

The Role of Stakeholders in Addressing Stunting Issues in Mesuji Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Stunting remains an urgent global health issue, affecting an estimated 148 million children under the age of five, mainly in low- and middle-income countries. In Indonesia, despite various efforts made nationally, the prevalence of stunting is still high, especially in rural areas and areas with limited resources such as Mesuji Regency. This research focuses on analyzing the role of stakeholders in handling stunting in Mesuji Regency, by examining how various actors interact, coordinate, and contribute within the local governance framework. This study uses a qualitative approach of case studies, with data collection through in-depth interviews with key informants from government agencies, health cadres, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders, as well as participatory observation and document review. The results of the thematic analysis show that there are various forms of stakeholder involvement, ranging from formal coordination through the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) to community-based nutrition education initiatives. However, a number of obstacles were also found such as limited resources, overlapping roles, and low public awareness. Nonetheless, effective collaboration has been shown to emerge in regions that have mutual trust, shared goals, and strong facilitation mechanisms. These findings underscore the importance of collaborative governance in public health policy, particularly in strengthening multi-sector synergy and program sustainability. This study contributes to the development of stakeholder governance theory and nutrition intervention practices at the local level.

INTRODUCTION

Stunting, or a condition of failing to grow in children due to chronic malnutrition that lasts from the womb to the age of two, is still a major challenge on the global health agenda. According to (Natassya & Soesanto, 2024) researching the effect of *stunting* on *cognitive development* and learning achievement. The impact is not only limited to the child's height being shorter than his or her age standard, but also includes delayed cognitive development, decreased immunity, as well as decreased individual productivity in the future (Black et al., 2013). According to the latest report UNICEF (2023), Around 148 million children under five in the world are stunted, with the highest prevalence in developing countries facing poverty, social inequality, and limited access to basic services.

Indonesia is included in the ranks of countries with a significant stunting burden. Stunting is included in the part of sustainable development, which is to eliminate all forms of malnutrition or hunger, one of which is by increasing food security (Archda et al., 2023). Although various intervention programs have been launched over the past decade, the prevalence of stunting is still at alarming numbers. Data from the 2022 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) recorded that 21.6% of Indonesian children under five were stunted. This figure does show a decrease from previous years, but it still exceeds the threshold set by WHO, which is 20% as the maximum limit of tolerable stunting prevalence (WHO, 2021). Therefore, the Government of Indonesia has set stunting reduction as a national priority agenda, which is realized through various policies, including the National Strategy for the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction (Stranas Stunting) and Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction.

Mesuji Regency, which is located in the Lampung Province area, is an area that is included in the priority category for accelerating stunting treatment. The region has complex geographical characteristics, with many remote villages that are difficult to reach, uneven basic infrastructure, and limited human resources. *The prevalence of stunting* continues to decline in the program implementation period, from 2018 to 2023. If in 2018 the *prevalence of stunting* in Indonesia is based on Basic Health Research Data (Risksedas, 2018) reached 30.8%, then in 2023 based on data from the results of the Indonesian Health Survey (SKI, 2023) *The prevalence of stunting* in children under five in Indonesia is 21.5%. This means that there has been a decrease in *the prevalence of stunting* by 9.3% points in 5 years or an average decrease of 1.86% points per year.

The factors that cause stunting in Mesuji are multidimensional. In addition to limited health services and infrastructure, socio-economic factors such as low household income, low maternal education, and inappropriate breastfeeding practices also worsen children's nutritional conditions. Study by (Titaley et al., 2019) It shows that social determinants such as family economic status, education level, and access to clean water and sanitation are significant factors in increasing the risk of stunting, especially in rural areas. The complexity of this problem shows that stunting control cannot be carried out only by the health sector, but requires cross-sector synergy and the involvement of various stakeholders.

In the context of national policies, the intervention approach to handling stunting has shifted from being sectoral to collaborative and integrated. The concept of *multi-sectoral convergence* as stated in Stranas Stunting encourages synergy across ministries, institutions, local governments, as well as civil society and the private sector in one integrated governance framework. Low public awareness of the impact of *stunting* is a challenge in itself. Various efforts to handle *stunting* have been carried out by the Government of Indonesia both at the central and regional levels, but have not been able to significantly reduce *stunting* (Rahman et al., 2023). The government continues to strive to alleviate *stunting* as a top priority program in every regional government.

This research is relevant because it presents a deep empirical understanding of how national policies translate at the local level, especially in areas with structural challenges such as Mesuji Regency. By referring to the *Collaborative Governance* theoretical framework developed by (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015), This study explores the dynamics of collaboration between stakeholders, the process of building trust, joint decision-making, and collective resource management in an effort to reduce stunting rates. The findings of this study are expected to fill the knowledge gap in the literature as well as become input in the formulation of locally-based nutrition development strategies.

This study aims to explore and analyze the role of key stakeholders in handling stunting problems in Mesuji Regency, both in terms of the form of involvement, and the collaboration mechanisms that are established. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following questions: Who are the key stakeholders involved in stunting prevention in Mesuji Regency, and how do they contribute and how the cross-sectoral collaboration process is formed and implemented in the local context of Mesuji.

By answering these questions, this research is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of governance theory in social intervention, as well as provide practical implications for strengthening the coordination of stunting control programs at the regional level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stunting is a condition of failure to grow in children under five due to chronic malnutrition and recurrent infections, especially in the golden period of the first 1,000 days of life. *Stunting* is a demographic bonus that harms the country, making it difficult for the country to develop and unable to compete with other developing countries. With a proportion of the productive age population of more than 60%, development economists estimate that Indonesia will become strong and able to compete with other countries in the world (Siswati, 2018).

Children who are stunted have a height lower than their age standard and are at risk of cognitive developmental disorders, weak immunity, and low productivity in the future (UNICEF, 2019). The factors that cause stunting are multidimensional and can be categorized into direct and indirect determinants. Direct determinants include low daily nutritional intake as well as a high incidence of infectious diseases such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections

(ARI), and worms that interfere with nutrient absorption (WHO, 2020). Meanwhile, indirect determinants include low access to health services, clean water, and sanitation, as well as low levels of education and parental knowledge about child parenting and nutrition (Kemenkes RI, 2023). Poverty and inequality of access to public services also exacerbate this condition. Family income is one of the factors that has a relationship with a child's nutritional status. Families with high economic status have a better ability to meet their intake needs compared to families with low income (Siringoringo et al., 2020). Therefore, it is not enough to control stunting through medical intervention alone, but it needs an integrated and sustainable cross-sector approach.

In the context of public policy, *the Stakeholder Theory* developed by Freeman (1984) emphasizing that the success of a policy depends on the involvement of all parties who have an interest in or are affected by the policy. This theory also underscores the importance of effective communication, fairness in the distribution of benefits, and accountability in the decision-making process (Bryson et al., 2006). Within this framework, each stakeholder has a complementary strategic position in encouraging the success of stunting control programs.

The *Collaborative Governance* approach developed in response to the complexity of public problems that cannot be solved by one actor alone. (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015) Defines *collaborative governance* as a collective decision-making process and structure that involves actors from government, the private sector, and civil society to achieve shared public goals. This model emphasizes three important elements: collaboration dynamics, trust between actors, and shared commitment. Collaboration dynamics include institutional structures that support cross-sector coordination, information sharing mechanisms, and conflict resolution processes. Trust grows through open communication, transparency, and accountability, which are the foundation for long-term commitment. Shared commitment is manifested through a shared vision, collective goals, and willingness to allocate resources synergistically (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In the context of stunting control, this approach is relevant because the challenges faced are cross-sectoral and require systematic alignment of the interests of various parties.

A number of previous studies have proven the importance of the role of stakeholders in stunting control policies. Study (Hermawan et al., 2023) di Sumedang Regency found that the stunting rembuk forum was effective in uniting cross-agency commitments, although there were still obstacles in consistent cross-sector implementation. Meanwhile, (Ardianti et al., 2024) researching the involvement of religious and traditional leaders in Bali, who have succeeded in raising public awareness through a cultural approach in nutrition education. However, most of these studies have not explicitly examined how stakeholder theory and collaborative governance approaches are applied integratively in stunting policy practice.

There is a gap in the literature on understanding how cross-sectoral collaboration takes place in resource-constrained areas, as well as how the dynamics of local actors influence policy processes and outcomes. Therefore, this

study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the dynamics of collaborative governance in stunting prevention in Mesuji Regency. The focus of the research is directed at the pattern of stakeholder interaction, the effectiveness of coordination, and the socio-cultural factors that affect the success of collaboration at the local level.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a single case study design. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the dynamics of collaboration in stunting control in a specific context, namely in Mesuji Regency. A single case study is relevant when the focus of the research lies on a single unit of analysis that is assessed to have unique characteristics or is important to study intensively.

Location and Participants

The research was carried out in Mesuji Regency, Lampung Province, which is one of the priority areas in accelerating stunting reduction. The study participants were selected purposively based on their involvement and role in the stunting control program. The main informants consist of various parties across sectors, namely the Regional Government, the Private Sector, Academic Researchers, the Media, and the Community. The selection of informants was carried out by considering the variety of perspectives and experiences relevant to the focus of the research.

Population and sample/material

The number of respondents was 15 key informants consisting of regional apparatus who were included in the stunting reduction acceleration team, district stunting task force, mass media, private parties, non-governmental organizations and communities affected by stunting and data collection was carried out in mesuji regency

Instrumen/Procedure

A qualitative data collection technique designed to obtain information from key informants through *Focus Group Discussions* (FGDs). The focus of the research is based on the perspective of the participants, through the process of *interpretation* of the *focus group discussion* data, and related documents. Collect data through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions with relevant policy stakeholders and institutions on the ground (Rachmawati et al., 2024).

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique uses methods such as data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. According to Miles and Huberman's theory (see also Sugiyono, 2020) stated that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and take place continuously until complete, so that the data is saturated.

RESEARCH RESULT

In the context of *collaborative governance*, the role of actors greatly determines the success of the implementation of *stunting control policies*. In Mesuji Regency, the involvement of actors from various sectors of government, society, the private sector, academia, and the media shows complementary contributions.

The government as the main actor has a dominant role in regulations and policies as well as strengthening governance and coordination across sectors. This role reflects the function of policy directing and integrator between sectors as explained by (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015), that government actors in the *governance* model have a role in facilitating, directing, and stimulating cross-actor participation.

Table 11. The Role of Actors in Solving *Stunting* Problems in Mesuji Regency

No	Actor	Actor Roles	Assignment	Explanation
1	Government	1. Strengthening governance and coordination	a) Program Planning and Monitoring b) Cross-Sector Coordination (stunting rembuk, TPPS forum)	The Mesuji Regency Government acts as the main actor that facilitates the <i>cross-sectoral deliberative</i> process, drafts regulations, and ensures that the coordination flow between OPDs, villages, and other stakeholders runs systematically and participatively (Emerson: <i>principled engagement</i>).
		1. Regulations and policies	a) Sensitive interventions (food security, family economic empowerment) b) Specific interventions (nutrition education, mother-child protection, sanitation)	Provide responsive policies and budgets for upstream and downstream interventions. Interventions are carried out in a structured manner through TPPS and <i>stunting</i> village loci as a form of <i>capacity for joint action</i> .
2	Private	1) Government program support	Supporting government programs in handling <i>stunting</i>	The private sector contributes in the form of activities directed at strengthening <i>stunting</i> handling with vulnerable communities. This role reflects <i>shared motivation</i> and social responsibility.
		2) Health education and promotion	Socialization of nutritious food, healthy products, and healthy lifestyles	The private sector is involved in nutrition awareness campaigns, both through direct involvement in villages.
		3) Health Services and	Carry out health services	Provide facilities and products to support health services for mothers and

No	Actor	Actor Roles	Assignment	Explanation
		Nutrition Interventions		children outside of government services.
3	Academic Diversity (Researcher)	1) Evaluator program	Monitoring and evaluation of <i>stunting programs</i> by relevant OPDs	The research field of bappelitbangda conducts an evaluation of program implementation, as part of <i>principled engagement</i> to increase accountability and effectiveness.
		2) Kajian	Making studies on handling <i>stunting</i> as a government innovation	The study conducted became the basis for policy formulation and strengthening local data-based interventions. Increase <i>capacity for joint action</i> through scientific knowledge.
4	Media	1) Information	Dissemination of nutrition campaigns, public education	The media plays a role in forming collective awareness and increasing public participation through consistent news and campaigns (related to <i>shared motivation</i>).
		2) Surveillance	Voice program constraints, social control over implementation in the field	Exert public pressure on government accountability and other sectors. The media has become a tool for public advocacy and reflection.
5	Community	1) Participation in the program	Posyandu cadres, mothers of toddlers, community leaders participated in counseling activities, nutrition counseling, and Village Deliberation	The active involvement of the community shows <i>high shared motivation</i> . Involvement in implementation and decision-making increases the sustainability of the program and fosters a sense of <i>ownership</i> .

Source : Researcher Processing Data, 2024

The implementation of *stunting* handling policies in Mesuji Regency is a complex effort and requires cross-sector collaboration. Based on the results of in-depth interviews and *Focus Group Discussions* (FGD) with various stakeholders, it was found that each actor has a distinctive and complementary role in realizing the common goal, which is to reduce *the prevalence of stunting* in this region.

To understand the dynamics of *collaborative governance* in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency, it is important to first unravel the role of each key actor involved, namely the government, the private sector, the community, academics, and the media.

Each actor has different contributions, capacities, and challenges in supporting the implementation of *stunting policies*. Based on the results of the data processed using the Nvivo program, the visualization can be as follows:

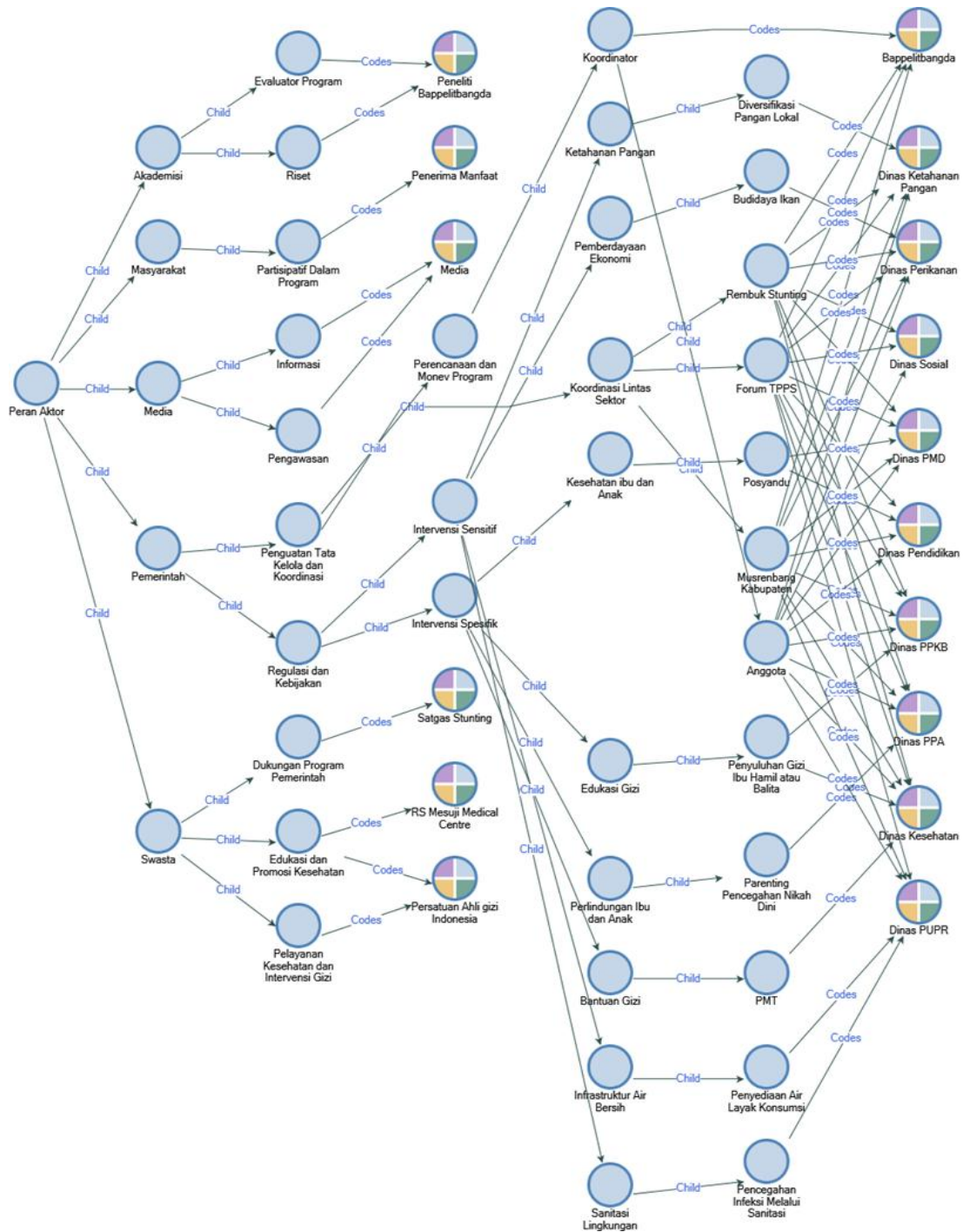


Figure 1 The Role of Each Actor in Collaborative Governance in Overcoming Stunting Problems in Mesuji Regency

DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Government

The results of the study show that the role of the government as the main actor in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency is very prominent, especially in the aspect of government governance through cross-sector planning and coordination as well as the preparation of regulations and policies in terms of specific and sensitive interventions. The local government, through Bappelitbangda and the *Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team* (TPPS), leads the

implementation of the program, prepares regional action plans, and monitors and evaluates the achievement of indicators.

Strengthening governance and coordination across sectors is the main foundation in ensuring the effectiveness of sustainable *stunting* handling. In this context, governance is not only understood as the technical management of programs, but also includes the process of planning, decision-making, implementation, and supervision involving various actors from across sectors and various levels of government.

Synergistic coordination is crucial because *stunting* is not a single sectoral issue, but multidimensional, which is influenced by aspects of health, education, food security, and socio-economic conditions of the community.

Previous research by (Ibrahim et al., 2024) It shows that the success of *stunting reduction* is greatly influenced by the quality of regional planning that involves all actors systemically. In a case study in East Nusa Tenggara, integrated planning between OPDs succeeded in improving the consistency of cross-sector programs and the efficiency of budget use. The involvement of the education sector strengthens the preventive aspect in handling *stunting* through education from an early age. Research by (Sofianita et al., 2018) revealed that school-based interventions, especially at the PAUD and elementary levels, contribute significantly in shaping children's understanding of the importance of balanced nutrition, as well as encouraging behavioral changes in the family environment. It also strengthens the principle of prevention from the upstream which is the main approach in the national strategy to accelerate *stunting reduction*. These findings reinforce the results of a study from (Siregar, 2021) which shows that social assistance-based interventions such as basic food programs and PKH contribute to improving the nutritional status of children from beneficiary families. This proves that effective governance must be based on mapping vulnerable groups and the distribution of targeted social assistance.

In efforts to combat *stunting*, the role of local governments is very important in formulating and implementing policies that are divided into two forms of intervention, namely *specific interventions* and *sensitive interventions*. *Specific interventions* include direct actions related to maternal and child health aspects, while *sensitive interventions* relate to indirect supporting factors such as the environment, education, and food security. Both are part of an integrated approach as mandated in Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of *Stunting Reduction*.

Research (Wicaksono & Harsanti, 2020) showed that adequate health service coverage in HPK significantly reduced the prevalence of *stunting*. Thus, the success of the Health Office depends not only on the availability of services, but also on how data is used as a tool for continuous control and improvement.

This strategy is important considering that the family is the first social unit that determines parenting, nutrition, and healthy living behavior. Study (Maryani & Mundarti, 2024) emphasized that at-risk family assistance can significantly reduce vulnerability to *stunting*, especially if it is carried out in a participatory and community-based manner.

(A. B et al., 2022) mentioned that mothers who give birth in adolescence are more prone to having *stunted* children, so policies that prevent the practice of early marriage have direct relevance in efforts to reduce *stunting*.

This program not only increases children's nutritional intake, but also relies on local potential as part of regional food security. (Marlinton & Sulistyaningsih, 2024) mentioned that fish consumption has a real contribution to improving children's nutritional status because of its high protein content.

If viewed through the theory of government collaboration according to Emerson, Nabatchi, dan Balogh (2012), The implementation of these specific and sensitive interventions reflects the formation of a *collaborative governance regime*, in which various government actors work together through shared capacity, shared motivation, and principled involvement in the policy process. The local government here functions as an integration node that ensures that each OPD moves in harmony in achieving a common goal, namely accelerating *stunting* reduction. Thus, the regulations and policies that are prepared are not only administrative products, but are a manifestation of synergy between sectors in presenting adaptive, participatory, and results-oriented policies.

2. The Role of the Private Sector

The role of the private sector in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency shows its contribution through various initiatives that support government programs, health education and promotion, health services and nutrition interventions.

Handling *stunting* as a public health issue requires a multi-sectoral approach, including active collaboration between the government and the non-government sector. The role of the private sector has been proven to be able to strengthen a more comprehensive intervention system, especially in areas facing resource challenges such as Mesuji Regency.

The role of the private sector in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency shows its contribution through various initiatives that support government programs, health education and promotion, health services and nutrition interventions. The private sector has a significant contribution to the implementation of *stunting* management policies in Mesuji Regency, especially in terms of resource support, innovation, and service coverage. In perspective (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015), The private sector is seen as part of an important actor in *collaborative governance regimes*, which can strengthen *the capacity for joint action*. The presence of private actors contributes through the provision of funds, technology, managerial expertise, and a wide network of partnerships

This study shows how the private sector contributes to strengthening the *stunting* management system through three important domains: support for government programs, education and health promotion, and health services and nutrition interventions. The private sector in Mesuji Regency is directly involved in the process of data collection, reporting, and *stunting* validation.

This practice is in line with the findings (Permatasari et al., 2021) which states that the involvement of private health facilities in maternal and child services can increase the coverage of specific nutrition services and accelerate the detection of *stunting risks*. This collaboration reflects the findings of the research

(Hidayaturrahman & Harsono, 2023) which emphasizes that the involvement of the private sector in local reporting and decision-making systems can improve the effectiveness of *stunting interventions* as it promotes data accuracy and a more equitable distribution of resources. This is in accordance with the study (Putri & Pahlevi, 2024) which states that nutrition education activities by the private professional sector play an important role in increasing public knowledge and awareness, especially for pregnant women and families with toddlers. Likewise, (Azizah et al., 2025) In his research, it was shown that community-based education with a promotive-preventive approach significantly had an impact on reducing the prevalence of *stunting* in the intervention area.

The role of the private sector in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency is very relevant and has a real impact, both in terms of public education, health services, and program governance support. The collaboration that has been established needs to be strengthened through inclusive regional policies so that this role becomes an integrated part of the *stunting control system* in the future.

3. The Role of the Community

Handling *stunting* cannot rely only on intervention from the government, but requires active collaboration from various parties, including the community as the most affected group. The results of research conducted in Simpang Pematang Village show that the local community has shown significant participation in *stunting* treatment programs, both as beneficiaries and as actors directly involved in educational activities and child health practices.

The community plays the role of beneficiaries of government programs and participates in the program. Posyandu cadres and human development cadres (KPM) are the spearhead of implementation in the field. They interact directly with pregnant women and toddlers, provide education, and accompany target families. Religious leaders have an influence in conveying health messages in religious activities, thereby strengthening public acceptance of interventions. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also present to provide support in the form of cadre training, nutrition education, and participatory monitoring. The private sector, although not yet optimal, has begun to be involved through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programs that support the provision of sanitation facilities and nutritious local food.

This shows an increase in *awareness* as a result of the counseling program. This shows that people who were originally passive in understanding nutrition issues, gradually began to show an active role after obtaining education. This is in line with *the community-based development* approach, which emphasizes the importance of empowering communities through knowledge transfer to be able to recognize and solve their health problems independently.

Research by (Ab-Rashid MNK & Mitsuaki N, 2015) shows that the mother's knowledge of nutrition is directly proportional to the nutritional status of the child. When knowledge increases through proper counseling, children's feeding practices become better, which has an impact on reducing the risk of *stunting*. Similar findings were also put forward by (Mcnally et al., 2016) which states that increasing the nutritional awareness of housewives through public

health education programs is proven to increase the consumption of animal protein and the frequency of visits to posyandu.

4. The Role of Academics in this Researcher at Bappelitbangda

The role of academics in handling *stunting* in Mesuji Regency is still limited, but it has great potential in strengthening intervention strategies, especially in terms of strengthening databases, implementing local research, and developing program innovations. In this context, academics do not only come from the university environment, but also include researchers who are under the structure of local government, such as the research team at the Regional Development Planning, Research and Development Agency (Bappelitbangda).

The findings of the evaluation are then submitted in a technocratic forum and used as the basis for the preparation of the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD). In addition, the results of the evaluation are also used to formulate recommendations for priority programs that will be implemented in the next planning period. This function shows that researchers at Bappelitbangda not only play a role as technical implementers, but also as data and analysis providers that support the *evidence-based decision-making process (evidence-based policy)*.

This is in line with the view (Hensen et al., 2021) which emphasizes the importance of synergy between the government and academia to create *stunting programs* that are in accordance with local needs and based on scientific data. Meanwhile, a study from (Nanvubya et al., 2020) underlined that collaboration between local governments and academic institutions can be a force in generating sustainable policy innovation, especially in programs that require a multisectoral approach such as *stunting management*.

5. The Role of Media

In the context of handling *stunting*, the mass media plays a strategic role as an information agent as well as a social supervisor. This role has become increasingly significant in line with the demand for public information disclosure and public participation in the supervision of development programs, including programs to accelerate *stunting reduction*. The media plays a role not only as a conveyor of information, but also as an actor who helps influence public opinion and encourage government accountability.

Meanwhile, the media has a role in disseminating information in increasing public awareness and supervision of government programs. These findings are in line with the function of the media according to (Bellé, 2014) which includes three main roles, namely: (1) *surveillance of the environment*, (2) *correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment*, and (3) *transmission of social heritage*. Meanwhile, a study by (Mpabalwani et al., 2021) revealed that the media plays a role as a tool of public control over the implementation of policies, especially in terms of transparency in the use of the village budget for child and maternal health programs.

Thus, the media has become an important actor in the *stunting management ecosystem*. The function of informative and supervisory media can strengthen community involvement while suppressing potential deviations in the

implementation of the program. This role cannot be underestimated, because in the current digital era and information disclosure, the legitimacy of policies is highly determined by transparency and speed of response, one of which is formed through media reporting.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study concludes that the handling of stunting problems in Mesuji Regency is highly dependent on the active involvement of various stakeholders across sectors and across levels of government. Government agencies such as the Health Office, Bappelitbangda, and village governments have a strategic role in formulating policies, allocating resources, and implementing programs. Collaboration with grassroots actors such as health cadres, community leaders, and religious leaders allows the implementation of national policies to be more contextual and effective at the local level.

Collaborative platforms such as the *Rembuk Stunting forum*, the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS), have supported coordination, data integration, and activity monitoring. However, the effectiveness of these collaborative efforts is influenced by several key factors, namely the level of trust between stakeholders, the availability of technical and financial resources, and the institutional capacity of local actors. These findings reinforce the theoretical framework of *collaborative governance* from Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), which emphasizes the importance of building trust, shared motivation, and institutional arrangements in dealing with complex public problems such as stunting. In addition, the study confirms that community-based approaches and local leadership are essential to maintain the sustainability of collective action and change in community behavior.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are some recommendations that can be implemented:

1. Strengthening the Capacity of Local Stakeholders

Training, mentoring, and continuous resource support are needed for frontline actors such as posyandu cadres, village officials, and community facilitators. Capacity building in nutrition, data management, and cross-sector coordination will encourage better and accountable services.

2. Institutionalize Collaborative Platforms

Forums such as *Rembuk Stunting* and TPPS need to be institutionalized through regional regulations (Perda/Perbup) so that their sustainability does not depend on certain program cycles. The integration of collaborative mechanisms into local governance structures will encourage long-term commitment.

3. Policies Adaptive to Local Contexts

The national strategy to reduce stunting needs to be translated flexibly to suit regional social, cultural, and economic conditions. An adaptive policy

framework will provide space for local innovation that remains in line with the direction of central policy.

4. Replication of Local Governance Models

The collaborative governance model developed in Mesuji can be used as a reference for other regions facing similar challenges. Documentation and dissemination of good practices need to be carried out to encourage learning between regions.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The results of this study open up a number of opportunities for the development of further theoretical and practical studies. First, considering that this study is a single case study with a focus on Mesuji Regency, a cross-regional comparative study is needed that can reveal the variation in collaborative practices and policy effectiveness in areas with different social, geographical, and institutional characteristics. Studies like this will strengthen generalizations and enrich collaboration-based stunting governance models.

Second, longitudinal research is needed to observe the dynamics of collaboration between sectors over time, including looking at how local political factors, leadership rotation, and changes in central policies affect the sustainability of cooperation and intervention outcomes. This approach will provide a deeper understanding of the sustainability of stunting governance, as well as how adaptation strategies are carried out by local actors in the face of policy and social dynamics.

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