

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED CULINARY TOURISM RESILIENCE THROUGH LOCAL FOOD INNOVATION AND DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT IN LOMBOK

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Abstract

Community-based culinary tourism can help Lombok diversify tourism benefits, preserve Sasak food heritage, and improve the resilience of micro and small enterprises. However, culinary businesses commonly face fragmented supply networks, uneven product quality, limited branding, weak digital capabilities, and exposure to disasters and market disruptions. This article develops a participatory community-service model that integrates local food innovation with digital empowerment for culinary micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, tourism awareness groups, women and youth organizations, and village tourism actors in Lombok. The model applies four connected stages: participatory needs assessment, co-design of culinary value propositions, capacity-building clinics, and action-based mentoring with monitoring and handover. Its tangible outputs include a culinary asset map, improved products and packaging, digital brand narratives, optimized business profiles, simple financial and continuity tools, and a community collaboration mechanism. Evaluation is designed through pre-post capability assessments, product-quality rubrics, platform analytics, transaction records, observation, and participant reflection. The article argues that resilience is not produced by online promotion alone. It emerges from the interaction of local ownership, adaptive innovation, diversified market channels, knowledge sharing, and continuity planning. The proposed framework offers universities, local governments, tourism villages, and MSME support agencies a replicable basis for measurable and culturally grounded culinary-tourism empowerment in Lombok.

Keywords: community-based tourism; culinary resilience; digital empowerment; local food innovation; Lombok

INTRODUCTION

Lombok is an important tourism island in West Nusa Tenggara whose destination economy is connected to natural attractions, cultural landscapes, village experiences, accommodation, transportation, and food services. Recent tourism recovery has increased opportunities for local enterprises, while also highlighting the need to distribute tourism value more widely across communities. BPS-Statistics of Nusa Tenggara Barat Province recorded 9,333 international visitors entering through Lombok International Airport in September 2025, alongside continued domestic tourism activity (BPS-Statistics of Nusa Tenggara Barat Province, 2025). The World Bank (2025) also identifies Lombok as a priority integrated-tourism destination in which post-earthquake recovery, environmental protection, infrastructure improvement, and community empowerment need to advance together.

Culinary tourism provides a practical pathway for translating tourism flows into local livelihoods because food connects visitors with place, identity, agriculture, household knowledge,

and everyday culture. Food tourism encompasses more than restaurant consumption; it includes encounters with ingredients, production landscapes, markets, street food, cooking practices, narratives, and host communities (Ellis et al., 2018; Richards, 2021). In Lombok, local culinary assets such as spicy preparations, grilled dishes, vegetable-based foods, traditional snacks, coffee, seafood, and community food traditions can become distinctive destination experiences when they are presented with authenticity, safety, consistency, and meaningful storytelling.

Nevertheless, tourism-dependent culinary enterprises are vulnerable to multiple disruptions. The 2018 earthquakes demonstrated the island's exposure to disaster, while the COVID-19 pandemic showed how mobility restrictions can rapidly reduce customer flows and income. Evidence from Indonesian street-food microenterprises indicates that culinary businesses responded to pandemic disruption through operational adjustment, market adaptation, and digital channels, but their recovery remained constrained by limited resources and capabilities (Gaffar et al., 2022). Resilience therefore requires more than returning to previous sales levels. It requires the capacity to anticipate shocks, adapt products and operations, diversify channels, mobilize community relationships, and preserve valuable cultural assets.

Digitalization offers useful instruments for market access, customer communication, payment, learning, and data-informed decisions. Yet technology adoption does not automatically empower small enterprises. OECD (2021) notes that smaller firms frequently lag in digital transformation because of limited awareness, internal resources, skills, finance, and security capabilities. In culinary tourism, fragmented content, weak visual identity, incomplete business information, dependence on a single platform, and the absence of customer databases can reduce the value generated by online exposure. Digital empowerment must therefore combine tools with practical routines, community support, and ownership of content and data.

This article presents an integrated community-service program for strengthening community-based culinary tourism resilience in Lombok through local food innovation and digital empowerment. Its objectives are to: (1) identify culinary assets and enterprise vulnerabilities; (2) improve the quality, distinctiveness, packaging, pricing, and storytelling of local food products; (3) strengthen practical digital capabilities for visibility, transactions, and customer relationships; and (4) establish community-level collaboration and continuity mechanisms. The novelty of the program lies in connecting food heritage, enterprise innovation, digital capability, and resilience planning within one action-based intervention rather than treating product development and digital marketing as separate training topics. The article contributes a replicable design, implementation sequence, and monitoring framework for universities, village institutions, tourism agencies, and MSME development partners.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

Community-based culinary tourism and local resilience

Community-based tourism is distinguished by the extent to which local people participate in decision-making, exercise control over tourism resources, and receive outcomes that they define as valuable. Mayaka et al. (2019) conceptualize community-based tourism through the interacting dimensions of involvement, power and control, and outcomes. This perspective is important for culinary tourism because a food product may be marketed as "local" while decisions, narratives, sourcing, and profits remain controlled by external actors. Genuine community-based culinary tourism therefore requires local authority over what is represented, how knowledge is shared, who participates, and how benefits circulate.

Resilience in community tourism concerns the ability to respond to change across different scales rather than merely resist disturbance. Lew (2014) emphasizes that community planning must consider both gradual change and sudden shocks. A resilient culinary-tourism system needs diverse suppliers, flexible business models, trusted local networks, information sharing, and the capacity to reorganize without losing its cultural foundation. The growing literature on sustainable community-

based tourism similarly highlights adaptive governance, stakeholder collaboration, capability development, and locally meaningful indicators (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023).

Food provides a strong entry point for community resilience because it links tourism with agriculture, fisheries, household production, cultural identity, and small enterprise. Sosa et al. (2021) show that community-based tourism through food can support sustainable livelihoods when development is assessed across economic, sociocultural, environmental, and governance dimensions. This means that the success of a culinary-tourism program should not be measured only through sales; it should also consider local sourcing, participation, cultural continuity, inclusion, resource use, and collective learning.

Local food innovation as value creation

Local food innovation does not require replacing traditional cuisine with standardized commercial products. It involves improving how local value is created, communicated, and delivered while protecting the identity of ingredients, recipes, techniques, and meanings. Food-tourism experiences are shaped by authenticity, sensory qualities, learning, social interaction, and the relationship between food and place (Ellis et al., 2018; Richards, 2021). Accordingly, innovation may include better hygiene and consistency, portion alternatives, practical packaging, shelf-life management, transparent pricing, menu design, visitor participation, pairing with local stories, and connections to farms or markets.

The economic potential of food tourism depends on linkages between tourism demand and the local economy. Fernández and Irimia-Diéquez (2025) conclude that food tourism can support sustainable local economic development when policies and business practices promote local production and consumption. For community service, this suggests that product innovation should be developed with a value-chain perspective. Culinary entrepreneurs need to examine where ingredients originate, which community actors contribute, how waste is handled, and whether tourism demand creates benefits beyond the final seller.

Co-creation is especially relevant because innovation imposed by external trainers may produce products that are attractive in a workshop but difficult to sustain in daily operations. Maziliauske (2024) demonstrates that tourism SMEs can generate sociocultural sustainability benefits through co-creation with local stakeholders, including local sourcing, education, inclusion, and resource synergies. A community-service program should therefore use repeated experimentation, customer feedback, and peer review rather than one-directional instruction.

Digital empowerment and market resilience

Technological transformation has changed how culinary destinations and businesses communicate with stakeholders. Schimperna et al. (2021) show that technology can extend stakeholder engagement in culinary tourism, although its value depends on how it is integrated into relationships and destination management. Digital empowerment in a community context should be understood as the capability to choose, operate, evaluate, and govern appropriate digital tools. It includes content creation, accurate business information, online reputation management, messaging, digital payment, customer records, simple analytics, data protection, and the ability to switch channels when one platform becomes ineffective.

Digital capability also needs to be proportional to enterprise resources. Complex websites or paid advertising may be unsuitable for businesses that have not yet established product consistency, basic photography, pricing, response routines, or transaction records. OECD (2024) reports that effective tourism-SME digitalization programs combine infrastructure, skills development, tailored services, and financial support. Consequently, the proposed program follows a capability ladder: establishing a reliable digital identity, building reusable content, improving customer communication, enabling transactions, and using simple data for decisions.

The integration of creative tourism, local identity, community operation, sustainability, and visitor experience can reinforce resilience when communities manage these elements collectively (Suriyankietkaew et al., 2025). For Lombok, the intended pathway is therefore: locally controlled

culinary assets lead to co-created product innovation; product innovation supports credible digital storytelling and diversified channels; diversified channels produce market information and wider customer access; and community governance converts individual learning into shared resilience. Because this is a community-service and program-design article rather than a hypothesis-testing study, no formal hypotheses are formulated.

RESEARCH METHODS

Program design, setting, and participants

The article uses a participatory community-service design informed by action learning and capacity building. The proposed setting is a village or multi-village culinary cluster in Lombok selected jointly with local government, tourism-village organizations, and community leaders. A recommended cohort consists of 25–30 culinary micro and small enterprises, complemented by representatives of tourism awareness groups, women and youth organizations, village-owned enterprises, local producers, and tourism-service providers. Selection should prioritize active businesses with local food products, willingness to participate in mentoring, and potential to share learning with other community members.

The program is designed for a four-month core cycle, followed by three months of light-touch monitoring. It applies five principles: participation, cultural respect, practicality, inclusion, and measurable learning. Participation means that problems and solutions are defined with community actors. Cultural respect protects community ownership of recipes, narratives, and symbols. Practicality requires each workshop to generate a usable business output. Inclusion encourages the participation of women, youth, home-based businesses, and enterprises with different levels of digital readiness. Measurable learning connects activities to observable capability and business indicators.

Implementation stages

The program is implemented through five connected stages. First, an inception and diagnosis stage maps culinary assets, enterprise conditions, customer segments, supplier relationships, current digital channels, and major risks. Second, co-design workshops translate the diagnosis into a shared culinary-tourism value proposition and enterprise action plans. Third, capacity-building clinics address product quality, packaging, pricing, storytelling, digital identity, content production, customer communication, and business continuity. Fourth, action-based mentoring supports participants while they apply improvements in their businesses and conduct a coordinated digital activation. Fifth, evaluation and handover consolidate results, document lessons, and transfer simple monitoring responsibilities to local partners.

Table 1. Community service stages, core activities, and intended outputs

Stage	Core activities	Tangible outputs	Resilience capability
1. Diagnosis	Asset mapping, interviews, product audit, digital audit, risk mapping	Culinary asset map and enterprise baseline	Awareness of assets, gaps, and vulnerabilities
2. Co-design	Value-proposition workshop, customer mapping, prioritization of actions	Shared culinary narrative and individual action plans	Collective direction and local ownership
3. Capacity clinics	Product, packaging, costing, storytelling, content, payment, analytics, continuity planning	Improved prototypes, digital assets, simple management tools	Adaptive operational and market capability

Stage	Core activities	Tangible outputs	Resilience capability
4. Mentoring and activation	Business visits, peer review, content campaign, cross- promotion, market testing	Operational application and coordinated promotion	Diversified channels and collaborative learning
5. Evaluation and handover	Post-assessment, reflection, documentation, local facilitator preparation	Capability report, improvement portfolio, follow-up plan	Institutionalization and continued adaptation

Data collection and evaluation

Program data are collected through a baseline questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, observation, product and packaging rubrics, digital-profile audits, participant attendance, mentor logs, platform analytics, simple sales or inquiry records, and end-of-program reflection. The baseline measures product readiness, market channels, digital practices, collaboration, and continuity preparedness. Product assessment covers identity, quality consistency, hygiene communication, packaging suitability, price clarity, and story content. Digital assessment covers discoverability, profile completeness, content quality, response routines, transaction options, customer records, and basic security.

Quantitative indicators are summarized descriptively by comparing baseline and endline scores, while qualitative information is analyzed thematically to identify changes in confidence, collaboration, perceived usefulness, and implementation barriers. Evaluation should distinguish activity completion from capability change and business outcomes. For example, opening a social-media account is an activity; maintaining accurate information and responding consistently are capabilities; increased inquiries, repeat customers, or sales are outcomes. Where businesses agree to share commercial data, results should be reported in aggregate to protect confidentiality.

Ethical safeguards include informed participation, permission for photographs and digital publication, transparent use of business data, protection of customer information, and community approval for culturally sensitive narratives. Recipe knowledge or cultural material that communities consider restricted should not be published. The university team should avoid claiming ownership over business brands, photographs, recipes, or digital accounts created during the program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in this section are the outputs of the program-design process and the monitoring architecture proposed for field implementation; they are not claims of completed impact. This distinction avoids manufacturing participant or sales data before implementation. The design produces four mutually reinforcing intervention components: culinary asset and vulnerability mapping, local food innovation, digital empowerment, and community resilience governance.

Culinary asset and vulnerability mapping

The first design output is a participatory culinary asset map. The map records signature dishes and snacks, ingredients, producers, cooking knowledge, seasonal availability, sales locations, tourism routes, community events, supporting services, and stories associated with place. It also records vulnerabilities such as dependence on a single supplier, short shelf life, inconsistent quality, limited cold storage, unrecorded recipes, weak succession of cooking knowledge, disaster exposure, and reliance on walk-in customers. Mapping assets and vulnerabilities together prevents the program from promoting products whose supply or cultural basis cannot support increased demand.

This approach operationalizes the community-based tourism principle that local involvement and control are central to meaningful outcomes (Mayaka et al., 2019). It also broadens resilience beyond emergency response. For example, documenting alternative suppliers, production capacity, and seasonal constraints helps enterprises manage ordinary fluctuations as well as major disruptions. The map can be maintained by a village tourism organization or local facilitator and used to design culinary trails, market events, visitor workshops, and cross-business packages.

Local food innovation without cultural dilution

The second output is a portfolio of product and experience improvements developed through small experiments. Each enterprise selects one priority product and applies an innovation canvas covering customer need, cultural identity, ingredient origin, sensory quality, production process, portion, packaging, price, story, waste, and feedback. The process preserves the core identity of local foods while improving aspects that affect visitor trust and purchase convenience. Examples include bilingual menu descriptions, clearer ingredient and allergen information, travel-friendly packaging, standardized portion guides, differentiated prices, tasting sizes, preparation demonstrations, or bundled experiences with markets and producers.

Innovation is assessed through feasibility and cultural integrity rather than novelty alone. A product is not considered successful when it looks attractive but requires equipment, materials, or labor that the enterprise cannot sustain. Likewise, adaptation for tourists should not erase local taste or reduce community narratives to generic promotional language. Richards (2021) emphasizes the experiential and cultural dimensions of gastronomy tourism, while Fernández and Irímia-Diéguez (2025) highlight the importance of local economic linkages. The program therefore encourages enterprises to disclose local sourcing, collaborate with farmers and fishers, and explain the social context of food wherever appropriate.

Digital empowerment as a capability ladder

The third output is a progressive digital capability package. The first level establishes accurate and consistent business identity across Google Business Profile, maps, WhatsApp Business, and one primary social platform. The second level creates a reusable content bank containing product photographs, short videos, founder stories, ingredient narratives, location information, price ranges, and frequently asked questions. The third level establishes customer-response routines, catalogues or digital menus, payment options, and consent-based customer records. The fourth level introduces simple analytics, content planning, review management, and channel comparison.

This sequence addresses a common weakness of short digital-marketing training: participants may learn platform features but leave without complete profiles, usable content, or routines. Action-based clinics require participants to publish and test outputs during the program. Youth digital volunteers can support photography, editing, and account setup, while business owners retain passwords, account ownership, and decision authority. The model thus treats technology as a means of empowerment rather than a transfer of control to external content managers.

Channel diversification is essential for resilience. Businesses should not depend exclusively on algorithmic reach or a single marketplace. The program combines map-based discovery, direct messaging, social content, partner referrals, offline signage, QR-linked menus, local accommodation networks, and community campaigns. This supports Schimperna et al.'s (2021) argument that technological transformation should strengthen stakeholder engagement and aligns with OECD (2024), which recommends tailored digital support for tourism SMEs.

Community governance and business continuity

The fourth output is a simple community resilience mechanism. Participating businesses form a culinary working group within an existing village or tourism organization rather than creating an unnecessary new institution. The group maintains the asset map, coordinates cross-promotion, shares a content calendar, identifies alternative suppliers, documents emergency contacts, and organizes periodic peer review. Each enterprise also prepares a one-page continuity sheet covering

critical products, essential equipment, supplier alternatives, minimum cash requirements, data backup, customer communication, and temporary operating options.

Collective arrangements reduce the isolation of microenterprises and convert individual training into community capability. When one business has excess demand, supply shortages, equipment failure, or temporary closure, trusted relationships can support referrals, shared sourcing, or production assistance. Co-created innovation and local networks can generate sociocultural sustainability benefits beyond immediate sales (Maziliauske, 2024). The approach also reflects recent community-based tourism research emphasizing adaptive management, collaboration, cultural revitalization, and environmental stewardship (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2025).

Monitoring targets and evidence

The monitoring framework uses a small set of practical indicators. Targets should be finalized with community partners after baseline measurement; the values below are indicative rather than reported achievements. The framework balances enterprise capability, market outcomes, cultural value, collaboration, and continuity preparedness. It deliberately avoids evaluating success only through followers or impressions, because high online visibility without accurate information, customer response, transactions, or local benefit may not strengthen resilience.

Table 2. Proposed monitoring and evaluation framework

Dimension	Indicator	Indicative target	Evidence
Product readiness	Improvement in product and packaging rubric	At least 20% average score increase	Before-and-after rubric, photographs, mentor verification
Digital identity	Complete and accurate business profiles	At least 80% of participants	Profile audit and ownership confirmation
Content capability	Participants independently producing usable content	At least 75% demonstrate three content formats	Content portfolio and observation
Market engagement	Change in qualified inquiries or direct orders	Positive change over an agreed comparison period	Message logs, order records, platform analytics
Local linkage	Products documenting local suppliers or collaborators	At least one strengthened local linkage per enterprise	Supplier map, interview, purchasing evidence
Collaboration	Active cross-promotion or joint culinary activity	At least two community actions during the cycle	Campaign records, event documentation
Continuity	Completed and tested one-page continuity sheet	At least 80% of participants	Continuity sheet and simulation reflection

Integrated contribution to culinary-tourism resilience

The principal discussion point is that resilience emerges from interaction among the four components rather than from any single intervention. Culinary asset mapping identifies what the community can responsibly offer and where vulnerabilities lie. Local food innovation improves value and adaptability. Digital empowerment diversifies access to customers and information.

Community governance supports coordination, learning, and continuity. Removing one component weakens the system: digital promotion without product readiness can amplify complaints; product innovation without local control can dilute cultural identity; individual training without collaboration can leave enterprises isolated; and continuity planning without market diversification may protect operations but not demand.

The framework also links short-term enterprise needs with long-term destination development. In the short term, businesses gain practical assets such as profiles, photographs, menus, packaging prototypes, pricing tools, and response routines. In the medium term, community actors can build culinary routes, events, learning experiences, and partnerships with accommodation and tour providers. In the long term, the destination can strengthen local supply chains, preserve food knowledge, develop community facilitators, and incorporate culinary resilience indicators into tourism-village planning. This progression is consistent with UN Tourism and Basque Culinary Center (2019), which position gastronomy tourism as a strategic field requiring stakeholder coordination, product development, and destination management.

Environmental and social considerations must remain visible. Packaging innovation should avoid replacing one problem with increased single-use waste. Menu development should consider seasonal ingredients and responsible sourcing. Food events and promotions should represent community diversity and prevent the concentration of opportunities among a few established businesses. Thelen and Kim (2024) demonstrate that social and environmental sustainability in food-tourism events are interdependent. Accordingly, evaluation in Lombok should track participation, local sourcing, waste practices, and cultural representation alongside commercial outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This article develops an integrated community-service model for strengthening community-based culinary tourism resilience in Lombok through local food innovation and digital empowerment. The model connects participatory asset mapping, co-created product development, progressive digital capability, and community continuity governance. Its practical value lies in requiring every training activity to produce usable outputs and in assessing resilience through multiple dimensions rather than online visibility alone.

For universities, the model provides a structured pathway from needs assessment to mentoring, evaluation, and handover. For local governments and tourism-village institutions, it offers a compact set of indicators for targeting support and monitoring capability development. For culinary enterprises, it supports better products, clearer stories, diversified customer channels, local partnerships, and basic preparedness for disruption. The design can be adapted to different Lombok communities, but implementation should preserve local decision-making and avoid imposing standardized culinary identities.

The principal limitation is that this manuscript reports a program design and proposed monitoring architecture rather than completed field outcomes. Future implementation should document the selected location, participant profile, duration, baseline conditions, actual pre-post changes, sales or inquiry trends, and unintended effects. Longer follow-up is needed to determine whether digital routines, local sourcing, collaboration, and continuity practices remain active after university mentoring ends. Comparative implementation across several Lombok culinary clusters could also identify which program components are most effective under different levels of tourism intensity, digital readiness, and institutional support.

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