdarwis). I intensively asked members of the Karang Taruna community and other potential youths to participate in the creation of Pokdarwis. I often visited their home to convince them to participate. I found many potential youths such as fresh graduates from university and young school teachers, and I asked all of them to participate in the establishment of Pokdarwis.*

With the establishment of *Pokdarwis* (called *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa) in 2006, Mr. Alif further reached other external parties for more support in the development of Dieng Tourism. Besides the local Banjarnegara Regency Government Tourism Body, other bodies such as the Regional Development Planning Agency of Banjarnegara Regency (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah Kabupaten Banjarnegara*) and the Forum for Economic Development Equipments and Promotion of Central Java Province. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*With the successful establishment of Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa, the local Banjarnegara Regency Government Tourism Body agreed to help us further. They further connected me with the Regional Development Planning Agency of Banjarnegara Regency. Through this body, they asked my Pokdarwis to join the program from the Forum for Economic Development Equipments and Promotion of Central Java Province called Regional Economic Development. Central Java Provincial Government itself has established several tourism clusters area, such as Borobudur, Solo, Karimunjawa, and Dieng. Therefore Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa was considered an important part of the development of Dieng tourism and received considerable support. Through this program, Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa received support not just from the provincial government, but also from other countries such as Germany and Japan. For this program, they asked me to become the facilitator of Business Development Services. In this role, I received training in business management, economic development, Business-to-Business (B2B) relationship, and tourism development. Through this training, I also found new interesting concepts in tourism such as sustainable tourism and community-based tourism.*

The provision of important resources and knowledge from external parties has enabled Mr. Alif and *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa to innovate and rejuvenate the Dieng tourism industry. However, the resources and knowledge from these external parties still need to be applied to day-to-day practical use (Gumusluoğlu & Ilsev, 2009). Thus Mr. Alif and *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa worked to implement these new resources and knowledge by mapping the Dieng tourism industry and implementing concepts from community-based tourism with the creation of several

homestays. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*I immediately applied every new knowledge that I gained. At first, I established the mapping analysis for Dieng tourism, in which I analyze several important factors, such as attraction, accessibility, and amenity. From the attraction side, Dieng has a lot of tourist attractions, such as its cold climate, its mountainous landscape, and its lakes and craters. Dieng also has good accessibility and could be easily reached from other large cities such as Semarang and Yogyakarta. However, Dieng still lacked in terms of amenities, which Dieng could only offer old inns to accommodate tourists. This also explained why not many tourists chose to stay in Dieng and tend to stay in other cities (Semarang or Yogyakarta). Since I intended to establish a tourism industry through a community-based concept, I worked with Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa to establish several homestays (a form of hospitality and lodging whereby visitors share a residence with a local of the area (host) to which they are traveling) in 2007. Thus Dieng could better accommodate the tourists and the tourists were more willing to stay in Dieng rather than in other nearby cities.*

### **Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa and The Dieng Culture Festival**

Through the hard work of Mr. Alif and Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa, several new initiatives in Dieng tourism were born, such as the establishment of several homestays, handicraft products, and food products such as carica fruit preserves (a type of papaya fruit) (Afifa & Kinseng, 2020). Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa also received several awards, such as the Best Pokdarwis of Central Java Province in 2008. However, the impact of these new initiatives was barely noticeable, since the number of tourists who came to Dieng and stayed in the homestays or purchased the products remained relatively low. Thus a new initiative still needs to be implemented, and Mr. Alif decided to establish an event to attract more tourists to visit Dieng. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*Through our hard work and initiatives, Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa received several awards such as the Best Pokdarwis of Central Java Province in 2008. However, we found out that our initiatives still could not attract more tourists to stay in Dieng. Our homestays were still mostly empty, and many tourists purchased our products. Thus I realized Dieng needed more branding, and to achieve this I decided to establish an event.*

The establishment of a tourism event in Dieng could be beneficial for tourism in Dieng. This is because an event serves to attract tourism to Dieng and create a positive destination image for Dieng (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kelly & Fairley, 2018). In addition, tourists would be tempted to stay longer in Dieng, thus increasing the number of visitors to the homestays (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Earlier events such as Solo Batik Carnival (a carnival in the city of Solo which was inspired by Jember Fashion Carnival and to promote tourism and batik products in Solo) and Borobudur International Festival (a festival in Borobudur Temple Area to attract tourists) have served as inspirations for Mr. Alif (Indriyani & Pinasti, 2020; Yulia, 2020). Thus, Mr. Alif was determined to create a similar event in Dieng named Dieng Culture Festival in 2010. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*I have seen the success of several tourist events in Central Java, such as the Solo Batik Carnival and Borobudur International Festival. Thus I decided that Dieng should have a similar event, an international event that could attract more tourists. Therefore I decided to establish Dieng Culture Festival with Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa.*

The establishment of events, especially tourism events, is a very complicated task. This is because an event usually requires considerable resources from internal and external parties. An

event could also create negative impacts, such as traffic congestion and increasing security issues. Thus supports from local community members and external parties becomes imperative for the success of an event (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kelly & Fairley, 2018; Kim et al., 2015). To achieve this, strong leadership and extensive communication with local community members and external parties is necessary. For the establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival itself, Mr. Alif faced several challenges such as skepticism and potential rejection from the local community. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*I created Dieng Culture Festival for several purposes. First for cultural preservation, second for community development, and third to help promote local community products and tourism services. Despite these noble purposes, I faced several challenges from my local community. I received some backlash from my decision to choose the Dieng Culture Festival as the name of the event since some people considered the English naming as unpatriotic. Some people considered my decision as something ostentatious. Some people also considered my event too ambitious. However, this backlash did not deter me, since I was determined to bring Dieng to global attention, just like Borobudur through Borobudur International Festival and Solo with Solo Batik Carnival. Another challenge that I faced was potential rejection from local clerics since some clerics consider cultural and art events as heresy. Thus I conducted extensive communication with local clerics, and they could accept the establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival. Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa members and local youth were also skeptical at first since they did not have any experience managing large events. Thus I strongly persuaded and motivated them, I convinced them that they could manage the Dieng Culture Festival. They created promotional posters for this event, and they also created all divisions for this event. This event required 22 divisions, all being filled and managed by local youths and members of Pokdarwis Dieng Pandawa. For this event, I also worked with several local dance studios that specialized in local art (such as wayang kulit, warok mask dance, and lion dance). To help promote this event, I also engaged several media and newspapers, thus more people could find out about and participate in this event. This event also received a boost from positive word of mouth from my local community and other parties.*



Source:

<https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2022/07/26/info-tiket-lokasi-waktu-pelaksanaan-dan-rangkaian-acara-dieng-culture-festival-2022>

<https://phinemo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Webp.net-resizeimage.jpg>

Picture 2. Promotional Posters of The Dieng Culture Festival

### The Success of The Dieng Culture Festival

The establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival in 2010 became an important milestone in the development of tourism in Dieng (Prasetyo & Suryoko, 2018). The Dieng Culture Festival has successfully brought the interest of tourists, both in Indonesia and the rest of the world (Prasetyo & Suryoko, 2018; Rosilawati et al., 2021). The Dieng Culture Festival itself consists of several events, such as *Jazz Atas Awan* (Jazz On The Sky), sunrise sightseeing, the exhibition of traditional arts (*wayang kulit*, *warok* mask dance, and lion dance), paper lantern and fireworks exhibition, the exhibition of Dieng agricultural products (purwaceng or *Pimpinella pruatjan*, dutch eggplant, and potatoes), cultural carnival, and exhibition of *anak gimbal* (dreadlock hair cutting tradition) (Kusumastuti & Priliantini, 2017; Mahmudi et al., 2020; Rosilawati et al., 2021; Sundari, 2021). With the establishment of this event, the number of tourists visiting Dieng increased significantly. While in 2015 348.767 tourists visited Dieng, by 2017 421.394 tourists visited Dieng, an increase of 20% from 2015 (Afifa & Kinseng, 2020). The number of tourists who participated in the Dieng Culture Festival also increased, from 60.000 tourists in 2015 to 90.000-100.000 in 2016, and over 200.000 tourists in 2019. These tourists came from several countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, and European Countries (Kusumastuti & Priliantini, 2017). This event also brought 80 billion rupiahs in direct and indirect economic benefit to Dieng's local community. Despite this success, Mr. Alif still worked to improve this event by introducing a new attraction (*Jazz Atas Awan* or *Jazz On The Sky*) and working with other external parties such as universities (Gadjah Mada University and the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta) and Geo Dipa (a State-Owned Enterprise developing geothermal energy in Dieng). As stated by Mr. Alif:

*For the success of this event, I try to reach as many external parties as possible, such as government agencies, business associations, and media. Through many external parties, we received substantial sponsorship and marketing boost. Thus this event could attract many tourists, with as many as 200.000 tourists participating in this event in 2019. This event also brought 80 billion rupiahs to Dieng's local community. For the improvement of this event, we worked with several universities, such as Gadjah Mada University and the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta, to conduct research for this event. Through this research, we found that most of the tourists who participated in the Dieng Culture Festival were at the age of 18 to 40 years old. Thus we decided to create additional attractions for this event that could attract younger tourists, namely Jazz Atas Awan or Jazz On The Sky. In addition, we continue to work with Geo Dipa, and as part of their corporate social responsibility program, they agreed to provide sponsorship for the Dieng Culture Festival.*



Source:

<https://travel.kompas.com/read/2023/06/24/200800227/alasan-dieng-culture-festival-2023-ditiadakan-bukan-lagi-karena-covid-19?page=all>

<https://travel.kompas.com/read/2021/09/09/150200127/dieng-culture-festival-2021-masih-virtual-tunggu-arahan-satgas-covid-19?page=all>

<https://phinemo.com/sejarah-dieng-culture-festival/>

<https://lifestyle.bisnis.com/read/20170725/224/674646/dieng-culture-festival-2017-sembilan-anak-berambut-gimbal-diruwat>

Picture 3. Several Attractions of The Dieng Culture Festival (from left to right: paper lantern exhibition, warok mask dance, jazz atas awan, and exhibition of anak gimbal).

The success of the Dieng Culture Festival has brought global attention to Dieng and made Dieng tourism an inspiration for community-based tourism around the world. *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa and Dieng Culture Festival also received several national and international awards. As stated by Mr. Alif:

*The success of the Dieng Culture Festival not only brought economic benefits for the Dieng local community but also brought global attention to Dieng. Many people finally found out about the beauty of Dieng. Mr. Ganjar Pranowo (Governor of Central Java from 2013-2023) also regularly visited Dieng to support Dieng Culture Festival. Due to the success of the Dieng Culture Festival, we received many awards such as the national Desa Wisata awards, awards for sustainable tourism, and international awards from Singapore and the Philippines.*

## CONCLUSION

The tourism sector is mainly managed conventionally, with the more traditional firm-based, top-down approach (Matilainen et al., 2018). Thus the benefit from the tourism sector is mostly enjoyed by large investors. This causes several negative impacts, especially for the local community, such as social disparities and local communities could feel left out since they do not enjoy the economic gains from the tourism sector (Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, 2021). To address this problem, the concept of community-based tourism is conceived. Unlike the conventional tourism sector, community-based tourism has a bottom-up approach, thus centered and managed by the local community. Community-based tourism is comprised of some locally owned enterprises that leverage the local culture and rural or natural settings as attractions and heavily include the community in the planning and execution of the business (Ernawati et al., 2017; Rosilawati et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, community-based tourism is performed by the local community group called *Kelompok Sadar Wisata* or *Pokdarwis*. These groups consist of several members of the local community and are responsible for implementing programs related to tourism development in the local community. *Pokdarwis* has a vital part in the implementation of community based-tourism by creating and managing the *Desa Wisata* (a village community that conducted tourism service) and local events such as Dieng Culture Festival (Hanani et al., 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Kim et al., 2015; Umam et al., 2022). The implementation of community-based tourism and the creation of tourism events requires the presence of leadership and extensive communication. This is because strong community participation is required in the community based-tourism (Chin & Noorashid, 2022; McGehee et al., 2015). Thus leadership is required to build strong community participation and provide direction and structure for community-based tourism (McGehee et al.,

2015). Community-based tourism and tourism events also require a partnership both within the community and outside the community.

For this purpose, besides leadership, extensive communication needs to be established with community members and outside parties (Xu et al., 2017). Thus the role of communication is also crucial for the development of community-based tourism and the creation of tourism events. In this context, communication plays an important role in community engagement in knowledge and skills exchange, maintaining support for community-based tourism from local community members, bringing local tourist programs and initiatives to life, and involving local community members in planning and decision-making of tourism business (Chin & Noorashid, 2022). Because of this, transformational leadership is considered more suitable for community-based tourism, since transformational leadership requires extensive communication and could better foster community collaboration (Cohrs et al., 2020; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; McGehee et al., 2015).

In Dieng, community based-tourism was first conceived by Mr. Alif Faozi (local leader of the Dieng community), due to the underdevelopment of Dieng tourism. Through his transformational leadership and extensive communication with the local community and external parties, Mr. Alif Faozi worked to rejuvenate Dieng tourism with the creation of *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa in 2006. The provision of important resources and knowledge from external parties has enabled Mr. Alif Faozi and *Pokdarwis* Dieng Pandawa to implement several new initiatives in line with the community-based tourism concept, such as the establishment of several homestays, handicraft products, and food products such as carica fruit preserves (a type of papaya fruit) (Afifa & Kinseng, 2020). However, the impact of these new initiatives was barely noticeable, since the number of tourists who came to Dieng and stayed in the homestays or purchased the products remained relatively low. Thus a new initiative still needs to be implemented, and Mr. Alif decided to establish an event called Dieng Culture Festival to attract more tourists to visit Dieng. Despite several challenges such as skepticism and potential rejection from the local community, transformational leadership and extensive communication from Mr. Alif Faozi have enabled the creation of the Dieng Culture Festival by the local Dieng community.

The establishment of the Dieng Culture Festival in 2010 became an important milestone in the development of tourism in Dieng (Prasetyo & Suryoko, 2018). The Dieng Culture Festival has successfully brought the interest of tourists, both in Indonesia and the rest of the world (Prasetyo & Suryoko, 2018; Rosilawati et al., 2021). The Dieng Culture Festival itself consists of several events, such as *Jazz Atas Awan* (Jazz On The Sky), sunrise sightseeing, the exhibition of traditional arts (*wayang kulit*, *warok* mask dance, and lion dance), paper lantern and fireworks exhibition, the exhibition of Dieng agricultural products (purwaceng or *Pimpinella pruatjan*, dutch eggplant, and potatoes), cultural carnival, and exhibition of *anak gimbal* (dreadlock hair cutting tradition) (Kusumastuti & Priliantini, 2017; Mahmudi et al., 2020; Rosilawati et al., 2021; Sundari, 2021). With the establishment of this event, the number of tourists visiting Dieng increased significantly. This event also brought 80 billion rupiahs in direct and indirect economic benefit to Dieng's local community. The success of the Dieng Culture Festival also made Dieng tourism an inspiration for community-based tourism around the world.

The limitation of this research is that this research does not investigate other community-based tourism and only focused on the Dieng Culture Festival. For future research, it is suggested to analyze other tourism events established by community-based tourism. This research implies that tourism events could also be successfully established by local communities in line with

community-based tourism. This could be achieved through strong local leadership and extensive communication with the local community members and external parties.

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