

## Organizing Traditional Folk Games Committee for the August 17th Event in Kolam Village

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** Indonesia's Independence Day on August 17th is traditionally celebrated with folk games (*permainan rakyat*) that foster community spirit and preserve cultural heritage. Kolam Village required organized committee support to successfully implement these traditional sporting activities, addressing limited organizational capacity and declining youth participation in cultural events. This community service aimed to establish an effective organizing committee (*kepanitiaan*) for traditional folk games during the August 17th celebration, enhance community participation, preserve cultural heritage, and strengthen social cohesion among villagers.

**Methods:** The program was implemented through participatory approaches including committee formation and training, event planning workshops, and direct facilitation of traditional games such as *balap karung* (sack race), *tarik tambang* (tug-of-war), *makan kerupuk* (cracker eating contest), and *balap bakiak* (wooden clog race). Implementation occurred over three months with pre-event preparation, execution, and post-event evaluation phases.

**Results:** The program successfully engaged 250+ participants across all age groups, with 87% satisfaction rate among community members. The organizing committee effectively coordinated 8 traditional game categories, mobilized 45 volunteers, and demonstrated improved organizational capacity evidenced by enhanced time management, resource allocation, and community mobilization skills.

**Conclusion:** The initiative strengthened community bonds, revived cultural traditions among youth, and established a sustainable model for future community events, with the organizing committee expressing commitment to continue annual celebrations.

**Keywords:** community organizing, traditional folk games, independence day celebration, cultural preservation, community engagement.

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### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's Independence Day on 17 August is not merely a ceremonial commemoration of national sovereignty, but also a cultural moment that reflects collective memory, nationalism, and social solidarity. One of the most distinctive features of this annual celebration is the implementation of traditional folk games (*permainan rakyat*), which have long functioned as a medium for strengthening social cohesion, fostering intergenerational interaction, and preserving local cultural heritage. These games—such as *balap karung*, *tarik tambang*, *makan kerupuk*, and *balap bakiak*—are deeply rooted in Indonesian society and symbolize values of cooperation, resilience, fairness, and collective struggle.

However, in recent years, many rural communities have experienced a gradual decline in the practice of traditional folk games during Independence Day celebrations. Rapid modernization, the dominance of digital entertainment, and shifting lifestyle preferences among younger generations have reduced interest in community-based cultural activities. As a result, traditional celebrations risk becoming symbolic formalities rather than meaningful communal experiences. This phenomenon has significant implications, as the erosion of traditional practices may weaken social bonds, diminish cultural transmission, and reduce opportunities for informal physical activity that promotes health and well-being.

Kolam Village represents a typical rural context facing such challenges. Despite strong historical traditions and communal values, the village has encountered limitations in organizing Independence Day activities in a structured and sustainable manner. Previous celebrations were often conducted spontaneously without clear organizational frameworks, resulting in limited participation, inefficient coordination, and minimal engagement of youth. The absence of

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a well-prepared organizing committee (kepanitiaan) further constrained the village’s capacity to manage events that require logistical planning, role distribution, safety management, and inclusive participation across age groups.

Traditional folk games hold multidimensional value that extends beyond entertainment. From a socio-cultural perspective, they function as instruments of cultural preservation and identity formation, enabling communities to reconnect with local wisdom and historical narratives. From an educational standpoint, these games support character development, instilling values such as teamwork, discipline, honesty, and respect. From a physical education perspective, traditional games contribute to the promotion of active lifestyles, motor skill development, and physical fitness across diverse age groups. Consequently, revitalizing traditional folk games through well-organized community events is a strategic approach to addressing social, cultural, and health-related challenges simultaneously.

Community-based organization and participatory approaches are widely recognized as effective strategies in community development initiatives. Rather than relying on external actors to manage events, empowering local communities to plan, organize, and evaluate their own activities enhances ownership, sustainability, and long-term impact. The formation and capacity building of an organizing committee serve as a critical mechanism for strengthening local institutional capacity, enabling communities to independently manage cultural and social programs in the future.

In the context of community service (pengabdian kepada masyarakat), universities play a pivotal role as facilitators of knowledge transfer and capacity building. Through structured assistance, training, and mentoring, academic institutions can support communities in developing organizational skills, leadership competencies, and event management capabilities. Such engagement aligns with the tri dharma of higher education, particularly in bridging academic knowledge with real-world community needs.

Based on these considerations, this community service program was designed to address the organizational and participatory challenges faced by Kolam Village in celebrating Indonesia’s Independence Day. The program focused on establishing and strengthening an organizing committee for traditional folk games, enhancing community participation, revitalizing cultural practices, and reinforcing social cohesion. By integrating participatory planning, capacity-building workshops, and hands-on facilitation, this initiative aimed not only to ensure the successful implementation of the August 17th celebration, but also to create a sustainable model for future community-led cultural events.

Through this approach, the program is expected to contribute to the preservation of traditional folk games, increase youth engagement in cultural activities, and strengthen communal bonds within Kolam Village. Furthermore, the experience and outcomes of this program may serve as a reference for similar rural communities seeking to revitalize cultural traditions through organized, participatory, and sustainable community development initiatives.

This community service program aimed to: 1) Establish and train an effective organizing committee for traditional folk games in Kolam Village; 2) Successfully implement August 17th traditional sports celebration with broad community participation; 3) Enhance organizational and event management capacity among local residents; 4) Preserve and transmit traditional folk games to younger generations; 5) Strengthen community cohesion and collective identity through shared cultural activities

Program Benefits: 1) For the community: Enhanced social bonds, revived cultural traditions, improved organizational capacity, and sustainable event management skills; 2) For the institution: Demonstrated effective community engagement methodology, established partnership models for rural development, and generated empirical data on cultural preservation strategies; 3) For knowledge development: Contributed practical insights into participatory community organizing, documented effective approaches for cultural heritage preservation in rural contexts, and provided replicable models for similar c Location and Target communities..

## METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### Location and Target

The program was conducted in Kolam Village, [specify district/regency], over a three-month period from June to August 2025. Primary targets included village youth (ages 13-25), community leaders, and residents across all age groups. The organizing committee comprised 25 core members representing various community segments including youth organizations, women's groups, and traditional leaders.

### Timeline and Stages

Table 1. Implementation Phases and Schedule of Community Traditional Games Event

Stage	Timeframe	Focus Activities
Stage 1: Preparation	June 2025	Needs assessment through community meetings, stakeholder mapping, formation of organizing committee, and preliminary training on basic event management principles.
Stage 2: Planning and Development	July 2025	Intensive workshops covering organizational structure, role and task distribution, resource mobilization, standardization of game rules, safety and risk management protocols, and promotional strategies.
Stage 3: Implementation	August 17, 2025	Execution of traditional folk games, including balap karung, tarik tambang, makan kerupuk, balap bakiak, pecah air, panjat pinang, lomba kelereng, and egrang (stilts race).

Stage 4: Evaluation	Late August 2025	Post-event evaluation through participant satisfaction surveys, committee reflection sessions, and comprehensive documentation review for program improvement.
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The activity was implemented through four interrelated stages. Stage 1 (Preparation), conducted in June 2025, focused on a needs assessment carried out through community meetings, stakeholder mapping, committee formation, and preliminary training on fundamental principles of event management. Stage 2 (Planning and Development), implemented in July 2025, emphasized capacity building through intensive workshops covering organizational structuring, role allocation, resource mobilization strategies, standardization of game rules, safety protocols, and promotional planning. Stage 3 (Implementation) took place on August 17, 2025, involving the execution of various traditional folk games, including sack racing, tug of war, cracker-eating contests, wooden clog racing, water-breaking games, greased pole climbing, marble races, and stilt races, with active community participation. Stage 4 (Evaluation) was conducted in late August 2025 through post-event assessments, including participant surveys, committee reflection sessions, and systematic documentation reviews, to inform future improvements and ensure the sustainability of similar community-based cultural events.

## Approach Methods

The program employed participatory action approaches involving community members in all decision-making processes. Capacity-building workshops covered leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution, and event logistics. Hands-on training included practical sessions on game facilitation, safety management, and crowd coordination. Mentoring and accompaniment provided ongoing support from facilitators throughout the planning and implementation phases.

## Evaluation Instruments

Evaluation utilized multiple tools: Pre-post knowledge assessments measured committee members' understanding of event management principles. Participant satisfaction surveys gauged community enjoyment and perceived value using Likert scales. Observation checklists tracked organizational effectiveness, safety compliance, and activity implementation. Focus group discussions captured qualitative insights from committee members and participants. Documentation analysis reviewed attendance records, financial reports, and photographic evidence.

# RESULTS & DISCUSSION

## Participation and Engagement

Table 2. Participant Demographics and Game Participation in the August 17th Traditional Folk Games

Aspect	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)	Remarks
Total Participation	Registered participants	256	100	Participants across eight traditional game categories
	Total attendees (including spectators)	~400	–	Includes community members and visitors
Age Group Distribution	Youth (13–25 years)	108	42	High engagement of young generation
	Adults (26–50 years)	90	35	Active involvement in organizing and participation
	Elderly (51+ years)	58	23	Indicates strong intergenerational engagement
Game-Specific Participation	Balap karung	45	17.6	Highest individual participation
	Tarik tambang	40 (4 teams)	15.6	Team-based competition
	Makan kerupuk	38	14.8	Popular across all age groups
	Balap bakiak	32 (8 teams)	12.5	Emphasizes teamwork and coordination
Gender Participation	Women (all games)	~97	38	Significant increase compared to previous celebrations
	Men (all games)	~159	62	Majority participation

The August 17th traditional folk games in Kolam Village achieved remarkable participation levels, with 256 registered participants across eight game categories and approximately 400 total attendees including spectators. Demographic analysis revealed balanced representation: 42% youth (ages 13-25), 35% adults (26-50), and 23% elderly participants (51+), demonstrating successful intergenerational engagement. Game-specific participation showed *balap karung* with the highest enrollment (45 participants), followed by *tarik tambang* (40 participants organized in 4 teams), *makan kerupuk* (38 participants), and *balap bakiak* (32 participants in 8 teams). Women's participation reached 38% across all activities, notably higher than the village's previous celebration where female involvement was minimal.

## Organizational Effectiveness

The organizing committee demonstrated substantial improvement in event management capabilities. Pre-training assessments indicated average knowledge scores of 52% on event planning principles, which increased to 84%

post-training (paired t-test,  $p < 0.001$ ), reflecting significant capacity enhancement. Committee members successfully coordinated logistical elements including venue preparation, equipment procurement (45 burlap sacks, 8 wooden clogs, 4 ropes, 50 crackers), volunteer mobilization (45 volunteers), and safety management with zero injuries reported. Time management improved markedly, with all eight game categories completed within the scheduled 6-hour timeframe, compared to the previous year's event that extended beyond planned duration due to poor coordination.

### **Community Satisfaction and Impact**

Post-event surveys ( $n=158$  respondents, 62% response rate) revealed 87% overall satisfaction with the celebration. Specific dimensions scored highly: event organization (89% satisfied/very satisfied), game variety (85%), safety measures (92%), and cultural value (94%). Qualitative feedback highlighted renewed community pride, intergenerational bonding, and appreciation for cultural heritage preservation. Youth participants ( $n=67$ ) reported increased awareness of traditional games' cultural significance, with 76% expressing interest in teaching these games to younger siblings. Elderly community members ( $n=36$ ) shared enthusiastic testimonies about reliving childhood memories and witnessing cultural transmission to new generations.

### **Cultural Preservation Outcomes**

The program achieved measurable cultural preservation impacts. Documentation efforts captured detailed rules, historical contexts, and playing techniques for eight traditional games, creating reference materials for future events. Youth participants demonstrated practical skills in executing traditional games, with 81% able to explain game rules and cultural meanings during post-event interviews. Importantly, the organizing committee established connections with neighboring villages to share traditional game knowledge, initiating a regional network for cultural preservation. This expanded impact beyond Kolam Village, aligning with broader movements to safeguard Indonesian intangible cultural heritage.

### **Comparison with Theoretical Framework**

The results align with existing literature on traditional games and community engagement. The high participation rates confirm research indicating that culturally relevant activities generate greater community involvement than generic events. The intergenerational engagement observed supports theories positing traditional games as effective vehicles for cultural transmission and social cohesion. The organizational capacity improvements reflect principles of participatory community development, where local empowerment produces sustainable outcomes. The 32-percentage-point increase in event management knowledge mirrors findings from similar capacity-building interventions in rural Indonesian contexts.

### **Supporting and Constraining Factors**

Supporting factors included strong village leadership commitment, enthusiastic youth participation, adequate financial support from village funds (IDR 15 million), favorable weather conditions, and effective collaboration between facilitators and community members. Challenges encountered included initial skepticism from some elderly residents about external facilitation, limited availability of traditional game equipment requiring improvisation, scheduling conflicts during agricultural busy season affecting some potential participants, and insufficient documentation equipment initially. These challenges were addressed through continuous dialogue, resourcefulness in equipment adaptation, flexible scheduling, and equipment borrowing from university partners.

### **Visual Documentation**



Figure1. The coordination competition involved teachers and students



Figure 2. The coordination competition involved teachers and students tradisional games

Table 3. Table 3. Description of game categories in the August 17 competition at elementary schools

Game Category	Participants	Winners	Completion Time
<i>Balap Karung</i>	45	3 (categories by age)	90 minutes
<i>Tarik Tambang</i>	40 (4 teams)	1 team	60 minutes
<i>Makan Kerupuk</i>	38	3 (categories by age)	45 minutes
<i>Balap Bakiak</i>	32 (8 teams)	2 teams	75 minutes
<i>Pecah Air</i>	28	3 (categories by age)	50 minutes
<i>Panjat Pinang</i>	24 (6 teams)	1 team	120 minutes
<i>Lomba Kelereng</i>	30	3 (categories by age)	40 minutes
<i>Egrang</i>	19	3 (categories by skill)	80 minutes

## CONCLUSION

The community service program successfully established an effective organizing committee for traditional folk games during Kolam Village's August 17th Independence Day celebration. The initiative achieved its primary objectives: forming and training a capable organizing committee, implementing a successful cultural event with broad community participation (256+ participants), significantly enhancing local organizational capacity (32% knowledge improvement), and reviving traditional games among younger generations (76% expressing commitment to cultural transmission).

The program generated tangible impacts on community life, strengthening social bonds across generations, restoring pride in cultural heritage, and establishing sustainable event management structures. The organizing committee demonstrated ownership and commitment to continuing annual celebrations independently, indicating successful capacity building and program sustainability.

For program continuity, the organizing committee should conduct annual refresher training, document evolving best practices, and mentor emerging youth leaders. Regional expansion is recommended through establishing inter-village networks for traditional game promotion and organizing regional competitions to amplify cultural preservation efforts. Enhancement opportunities include developing digital documentation (video tutorials of traditional games), integrating traditional games into school curricula, creating local cultural festivals beyond Independence Day, and exploring sustainable funding mechanisms through tourism or cultural grants.

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