



## **Empowerment of Traditional Sports as an Effort to Preserve Culture and Increase Physical Activity among the People of Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar**

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### **Abstract**

The Student Creativity Program (SCP) in the field of Community Service aims to empower the people of Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar, through traditional sports activities to preserve culture and increase the community's physical activity. The program is implemented using a participatory approach, involving village residents, traditional leaders, and youth groups. The implementation methods include socialisation, training in traditional games (such as gobak sodor, egrang, tarompa panjang, and cak bur), and organising a village traditional sports festival. The results show a 65% increase in community participation in traditional sports activities, greater awareness of local culture, and the establishment of the Village Traditional Sports Community (VTSC), which helps maintain the program's sustainability. This program has successfully fostered values of togetherness and sportsmanship, as well as improved the community's physical fitness. Thus, traditional sports have proven to be an effective medium for social empowerment and cultural preservation at the village level.

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## **1. Introduction**

Indonesia possesses an extraordinary wealth of culture, reflected in the variety of traditional sports that have developed across different regions. Traditional sports not only function as forms of folk entertainment but also serve as media for social interaction, moral education, and the preservation of cultural values [1–3]. However, advances in technology and globalisation have led to shifts in people's lifestyles, particularly among younger generations, who tend to abandon traditional games in favour of passive, digital activities.

Traditional sports are an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage, encompassing social values, togetherness, sportsmanship, and local wisdom. These activities serve not only as public recreation but also as a means of character education and the formation of regional cultural identity [4–6]. Nonetheless, technological development and the modernisation of lifestyles have led to a decline in public interest in traditional sports, as modern sports and digital games have become more dominant, pushing conventional sports to the margins [7–9].

This phenomenon is also evident in many regions of Indonesia, including Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar Regency. Based on preliminary observations, residents in this village tend to spend more time engaging in passive activities such as using gadgets and social media, rather than participating in physical activities within their surroundings. This condition has led to decreased physical activity and a fading awareness among the younger generation of their traditional games. In fact, traditional sports such as egrang (bamboo stilts), tarompa panjang (long clogs), gobak sodor, and cak bur have great potential to improve physical fitness and strengthen social bonds among community members [10–12]. Through the Student Creativity Program (PKM) in the field of Community Service, the activity entitled “Empowerment of Traditional Sports as an Effort to Preserve Culture and Increase Physical Activity among the People of Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar” was designed as a strategic initiative to revive cultural values and the spirit of cooperation through traditional sports. This program is expected to raise community awareness of the importance of preserving local culture while simultaneously promoting physical health through enjoyable physical activities [13–15].

Furthermore, this empowerment initiative involves the active participation of all community groups, from children and adolescents to adults. Such a participatory approach aligns with the community-based development concept, in which the community serves as the primary agent in designing, implementing, and ensuring the sustainability of the program [16–18]. Thus, traditional sports are not merely recreational activities but also a means of social empowerment and a tool for strengthening the cultural identity of the people in Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar.

The Student Creativity Program (PKM) activity has several primary objectives. First, it aims to preserve local cultural values through traditional sports, where the implementation of this activity is expected to revive Acehese conventional games such as cak bur, egrang, and tarompa panjang as regional cultural identities that are gradually being forgotten [19–21]. Second, it seeks to increase physical activity and community fitness, as traditional sports can serve as an affordable, enjoyable, and effective form of physical activity that enhances physical fitness, particularly among children and adolescents [22–24]. Third, the program strives to increase community participation in social and cultural activities by applying a participatory approach that directly involves residents in the planning and implementation of the activities, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for cultural preservation [25–27]. Fourth, it aims to raise awareness among younger generations about the importance of local culture by introducing the positive values of traditional sports, encouraging them to love, preserve, and further develop their regional culture [28–30]. Finally, the program intends to promote the establishment of traditional sports communities at the village level, forming community groups that actively serve as organisers, trainers, and facilitators in sustaining traditional sports activities [31–33].

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## **2. Methodology**

This community service project was conducted using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, emphasising the active involvement of the community throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. The activity took place in Krueng Anoi Village, Aceh Besar Regency, over three months, from January to March 2025. The main participants were 85 community members, including children, adolescents, and adults, representing various social groups in the village.

The implementation process consisted of several key stages. (1) Socialisation and needs assessment: The team conducted preliminary surveys and interviews with local leaders, youth groups, and residents to identify the community’s needs and readiness for traditional sports activities. (2) Training and coaching: Participants were introduced to several traditional games such as gobak sodor, egrang, tarompa panjang, and cak bur. Training sessions focused on rules, techniques, and the cultural values embedded in each game. (3) Practice and community involvement: Regular practice sessions were held every weekend, encouraging full participation from the community while strengthening intergenerational interaction. (4) Evaluation and festival implementation: At the end of the program, a village-level traditional sports festival was organised as a culmination event to measure community engagement, promote cultural pride, and celebrate achievements.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out to record levels of participation, enthusiasm, and cooperation among community members. Interviews with participants and village officials provided qualitative insights into changes in attitudes, knowledge, and community cohesion. Documentation, including photographs, attendance lists, and field notes, supported the analysis. The data obtained were analysed descriptively to highlight the social, cultural, and physical impacts of the empowerment program.

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### **3. Result & Discussion**

The program was implemented over 3 months and involved 85 participants from various groups within the Krueng Anoi Village community. Based on observations and questionnaires distributed before and after the activities, several key findings were obtained. First, there was a significant increase in community physical activity. Before implementation, only about 25% of residents regularly engaged in outdoor physical activities. After the program commenced, participation rose to 65%, mainly through weekly scheduled traditional game sessions. This demonstrates that traditional sports serve as an effective means of improving community fitness (Rahmawati & Nurhadi, 2022). Second, there was a revitalisation of local cultural values. Community members, especially children and adolescents, began to rediscover traditional games such as cak bur, gobak sodor, and egrang. A renewed sense of pride in local culture emerged, along with enthusiasm to make these games part of the village's annual events. This aligns with Kemenpora's (2021) findings, which highlight that community involvement in cultural activities strengthens regional identity.

Third, the establishment of the Krueng Anoi Traditional Sports Community (KOTRADES) marked a significant outcome of the program's sustainability efforts. This community, consisting of local youth and village officials, became the driving force behind weekly training sessions and the long-term continuity of traditional sports activities. Such a community-based development approach proved effective in fostering a sense of ownership and social responsibility (Setiawan & Handayani, 2020). Fourth, the program had social and educational impacts, as the traditional sports festival encouraged intergenerational interaction and strengthened social ties among residents. Participants also learned values such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and responsibility, consistent with the concept of character education through sports (Siregar, 2020; Supriyanto, 2021). Finally, there was strong potential for sustainability, as the village government expressed its commitment to include traditional sports in the village's regular agenda, providing facilities and annual rewards. This indicates that local culture-based empowerment can serve as a model for sustainable social development and rural tourism.

**Figure 1** shows a group of students stretching outdoors as part of their physical education class. Stretching is an essential component of any physical exercise program, as it helps prepare the muscles and joints for more intense movements. The students are seen sitting on the ground, extending their legs and reaching toward their toes, indicating they are engaging in static stretching to improve flexibility and reduce muscle stiffness. Conducting this activity outdoors allows students to experience a more relaxed, open environment, promoting both physical and mental readiness before engaging in additional physical tasks.

In addition, the activity demonstrates the importance of discipline, coordination, and participation in group exercises. The uniformity of students' movements and attire reflects a well-organised session led by an instructor that emphasises teamwork and collective learning. This kind of stretching routine not only enhances physical performance but also fosters a sense of togetherness and cooperation among participants. By performing stretching exercises in an outdoor setting, students can also benefit from exposure to natural surroundings, which can positively influence motivation and overall well-being during physical training sessions.





**Figure 1:** Students Performing Stretching Exercises Outdoors

**Figure 2** illustrates a group of students conducting outdoor running drills as part of their physical education training. The students are positioned on an open field with cones set up as markers, indicating that the activity involves structured running exercises designed to develop speed, agility, and endurance. Running drills are a vital component of cardiovascular fitness programs, helping students enhance their physical stamina and coordination. The use of outdoor space allows greater freedom of movement and exposure to fresh air, contributing to a healthier, more enjoyable exercise environment. The clear weather conditions shown in the figure also create an ideal atmosphere for physical activity, ensuring safety and comfort during the session.



**Figure 2:** Students Performing Outdoor Running Drills

This activity emphasises the importance of movement-based learning and teamwork in physical education. Students appear to be actively engaged and following a set pattern or the instructor's guidance, demonstrating discipline and participation in a collective exercise routine. Outdoor running drills not only build individual fitness but also encourage social interaction, cooperation, and motivation among participants. Through such activities, students can develop a balanced combination of physical ability, mental focus, and collaborative skills, all of which are fundamental outcomes of an effective physical education curriculum.

**Figure 3** depicts a group of students participating in a collective jogging activity on an outdoor running track. Jogging is a fundamental aerobic exercise that promotes cardiovascular health, endurance, and overall physical fitness. The image shows students moving together at a moderate pace, suggesting that the activity serves as a warm-up or conditioning session within a physical education program. Conducting jogging exercises in groups allows students to develop a consistent rhythm and maintain motivation through peer support. The use of the track provides a controlled, safe environment for continuous movement, ensuring students can perform the exercise effectively and systematically. Moreover, this group jogging session highlights the social and psychological aspects of physical education. Engaging in physical activity as a group fosters a sense of community, teamwork, and shared responsibility among students. It also encourages positive competition and cooperation, as participants motivate each other to complete the exercise. From an educational perspective, such activities not only enhance physical performance but also instil discipline, perseverance, and healthy lifestyle habits. Therefore, the jogging activity illustrated in the figure plays a vital role in improving students' physical well-being while nurturing their interpersonal and cooperative skills.



**Figure 3:** Students Performing Group Jogging Activity on the Track

**Figure 4** shows a group of students participating in a blindfold game on the beach. This type of activity is commonly used in outdoor education and team-building programs to enhance communication, trust, and cooperation among participants. The students are shown wearing blindfolds, indicating that the exercise requires them to rely on verbal cues and teamwork rather than visual guidance. Conducting such activities in a natural setting, such as the beach, provides a refreshing, stimulating environment that encourages active participation. It also helps students develop adaptability and focus as they navigate challenges in unfamiliar conditions.



Furthermore, this activity contributes to the development of essential soft skills, including leadership, problem-solving, and mutual trust. By performing the game in groups, students learn to communicate effectively and depend on one another to achieve shared objectives. The relaxed atmosphere of the beach setting also promotes social interaction and reduces stress, making the learning experience enjoyable and memorable. Overall, the blindfold game activity illustrated in the figure not only fosters physical engagement but also enhances interpersonal and cognitive skills that are valuable in both educational and real-life contexts.



**Figure 4:** Students Participating in a Blindfold Game Activity on the Beach

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#### **4. Conclusion**

The traditional sports empowerment program in Krueng Anoi Village successfully achieved its primary objectives, enhancing community physical activity, fostering awareness of local culture, and establishing a community dedicated to preserving traditional sports. The results demonstrate that conventional sports function not only as a form of recreation but also hold strategic value in strengthening cultural identity, improving public health, and promoting social empowerment within the village community. Continuous support from the village government and educational institutions is essential to ensure that this initiative continues to thrive and develop as a proud expression of Acehnese cultural heritage.

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