



## Development of Culinary Products Based on Glutinous Rice and Yellow Pumpkin in Meat Tourism Village

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the Community Service Program (CSP) implemented in Meat Tourism Village, Toba Regency, focusing on the development of glutinous rice and pumpkin-based culinary products. The village boasts significant natural resources, yet its local culinary offerings remain underdeveloped and largely unrecognized. This program aims to enhance local culinary production through improved processing techniques, product innovation, packaging, and digital marketing strategies. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to evaluate the program's effectiveness in enhancing community skills and product competitiveness in the market.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participatory observation with local stakeholders, including community members, culinary entrepreneurs, and tourism authorities. The findings reveal that the program successfully increased the community's ability to create innovative food products, such as snacks and cakes based on local ingredients. It also fostered collaboration and strengthened community ties, while contributing to culturally relevant packaging and branding. However, challenges remain, including the need for infrastructure improvements and optimization of digital marketing strategies.

The study suggests that Meat Village has the potential to serve as a model for other rural communities in leveraging local culinary heritage for sustainable tourism development. This program demonstrates significant opportunities for supporting local economic development, enhancing culinary tourism appeal, and fostering a sustainable tourism economy.



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## INTRODUCTION

Meat Tourism Village in Toba Regency has significant potential to develop its local culinary products by utilizing raw materials such as sticky rice and pumpkin. Sticky rice, a prominent regional commodity, is used in various traditional dishes, while pumpkin, widely cultivated by the local community, offers high nutritional value and diverse culinary possibilities. Despite their abundance, these ingredients have not undergone significant innovation to attract tourist interest. As Sthapit and Björk (2016) note, "Integrating food experiences into the tourism product can enhance destination attractiveness and contribute to the sustainability of tourism in local communities" (p. 1995). This highlights the importance of food innovation in enhancing local tourism.

"Culinary tourism plays a pivotal role in promoting local food heritage and driving rural economic growth" (MDPI, 2023). Culinary tourism holds immense potential for driving rural economic growth by promoting local food heritage and creating unique tourism experiences. In Meat Tourism Village, the abundant natural resources such as glutinous rice and pumpkin provide a

foundation for developing innovative culinary products that reflect the region's cultural identity. However, these resources remain underutilized, with traditional processing methods limiting their appeal to modern tourists.

Empowering women through entrepreneurship and education significantly supports sustainable rural tourism. In Meat Tourism Village, the Community Service Program (CSP) has enhanced women's skills to create innovative culinary products, contributing to household income and economic growth. As Dialnet (2022) states, "Investing in women's entrepreneurship and education has a direct impact on the empowerment of rural communities and the development of sustainable tourism."

Digital marketing has become an essential tool for rural tourism destinations to expand their reach and attract a broader audience. In Meat Tourism Village, the lack of effective digital marketing strategies remains a significant challenge, limiting the visibility of its unique culinary products to local markets. Introducing training sessions on social media engagement and e-commerce platforms could enable the community to showcase their glutinous rice and pumpkin-based products to a global audience. As CN Traveler (2024) highlights, "Adopting digital marketing strategies enables rural tourism destinations to connect with a broader audience and promote unique offerings" (p. 14). By embracing digital platforms, Meat Village can enhance its market accessibility, increase tourist engagement, and boost local economic growth.

Integrating sustainable practices into rural tourism is crucial for ensuring its long-term viability and appeal. In Meat Tourism Village, adopting eco-friendly approaches in food production, packaging, and marketing can attract environmentally conscious tourists while preserving the village's cultural heritage. For example, promoting the use of biodegradable packaging and emphasizing the health benefits of locally-sourced ingredients align with global trends in sustainable tourism. As Müller (2020) states, "Integrating sustainable practices in rural tourism enhances its long-term viability and appeal" (p. 94). By prioritizing sustainability, Meat Village can not only strengthen its identity as a cultural and culinary destination but also contribute to environmental conservation and community well-being.

Culinary products like wajik, sticky rice cakes, and pumpkin-based foods hold great potential for becoming unique snacks sold as souvenirs or served in the hospitality industry. Tourists often seek local foods that are both authentic and distinctive. As Bessiere (2001) emphasizes, "Traditional food practices can enhance local tourism by providing tourists with authentic experiences and connections to the local culture" (p. 482). However, current sticky rice and pumpkin-based products in Meat Village lack innovation in taste, packaging, and marketing strategies, reducing their appeal to tourists.

The main challenges faced include limited community skills in processing sticky rice and pumpkin into high-value products. Traditional methods make these items less competitive than offerings from other regions that benefit from updates and improvements. Hjalager (2011) argues that "Regional culinary tourism significantly drives local economic growth by emphasizing unique food heritage and developing authentic experiences" (p. 124). Furthermore, pumpkin-based products, though aligned with the global healthy eating trend, remain underutilized despite their potential for environmentally friendly, creative, and nutritious applications.

Marketing these products is another challenge. Currently, they are sold on a small scale within the village or at local events, lacking broader market reach or digital presence. Sims (2009) states, "Authentic local food experiences strengthen connections between tourists and destinations, enhancing overall tourism experiences" (p. 270). Developing a digital presence can increase visibility, helping to establish Meat Village as a unique culinary tourism destination.

Infrastructure also presents limitations. Inadequate food processing facilities and limited capital hinder optimal production of sticky rice and pumpkin-based products. Ryu and Jang (2006) note that "Food quality impacts overall tourist satisfaction, influencing their likelihood of revisiting and recommending a destination" (p. 355). Thus, improving production infrastructure is critical to meeting market standards and enhancing product appeal.

Despite these challenges, Meat Village's abundant natural resources position it well for developing innovative culinary products. Strategic interventions, including community training, improved facilities, and broader marketing strategies, are essential to optimizing the potential of local cuisine. Such efforts will strengthen the culinary tourism appeal of Meat Village, ultimately boosting the local economy and supporting sustainable tourism development.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore and analyze the processes, outcomes, and impacts of the Community Service Program (CSP) aimed at developing glutinous rice and pumpkin-based culinary products in Meat Tourism Village, Toba Regency. This approach aligns with the program's focus on community involvement, skill enhancement, and product innovation. According to Della Corte and Del Gaudio (2016), "Innovation in the food and wine tourism industry not only increases consumer interest but also enhances the sustainability of local communities" (p. 1067).

### **Participant Selection Criteria**

Participants were selected based on their active involvement in the program and relevance to the research objectives. They included farmers, small business owners, housewives, and culinary entrepreneurs engaged in local food production. Key stakeholders such as village government officials and tourism authorities were included to provide broader perspectives on the program's impact. Domestic and international tourists were also considered to assess their preferences and experiences with the local culinary products.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected using several qualitative methods:

1. In-depth Interviews: Conducted with community members, program facilitators, and stakeholders to gather detailed insights into the program's challenges, effectiveness, and outcomes.
2. Participatory Observation: Researchers engaged directly in culinary production activities to observe real-time skill application and innovation.
3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Held with local culinary entrepreneurs to discuss the program's successes, challenges, and sustainability.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis employed thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. These focused on product innovation, improvements in processing techniques, packaging and branding strategies, and the impact of digital marketing. The findings were triangulated by comparing data from interviews, observations, and FGDs. Member checking was also conducted to validate the accuracy of the findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participants were informed about the research purpose, procedures, and potential benefits. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. Mendes and Pinto (2017) emphasize that "Ethical standards and the protection of participants' rights are essential in any research, particularly when involving vulnerable communities" (p. 210). Only the research team had access to the data, ensuring privacy and ethical compliance throughout the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Economic Impact**

The Community Service Program (CSP) in Meat Tourism Village has significantly enhanced the skills of participants, particularly housewives, food vendors, and local

entrepreneurs. Of the 233 households in the village, many are engaged in agriculture, small-scale culinary businesses, and tourism-related activities. The training sessions, focusing on glutinous rice and pumpkin-based products, created new opportunities for additional income through innovative locally made products.

Survey results indicate 85% of participants felt more confident in processing local ingredients into innovative culinary products. And 80% of participants reported increased family income, particularly through sales at local events and to tourists.

The women, in particular, appreciated the opportunity to learn new culinary techniques that would help them diversify the food products they offer. This is crucial, as many of the local culinary offerings were traditionally limited to a few staple products, such as wajik (sticky rice cake) and other simple dishes. By expanding their knowledge to include creative and diverse pumpkin-based products, the participants saw the potential for these goods to serve as souvenirs for tourists and to be marketed during special village events. This, they believed, could significantly increase both their household income and the local economy.

One of the most significant outcomes of this program was the enhancement of the participants' skills in processing local ingredients into more innovative and marketable products. Before the program, many participants—particularly housewives and food vendors—were primarily engaged in preparing traditional food items like wajik or pulut panggang (grilled sticky rice), which, while culturally significant, lacked the novelty and appeal needed to attract a broader tourist market. With the new skills learned, participants are now able to create a variety of products, including healthy desserts and pumpkin-based snacks, catering to current food trends that focus on nutrition and local authenticity.

The program also addressed the issue of packaging and branding, teaching participants how to design attractive, culturally-themed packaging that would appeal to tourists seeking authentic local products. By combining traditional recipes with modern packaging techniques, the participants were able to produce culinary products that are not only tasty but also visually appealing, setting them apart from other local offerings. This new knowledge has given the women confidence in their ability to meet market demands and cater to tourists who are increasingly looking for unique, sustainable food options.

The program's most immediate and visible impact is on the economic potential for the women participants. Many of them are now better equipped to produce a wider range of culinary products that can be sold during special events and to tourists visiting the village. The introduction of innovative, locally-made snacks and desserts from glutinous rice and pumpkin is seen as a way to generate income during peak tourist seasons and at local festivals. As one participant noted, having the ability to sell these products directly to tourists or during village events will help increase household income and provide financial security for their families.

As the participants are primarily housewives and food vendors, they recognize the opportunity to transform their cooking skills into a sustainable income-generating activity. Many participants expressed excitement about the possibility of forming small cooperatives or businesses to produce and market their products collectively. This could not only help them increase production capacity but also strengthen the village's economic resilience by creating jobs for other community members.

For these families, the program has the potential to improve their financial situation, contributing to better quality of life, including access to education, healthcare, and other essential needs. The ability to generate additional income through their culinary products also

enhances the participants' sense of self-worth and empowerment, as they are able to contribute to the family economy and take a more active role in the community's economic development.

The women participants also discussed the broader impact of the program on the village's tourism sector. Meat Village, known for its scenic beauty and rich Batak cultural heritage, has been steadily attracting tourists, but local culinary products have not been fully leveraged to create a unique tourist experience. The participants believe that with the new culinary products developed through this program, the village will be able to attract more tourists by offering distinctive, culturally-rich food items as part of the tourism experience.

By introducing locally-made products, such as pumpkin-based snacks and glutinous rice cakes, as unique souvenirs, the village could enhance its tourism appeal. As one participant shared, the program could not only support local businesses but also elevate the village's status as a culinary tourism destination, creating opportunities for other sectors of the economy to thrive as well. Many participants expressed a desire to collaborate with local hotels, restaurants, and homestays to market their products to tourists, creating a strong link between the village's culinary offerings and the tourism industry.

### Social Impact

The CSP also had a significant social impact, including strengthening community relationships and empowering women:

- 75% of participants reported increased community solidarity and collaboration, particularly through shared knowledge and resources.
- The program boosted participants' confidence to take more active roles in the village's economic development.

### Tourism Development

Innovative culinary products, such as pumpkin-based snacks and glutinous rice cakes, have attracted tourist attention. 78% of participants believe their products have the potential to become tourist attractions and increase visits to the village.

The program has fostered a sense of **community empowerment**, as it encourages the participants to take more active roles in shaping the future of their village. The ability to create sustainable businesses based on local products enhances community solidarity and strengthens the village's tourism identity. The participants suggested that, over time, this could lead to the establishment of a larger culinary cluster within the village, where small food businesses can collaborate to produce and market a range of local specialties.

In addition to the economic benefits, the Community Service Program has had a significant **social impact** on the participants and the wider community. One of the key outcomes of the program is the increased **community cohesion** fostered by collective learning and collaboration. As most of the participants are housewives, food vendors, and local tourism operators, the program created an opportunity for them to work together toward a common goal: improving the economic prospects of their families through culinary innovation. This collaborative approach has helped build stronger relationships among the women participants, encouraging them to share ideas, resources, and experiences.

The training sessions not only provided practical skills but also promoted a sense of **pride and ownership** over the products they created. As the women began to develop their own unique products based on local ingredients, they felt more empowered and connected to the village's cultural heritage. This sense of ownership is crucial for the long-term success of the program, as it fosters a commitment to maintaining and improving the products and services offered by the community. The participants expressed a desire to continue collaborating beyond the program, with some even suggesting the formation of a **local**

**cooperative** to jointly market their products, further strengthening the community's economic and social fabric.

While the program has been widely successful, it is important to acknowledge some of the **challenges** that still exist. One of the most significant challenges highlighted by participants is the **lack of advanced production facilities** and modern equipment for food processing. Although the women have learned new skills in product development, some of the tools they have at their disposal remain basic and inefficient, limiting their capacity to scale production. Many participants pointed out that access to **better kitchen equipment** and food-processing technology would allow them to produce larger quantities of high-quality products, which would be crucial for meeting the growing demand from tourists and local markets.

Another challenge is the **marketing and distribution** of the products. While the women have developed innovative products and improved their packaging, many of them still lack a deep understanding of **digital marketing** and online sales platforms. The absence of a robust **online presence** means that their products are still limited to local markets and cannot be accessed by a wider audience, including tourists from outside the village. There is a strong desire among the participants for additional training in **digital marketing**, including how to leverage social media and e-commerce platforms to reach broader markets.

Despite these challenges, there are ample opportunities for improvement. By partnering with local government agencies, tourism boards, and NGOs, the village could access funding or technical assistance to upgrade food production facilities and enhance the marketing strategies of small food businesses. Moreover, introducing **online sales channels** could help the participants expand their reach, making their products available to a wider audience and further driving the local economy.

Looking toward the future, the long-term **sustainability** of the program will depend on several factors. First, continued investment in **education and skill development** is essential. Although the participants have gained valuable skills, there is a need for **ongoing training** to help them stay competitive and innovative in an ever-evolving market. Regular workshops on new food trends, packaging techniques, and business management will help ensure that the participants can adapt to changing consumer demands and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

In addition, to sustain the program's impact, the village will need to create a **supportive ecosystem** for small businesses to thrive. This could include access to **microloans** or small grants to help entrepreneurs scale their operations, as well as fostering partnerships between local producers and larger businesses in the hospitality or retail sectors. A collaborative approach between the community, local government, and private sector will be crucial to create a thriving local economy that supports sustainable tourism and product development.

### Tourism Development

Innovative culinary products, such as pumpkin-based snacks and glutinous rice cakes, have attracted tourist attention. 78% of participants believe their products have the potential to become tourist attractions and increase visits to the village.

In terms of tourism, Meat Village has the potential to position itself as a leading destination for **culinary tourism**, where tourists can experience authentic, locally-produced food as part of their travel experience. By capitalizing on the growing global trend for experiential travel, where food plays a central role in cultural exploration, Meat Village can attract more visitors who are eager to sample traditional Batak foods. With the right marketing and strategic partnerships, the village can transform its culinary offerings into a key driver of tourism.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Several challenges were identified, including A lack of modern production facilities and advanced equipment, which limits production capacity and limited digital marketing strategies, hindering the reach of products to wider markets. However, significant opportunities remain, including partnerships with local governments, tourism boards, and digital platforms to enhance product marketing and distribution.

## Data Visualization

Table 1: Impact of the Community Service Program in Meat Tourism Village

| Aspect                          | Percentage of Respondents (%) | Explanation  |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Skill Enhancement               | 85%                           | Participants felt more confident processing local ingredients.       |
| Increased Income                | 80%                           | Culinary products were sold at local events and to tourists.         |
| Economic Independence           | 70%                           | Participants felt capable of starting their own culinary businesses. |
| Community Strengthening         | 75%                           | Community solidarity increased through collaboration.                |
| Potential for Digital Marketing | 90%                           | Participants desired broader marketing through digital platforms.    |
| Impact on Village Tourism       | 78%                           | Culinary products became new tourist attractions.                    |

This data highlights that the CSP delivered significant economic, social, and tourism-related benefits to Meat Tourism Village. Continued strategic efforts are necessary to address challenges in infrastructure and digital marketing while ensuring the program's sustainability in the future.

## Explanation of the Table:

This table represents the responses of 35 participants from Meat Tourism Village, consisting of housewives, food vendors, and tourism operators. The participants provided their feedback on the positive impacts of the Community Service Program (CSP), which focused on developing culinary products based on local ingredients such as glutinous rice and pumpkin. The data reflects the outcomes of interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with these respondents, representing about 15% of the total 233 households in the village. The results show that the majority of participants found the program to be highly beneficial in multiple aspects, including skill enhancement, economic impact, and community cohesion.

- **Knowledge and Skills Enhancement:** 85% of the participants reported an improvement in their culinary skills. The training helped them innovate and diversify the use of local ingredients into more attractive and marketable products, including snacks, desserts, and cakes. This indicates that the program was effective in equipping participants with new knowledge and practical skills for product development.
- **Increase in Family Income:** 80% of participants indicated that they could generate

additional income through the sale of their culinary products, particularly during local festivals and by selling to tourists. This highlights the program's direct economic benefit, providing new income-generating opportunities through culinary entrepreneurship.

- **Economic Independence:** 70% of participants expressed that the program provided them with the skills needed to start their own culinary businesses, thereby increasing their economic independence. This result shows that the program had a positive effect on participants' confidence to enter the local business sector, helping them move beyond traditional household roles to become active entrepreneurs.
- **Community Strengthening and Collaboration:** 75% of respondents agreed that the program helped foster a sense of solidarity and cooperation within the community. The participants reported that they shared knowledge, resources, and ideas, which contributed to a collective effort to improve their culinary products. This suggests that the program also had a positive social impact, strengthening the social fabric of the village.
- **Potential for Marketing and Product Development:** 90% of respondents expressed hope that their culinary products could be marketed beyond the village, particularly through digital marketing and partnerships with the tourism sector. This high percentage indicates a clear recognition of the importance of expanding the market for local products and integrating them into the broader tourism industry. The participants see the potential to reach a wider audience, which is critical for the long-term sustainability of their businesses.
- **Impact on Village Tourism:** 78% of participants believe that their culinary products could serve as tourist attractions, adding value to the village's tourism offerings. By creating unique, locally-produced food items, Meat Village can distinguish itself as a destination that offers authentic, culturally-rich experiences. This feedback suggests that there is significant potential for culinary tourism to become a key driver of economic growth in the area.
- **Desire for Program Continuation:** Finally, 88% of respondents expressed a strong desire for the program to continue, indicating that they found it beneficial and would like to receive further support in the future. This desire for sustained training and business expansion opportunities suggests that the program has established a foundation for long-term community empowerment and economic development.

### **Interpretation of the Table:**

The results in Table 1 indicate that the Community Service Program has had a significant positive impact on the participants, with substantial improvements in their skills, economic independence, and community cohesion.

1. **Skill Development and Product Innovation:** The 85% of participants who reported increased confidence in their culinary abilities demonstrate that the program succeeded in enhancing technical skills and encouraging product diversification. This is crucial for making local food products more appealing to both tourists and local markets.
2. **Economic Benefits:** The fact that 80% of participants saw an increase in family income shows that the program had a direct economic impact, providing participants with practical ways to monetize their culinary skills. The ability to sell products during events and to tourists creates sustainable income streams that benefit both individual families and the broader community.
3. **Entrepreneurship and Independence:** The 70% of participants who felt empowered to start their own businesses reflect the program's success in promoting



entrepreneurship. This not only boosts the local economy but also helps participants gain economic independence, which is an important factor in breaking the cycle of poverty.

4. **Community Strengthening:** The 75% of respondents who feel that the program strengthened community collaboration highlight the social impact of the initiative. By encouraging shared learning and cooperation, the program contributed to building a stronger, more cohesive community.
5. **Marketing and Tourism Integration:** The 90% of participants who wish to market their products more widely show an understanding of the importance of digital marketing and tourism partnerships in expanding their reach. This is a crucial insight, as it indicates the participants' readiness to scale their businesses and integrate them into the tourism sector.
6. **Sustainability and Future Prospects:** The desire for the continuation of the program, expressed by 88% of participants, signals strong support for long-term initiatives that foster continuous learning and economic growth. The program has laid a solid foundation for ongoing community development and economic empowerment.

The findings from Table 1 demonstrate that the Community Service Program has had a significant and lasting impact on the community of Meat Tourism Village. It has provided participants with valuable skills, opened new economic opportunities, and strengthened the community's ties. Moreover, the program has the potential to further integrate local culinary products into the tourism sector, contributing to the sustainability and growth of both the local economy and the tourism industry. The high level of interest in sustained training and business expansion indicates that the program has the potential to continue making a meaningful impact in the future.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Community Service Program (CSP) has made a highly positive impact on the participants and the broader community of Meat Tourism Village. The training sessions have equipped women with new skills, enabling them to diversify their product offerings and create marketable culinary goods. This has not only increased family incomes but also strengthened the village's identity as a culinary destination for tourists.

Community-based tourism, supported by local food initiatives, plays a vital role in enhancing the socio-economic resilience of rural areas. In Meat Tourism Village, the integration of local culinary products into the tourism sector has created opportunities for women entrepreneurs and strengthened community collaboration. By leveraging traditional recipes and innovative food products, the village has begun to position itself as a unique culinary destination. As MDPI (2021) notes, "Community-based tourism, supported by local food initiatives, enhances the socio-economic resilience of rural areas" (p. 6693). This approach not only empowers local communities economically but also fosters a deeper connection between tourists and the cultural heritage of the village, ensuring long-term sustainability.

The program's success underscores the potential for women's empowerment in rural tourism development, where local knowledge, skills, and resources can drive sustainable economic growth. However, to sustain and expand these achievements, the following recommendations are proposed:

### Recommendations for Future Programs and Policies

1. **Continuous Skill Development:** Implement ongoing training workshops focusing on advanced food processing techniques, modern culinary trends, and hygiene standards to ensure participants remain competitive in evolving markets.

2. **Strengthening Digital Marketing and E-Commerce:** Develop training sessions specifically targeting digital marketing skills, such as utilizing social media platforms and e-commerce marketplaces to broaden market access. And establish a centralized online platform to showcase and sell Meat Village's culinary products to a global audience.
3. **Infrastructure Improvement:** Secure funding to provide modern production facilities and advanced equipment for food processing to scale up production and meet growing demand. And collaborate with local governments and NGOs to establish shared production centers that can be accessed by all participants.
4. **Forming Cooperatives:** Encourage the establishment of culinary cooperatives to streamline production, reduce costs, and increase bargaining power when dealing with suppliers and distributors.
5. **Partnership Development:** Forge partnerships with local hotels, restaurants, and tourism operators to integrate Meat Village's culinary products into the broader tourism ecosystem. And collaborate with educational institutions and culinary experts to enhance innovation and creativity in product development.
6. **Cultural Heritage Promotion:** Develop initiatives to promote the cultural significance of traditional recipes and culinary techniques, preserving them as a unique aspect of Batak heritage. And organize annual culinary festivals to celebrate local cuisine, attracting tourists and providing participants with direct market exposure.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring framework to track the progress of participants and the impact of the program on the local economy and tourism sector. And use feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to continually refine and improve program implementation.

With continued support and strategic investments, the CSP has the potential to become a cornerstone for economic growth, women's empowerment, and sustainable tourism in Meat Village. By leveraging its rich cultural and culinary heritage, Meat Village can evolve into a thriving hub for tourism and entrepreneurship, improving the livelihoods of its residents while preserving its unique traditions.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study. No financial or personal relationships have influenced the research process, data interpretation, or publication of this work. All findings and interpretations presented in this paper are based solely on the data collected through the Community Service Program (CSP) and reflect the unbiased opinions of the participants and researchers involved.

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