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When Forests Become Classrooms

How a community forest park could become an authentic geography learning resource
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🔎 Research in Brief

The study evaluates Precet Forest Park in East Java, Indonesia, as both a community-based tourism destination and a potential outdoor learning resource for geography education. Researchers used a descriptive mixed-methods approach, combining interviews and field observations with SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The park integrates forest conservation with productive activities, including resin tapping and coffee cultivation.

The findings identify considerable educational potential in the park's natural landscape, agricultural activities and community-based management. However, poor road access, limited infrastructure, inadequate promotion, competition from nearby tourist destinations and environmental risks, particularly landslides, constrain its development. The study proposes diversifying the park's identity by developing it as an educational outdoor laboratory rather than relying exclusively on conventional tourism.

For geography teachers, the study illustrates how a local landscape can become a resource for understanding human–environment interactions, land use, local livelihoods and disaster vulnerability. A field visit could help students connect geographical concepts with actual production activities and community management. However, safe accessibility, transport arrangements and appropriate risk-management measures would need to be addressed before organising student visits.

✓ Try Tomorrow

- Ask students to identify examples of human–environment interaction in a nearby natural area.
- Examine how agricultural activities, tourism and conservation compete for land and resources.
- Ask students to prepare a simple SWOT analysis of a local natural or community resource.

★ One Key Takeaway

A natural landscape can become an authentic geography classroom when students investigate the relationship between people, resources and the environment.

Keywords: geography education, outdoor learning, authentic learning, forest parks, community-based tourism, SWOT analysis

📖 Source Article

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