

Enhancing Guide Competence for Sensory-Disabled Tourists at Nglanggeran Geosite

Meningkatkan Kompetensi Pemandu Wisata untuk Wisatawan dengan Disabilitas Sensorik pada Situs Geologi Nglanggeran

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ABSTRACT

The Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano Geosite in Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta, is a leading geotourism destination that has begun to attract sensory-impaired tourists. This phenomenon demonstrated the area's potential as an inclusive tourism destination, while also creating an urgent need for tour guides with good communication skills. However, the development of local guide capacity still faced various challenges. Communication initiative using sign language carried out by several guides did not yet refer to Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO) standards, resulting in inconsistent interpretations and the potential for misunderstandings. In addition, formal training is still minimal and there are no sign language training programs specifically for the context of geotourism. This qualitative research using a case study approach identified the problem through observation, interviews, and literature studies of local managers and guides. The results of the study revealed communication limitations between guides and tourists with sensory disabilities. This study offered solutions, namely the implementation of BISINDO training through collaboration with students and the BISINDO community, as well as the development of inclusive support media such as visual guidebooks with sign language illustrations for geological terms and the installation of barcodes linked to sign language explanation videos at geosite points.

Keywords: *collaboration, inclusive tourism, Nglanggeran Geosite, sensory impaired travelers, tour guide*

ABSTRAK

Geosite Gunung Api Purba Nglanggeran di Kabupaten Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, merupakan destinasi geowisata unggulan yang mulai menarik kunjungan wisatawan difabel sensorik. Fenomena ini menunjukkan potensi kawasan ini menjadi destinasi pariwisata inklusif, sekaligus menciptakan kebutuhan mendesak akan pemandu wisata dengan kompetensi komunikasi yang baik. Namun, pengembangan kapasitas pemandu lokal masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Inisiatif komunikasi menggunakan isyarat tangan yang dilakukan beberapa pemandu belum mengacu pada standar Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia (BISINDO) sehingga mengakibatkan interpretasi yang tidak konsisten dan berpotensi menimbulkan kesalahpahaman. Selain itu, pelatihan formal masih minim serta tidak adan program pelatihan bahasa isyarat yang dikhususkan untuk konteks geowisata. Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus ini mengidentifikasi masalah tersebut melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi literatur terhadap pengelola dan pemandu lokal. Hasil penelitian mengungkap keterbatasan komunikasi antara pemandu dengan wisatawan difabel sensorik. Penelitian ini menawarkan solusi yaitu penyelenggaraan pelatihan BISINDO melalui kolaborasi dengan mahasiswa dan komunitas BISINDO, serta pengembangan media pendukung inklusif seperti buku panduan visual dengan ilustrasi bahasa isyarat untuk istilah geologi dan pemasangan kode batang yang terhubung dengan video penjelasan berbahasa isyarat di beberapa titik geosite.

Kata kunci : *kolaborasi, pariwisata inklusif, pemandu wisata, Situs Geologi Nglanggeran, wisatawan difabel sensorik*

INTRODUCTION

Nglanggeran Tourism Village is one of the best tourism villages in ASEAN in 2017 developed with the concept of CBT (Community Based Tourism) located in Patuk District, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region (Kemenpar RI, 2025). Some of the tourism potential in Nglanggeran Tourism Village is the ecotourism area of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano, Embung Nglanggeran, Nglanggeran Fruit Garden, and Curug Talang Purba (Herawati & Winarno, 2024). The beauty of the landscape and the uniqueness of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is one of the attractions of Nglanggeran Tourism Village that is quite popular attraction. Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is one of the geosites in Mount Sewu and was designated as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Global Geopark on 19 September 2015, located in the Great Batur Mountains area.

The existence of geosites plays a role in maintaining conservation values and can be developed into a tourist attraction (Rahmawati et al., 2019). In addition to ecological value, the development of geosites as tourist destinations can provide economic opportunities for the community. Tourism is considered as a potential in providing economic value and can open up jobs and improve community welfare (Hermawati, 2020). In order to advance the economy, the Nglanggeran Tourism Village community also increases capacity in the agricultural sector by planting durian and longan fruit (Puspita & Umilia, 2021). Tourism is a leading sector that must always be properly fostered in sectoral development, in terms of facilities and infrastructure as well as information related to tourist destinations (Aziz, 2022).

As tourism develops, many travelers' needs are increasingly diverse, especially the accessibility of information for all communities. Therefore, inclusive tourism exists to make travel experiences accessible and beneficial for everyone, including disabled travelers with diverse cultural backgrounds, and various socio-economic situations (UNWTO, 2018). Inclusive tourism destinations are destinations that offer travel experiences, single attributes, industry transformation by increasing competitiveness, creating decent jobs and encouraging equal

opportunities for all people, especially vulnerable groups, to participate and benefit from tourism activities based on sustainable principles (UNWTO, 2018).

In Indonesia, the commitment to realize the right to travel for persons with disabilities is regulated in Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities. Inclusive tourism emphasizes the importance of training and awareness for tourism industry players on how to serve guests with various needs, so that inclusive tourism experiences can be created without discrimination or barriers (Murti et al., 2024). Inclusive tourism can be realized if a tourist attraction is able to provide a sense of security and comfort as well as equal opportunities to enjoy tourist attractions.

Inclusive tourism development must be able to pay attention to the 4A concept, namely Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary (Cooper et al., 2005). The government and tourism entrepreneurs in developing tourist attractions seek to reduce negative impacts, pay attention to vulnerable groups, and involve the participation of local communities. Aspects of hospitality, insight, promotion, religious and cultural values need to be considered. The existence of tourism support facilities that can be accessed by all groups. Supporting components are realized in the form of encouragement of tourism institutions through interaction with tourists, the availability of information center services, complaint services, and coordination for first aid in disaster mitigation (Maharani, 2023).

After being designated as a geopark, Mount Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano has become a popular tourist destination for both domestic and foreign tourists.

Table 1.

Number of Tourist Visits to Nglanggeran Tourism Village

Year	Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano Geosite		Total Visitors
	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	
2018	134.225	1.421	135.646
2019	40.923	95	41.018
2020	20.851	134	20.985
2021	13.980	1	13.981
2022	22.359	238	22.597
2023	19.732	648	20.380

Source : Pokdarwis Nglanggeran Tourism Village (2024) in Nasir et al (2024)

Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is one of the objects favored by various tourists, including tourists with sensory disabilities. The arrival of tourists with sensory disabilities must of course be balanced with guiding competence, especially guides who are able to communicate with Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO) to facilitate communication. However, until now there are no tour guides who are competent in guiding tourists with sensory disabilities. The guides still rely on sign language skills that are not up to standard. Based on the problem formulation above, this research aims to explore the challenges or obstacles experienced by tour guides in guiding tourists with sensory disabilities and provide recommendations for various efforts that can be made to improve the quality of tour guides at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano in order to realize inclusive tourism. This research is expected to contribute to academic and practical knowledge related to inclusive tourism management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on improving the quality of tour guides and developing inclusive tourism (Dewi & Aprinica, 2024; Herdiana & Widharetno, 2022; Murti et al., 2024; Nandika et al., 2023; Zakiyah et al., 2016) has been conducted. Nandika et al (2023) stated that the quality of tour guides has a significant influence on tourist satisfaction. Not only knowledge about attractions, tour guides must have interpersonal skills, namely informative communication, hospitality, time management and tour flow, and personal empathy for tourists. The quality of tour guides also affects competitiveness destination. Inclusive tourism development includes not only physical aspects but also services and involvement of various levels of society. A relevant study in this context is research conducted by Dewi & Aprinica (2024) which emphasizes the importance of a training for market players and tourism officers to increase inclusive awareness and excellent service capabilities to all visitors without discrimination. This research also encourages a "tourism for all" approach that places access as a basic right in destination management practices.

Zakiyah et al (2016) stated that tourism facilities and accessibility for persons with

disabilities are not yet adequate and there are no regulations regarding the provision of facilities and accessibility that are friendly to persons with disabilities. The challenge lies in the limited budget and human resources. There is a need for disability-friendly tourism policies and accessibility facilities. According to Herdiana & Widharetno (2022) the government together with tourist attraction managers must try to realize making policy instruments that regulate in detail the development of accommodative tourism for disabled tourists. Murti et al (2024) said that communication accessibility is still a problem for disabled tourism actors in managing the tourism industry. Therefore, a program called *Difabike* was created that was proven to provide solutions through a structured and inclusive training program. This program encourages difables to be actively involved in various aspects. This previous research discusses the role of tour guides as well as improving infrastructure and accessibility to realize inclusive tourism. In addition, it also discusses aspects of communication. However, of the three studies, there is no research that discusses improving the quality of Human Resources (HR), namely tour guides to guide deaf tourists in the geotourism area.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to identify problems faced by local guides in the tourist village of Nglanggeran in order to improve their BISINDO skills. Qualitative research is a process of understanding the meaning of individual and group behavior, explaining social and humanitarian issues, which includes several stages, namely preparing research questions and temporary procedures, collecting data at the location where participants carry out their activities, inductive data analysis, constructing partial data into themes, and interpreting the meaning of the data. After that, a report is made in a flexible structure (Creswell, 2009). The research was conducted at the ancient volcano of Nglanggeran, Gunungkidul, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Data was collected through observation, interviews, literature studies, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews with tourism village managers and tour guides

aimed to explore information about the Ancient Volcano of Nglanggeran and the guides' experiences in guiding tourists with sensory disabilities.

There are five informants in this study. First, Mr. Mursidi, Head of the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) of Nglanggeran Tourism Village. Second, Mr. Sutoyo, Head of the Cleanliness and Beauty Section of Nglanggeran Tourism Village. Next, Mr. Dedik Widyanto and Mr. Triyono, tour guides. The last informant is tourist with sensory disabilities to find out their opinions about tour guides who have sign language skills. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), the data analysis process is divided into three parts, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. All collected data is then selected thematically. This means the data is grouped according to theme. Next, the data will be presented, concluded, and diversified. This study is expected to provide insights into local community empowerment programs in improving the quality of sign language skills or BISINDO of local guides in geotourism areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Nglanggeran Tourism Village is located in Nglanggeran Village, Patuk District, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. Nglanggeran Tourism Village is one of the ASEAN Best Tourism Villages in 2017 which is managed with the concept of CBT (Community Based Tourism). Nglanggeran Tourism Village became the World's Best Tourism Village according to UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) in 2021. In addition, the Ancient Volcano in the Nglanggeran area is one of the geosites in Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark which has been included in the International Geopark network and is a major attraction.



Figure 1.

Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano Area
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025.

Other potentials owned by Nglanggeran Tourism Village are Embung Nglanggeran, Nglanggeran fruit garden, Kampung Pitu, Curug Talang Purba, cocoa management, and cultural attractions. Nglanggeran Tourism Village has various activities that can be followed in the form of *tracking packages, sunset & sunrise packages, homestay packages, cocoa cultivation, Griya Cokelat "Dodol Kakao" Processed Cocoa Products, Batik Wood Mask, Batik Cloth, Janur Creations, Etawa Goat Farming, Rice Planting and Plowing, Local Cultural Arts, Chocolate Spa, Adventure Packages, Camping Packages, and Live in Packages.*

This tourism village was developed with the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The majority of Nglanggeran people work as farmers, planters, and breeders. Nglanggeran Tourism Village has been equipped with facilities to support the organization of activities and services to visitors in the form of a secretariat, information boards, *homestays*, toilets, insurance, tour guides, worship facilities, parking lots, pavilions, *outbound places, camping ground, hiking trails.* The average community is committed to developing tourism activities in Nglanggeran Tourism Village. If they are working, they will still make time on weekends to contribute to tourism in Nglanggeran.

One of the main aspects of tourism activities at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is guiding. Thus, the role of tour guides is crucial. The number of active tour guides in Nglanggeran Tourism Village who also guide at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is around 25 people. The guides range in age from 20 to 40 years old. All guides come from the local Nglanggeran community who devote themselves to tourism development. Each guide has a different educational background from junior high school (SMP) to senior high school (SMA). When guiding visitors on treks, the guides' knowledge in the field is crucial because they lack an expertise in tourism.

Tourists who want to use the services of a guide must pay an additional fee of Rp100,000/guide for local tourists and Rp150,000/guide for foreign tourists. The majority of foreign tourists visit around June to August, not so in December to January. The average foreign tourist comes from Europe, namely Germany and France, while the

majority from Asia comes from China. The main market for domestic tourists comes from freshmen and student exchanges. Nglanggeran Tourism Village has also been visited by the Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) from Australia who learned to process chocolate, make batik, and milk goats.

"Sebenarnya sudah banyak pihak yang memberikan pelatihan khususnya pelatihan bahasa asing khususnya bahasa Inggris. Bahasa Spanyol, bahasa Prancis itu juga pernah. Memang kembali lagi semuanya itu memang belum bisa berjalan maksimal karena kembali lagi karena keterbatasan SDM kami. Kami ada tiga grup, nah di dalam satu grup itu ada satu yang menguasai bahasa asing. Mereka belum menguasai secara utuh bahasa asing kemudian mereka menggunakan bahasa isyarat atau bahasa tarzan. Kalau bahasa asing kepepetnya tidak bisa memandu mereka akan menggunakan Google Translate."

"Actually, many parties have provided training, especially foreign language training, particularly English. Spanish and French have also been taught. However, once again, all of this has not been able to run optimally due to our limited human resources. We have three groups, and within each group, there is one person who is proficient in a foreign language. They have not yet mastered the foreign language completely, so they use sign language or Tarzan language. If they are unable to guide them in a foreign language, they will use Google Translate."

The limited quality of Human Resources (HR), especially in mastering foreign languages, is still a challenge. There are less than 10 tour guides who master foreign languages. Even out of a total of 25 guides at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano, only two are fluent in foreign languages. Guides who have difficulty guiding in foreign languages, will use tarzan language or *google translate* to communicate. Unfortunately, guides who are not fluent in foreign languages tend to rely on other guides who are fluent in foreign languages. This is also triggered by the educational background of the tour guides.

Actually, there are many parties that provide foreign language training not only in English, but even in Spanish and French. However, the training is only conducted for one

to two days or even one week so it is not consistent and sustainable. When bringing foreign tourists in a group, there must be at least one guide who can speak foreign languages. Usually foreign tourists are not too concerned with language, just focus on enjoying the nature there and do not even do documentation. Sometimes foreign tourists bring a Tour Leader (TL) who helps local guides to translate to tourists. The same thing also happens among groups of foreign students who bring a special translator to help the translation process. The guides learn a lot about interacting with tourists directly which certainly adds to the experience and knowledge of how to handle tourists when trekking at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano. Tour guides are always provided with material about Ancient Volcanoes. The information is then managed by the tour guides themselves for guiding purposes.

"Beberapa kali kelompok-kelompok kecil tuna wicara itu pernah. Saya berkomunikasi itu memang tidak sesuai dengan kode-kode mereka tetapi mereka memahami. Kadang 5 kadang ada 10, ada grup bisa semua atau dari sekolah mana. Cuma saya kan punya saudara yang bisu, nek mangan ngene nek ngarit ngene. Saya sudah sering komunikasi Cuma bedanya itu tidak sesuai dengan kode-kode yang dipelajari dan digunakan. Biasanya satu Yayasan tetapi ada salah satu yang bisa mungkin ketua Yayasan atau gurunya. Kalau untuk kode paling kode merapi, pakai gerak-gerak yang kaya gini. Itu ya harus ngulang-ngulang gitu."

"Several times, small groups of deaf people have done this. My communication was not in accordance with their codes, but they understood. Sometimes there were five, sometimes ten, sometimes the whole group or from a particular school. It's just that I have a deaf sibling, so I understand this kind of thing. I have communicated with them many times, but the difference is that it is not in accordance with the codes that are learned and used. Usually, it's one foundation, but there is one who can be the head of the foundation or the teacher. As for the codes, the most common one is the Merapi code, using movements like this. You have to repeat it over and over again."

Despite the foreign language challenges, tour guides still maximize their ability to communicate. Responding to this, the manager continues to try to improve the foreign

language skills of the local guides. The guides' foreign language skills are also supported by their hobby of watching movies and their daily practice. There is actually great potential. Through an unyielding spirit, the tour guides try to improve their capacity in language, including to communicate with tourists with sensory disabilities. Several times there are groups of tourists with sensory disabilities who come to Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano. The disabled tourists usually come in a group of 5 to 10 people. In addition, there was also a group that came from one institution, namely the Foundation and Special School (SLB). Unfortunately, the guides do not really master sign language according to the standard, namely Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO). The guides only use hand gestures to communicate.



Figure 2.

Amenity at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025.

Not only hampered by BISINDO skills, tour guides also face other challenges related to geological terms. Geological terms at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano are quite difficult to practice so they need to be repeated. Based on the interview results, there is one guide who is able and has communicated with tourists with sensory disabilities even though he does not use BISINDO. However, until now there is no guide who specifically guides deaf tourists. Sign language training has also never been held.



Figure 3.

Tour Guide Guiding Tourists at Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano Area
Source: Instagram, 2025.

To answer the challenges in realizing inclusive tourism for tourists with sensory disabilities, several ways can be realized. Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano tour guides have tried to use tarzan language or hand gestures when guiding tourists with sensory disabilities. In addition to various foreign language trainings, it is also necessary to organize sign language training, especially BISINDO for tour guides. In addition, cooperation from various parties is needed. Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as with academics such as students from the Department of Language and Literature or Education. BISINDO is a more flexible arena that develops naturally in the sensory disability community. BISINDO is used more frequently than the Indonesian Sign Language System (SIBI). BISINDO is easy to understand so that there is minimal difficulty in communication between guides and tourists. This training is also necessary because there are various geological terms that are difficult to understand. Terms that tend to be complicated and scientific in nature.

"Kalau barcode itu biasanya barcode yang ke kuesioner, Whatsapp. Kalau barcode yang sifatnya informasi itu sudah. Pada setiap destinasi itu ada barcode penjelasan. Wisatawan ketika mereka tidak membutuhkan pemandu, mereka bisa melihat informasi dari barcode tersebut namun juga beberapa sudah hilang."

"The barcodes are usually for questionnaires and Whatsapp. The barcodes that provide information are already there. At each destination, there is an explanatory barcode. When tourists don't need a guide, they can see the information from the barcode, but some of them are missing."

The digitalization aspect can also be used to answer the challenges in realizing inclusive tourism. Each tourist attraction in Nglanggeran Tourism Village and especially Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano already has a barcode that contains information about the object. This information can also be accessed by tourists with sensory disabilities. In addition to writing, manager needs to make a short 2-3 minutes video using BISINDO that explains the process of forming the Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano. Social media utilization also needs to be maximized. Manager can create special content in BISINDO about Nglanggeran Ancient

Volcano. The content can include the formation process of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano, tourism management, and crisis management. The manager can also create a visual guide ebook containing geological phenomena of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano. Each term can be equipped with illustrations and BISINDO motion equivalents. This *e-book* can also be used by guides in guiding tourists.

"Gunung Api Purba menurut saya tempat indah dan bernilai sejarah karena menyimpan jejak vulkanik jutaan tahun lalu. Jika ada juru isyarat saat berkunjung, itu sangat baik karena membuat kegiatan lebih inklusif, membantu siswa tunarungu memahami penjelasan tentang sejarah dan belajar di alam bisa juga bisa diakses semua orang."

"In my opinion, Gunung Api Purba is a beautiful place with historical value because it preserves volcanic traces from millions of years ago. If there are sign language interpreters during visits, that would be great because it makes the activity more inclusive, helping deaf students understand explanations about history and learning in nature, which can also be accessible to everyone."

According to sensory disability informants (28), ancient volcanoes are not only attractive because of their natural beauty but also have historical value related to their formation process. To explore and understand this object more deeply, they need tour guides. They hope that tour guides can use sign language so that everyone can understand.



Figure 4.

Interview with Nglanggeran Tourism Village Managers

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025.

Various efforts including training, content creation and the use of barcodes containing information about Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano are some of the ways to realize

inclusive tourism. These efforts must be carried out consistently. The involvement of various parties is also very necessary. Through various methods, tourists with sensory disabilities can have an equal tourism experience. This supports the realization of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano as an inclusive tourism destination.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Nglanggeran Tourism Village is a community-based destination that has the attraction of Ancient Volcanoes as part of the UNESCO Global Geopark. Over time, the Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano geosite area has become increasingly recognized. Various tourists come, including tourists with sensory disabilities who want to feel the same experience as other tourists when doing tracking activities. Unfortunately, efforts to realize inclusive tourism for tourists with sensory disabilities still experience obstacles, especially in the aspect of human resources. Tour guides do not have Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO) skills and have difficulty in conveying geological terms that are quite complex, so that an equal tourism experience has not been fully realized.

Recommendations

In order to respond to these challenges, it is necessary to conduct BISINDO training for guides through cooperation with academics and NGOs, as well as the utilization of digital technology such as bar codes containing information, visual content in the form of short videos with BISINDO, and ebooks about the geological phenomena of Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano. This effort is important to increase the capacity of human resources and expand tourism accessibility for all groups, especially tourists with sensory disabilities. Through consistent and collaborative steps, Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano has the potential to become an example of an inclusive geotourism destination in Indonesia.

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