

# The Phenomenon of Overcoming Stunting from the Perspective of Advocacy and Community Empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of overcoming stunting from the perspective of advocacy and community empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency. This type of research is qualitative research. This study has a sample known as informants. Informants in the study are as many as 10 informants. In this study, data are analyzed using content analysis. The results of the research show that advocacy that has been carried out has received political support, policy support, and social support from the community. Community empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency is carried out by cross-sectors and the budget is from the service and also village funds.

**Keywords:** Stunting, Advocacy, Community Empowerment

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development goals declared in 2015 as a global development agenda that received commitments from countries that joined the United Nations, namely 193 countries. This agenda was made in order to improve people's welfare, maintain the continuity of life in a sustainable manner, develop to maintain the quality of society and the environment, maintain the implementation of governance that can maintain justice and improve the quality of life from one generation to the next. The targets in this global agenda have three pillars that are supported on the foundation

of governance institutions, the first pillar is the social pillar, the second is the economic pillar, and the last pillar is the environment, including biodiversity (Alisjahbana and Murniningtyas, 2018).

The pillars of sustainable development goals are based on 17 goals with 169 targets and 241 indicators that are related to one another. According to Alisjahbana and Murniningtyas (2018), each country has different trends in achieving goals in their country. Indonesia as a committed country has a trend towards achieving sustainable development goals, namely on the social pillars which include poverty, hunger (stunting, underweight, and malnourished children), health (neonatal mortality, under-five mortality, and infant mortality), and finally on education (access and quality of education).

The achievement of sustainable development goals is of course very much based on the role of human development. This human development can be done with the first 1,000 days of life approach. According to Rahayu et al. (2018), the first 1,000 days are also known as the window of opportunity or often known as the golden period. The fact says that between the fetus and the age of two years the child experiences growth and development so quickly and is not experienced in the later years of the child. For this reason, it is very important to fulfill food and nutrition in the first 1000 days of life. Optimal supply of

nutrients at this age range can prevent damage to children's nutrition from an early age, such as stunting (short or very short children).

According to the World Health Organization (2018), stunting is defined as a child with a low height compared to children of his age as measured by the Z-Score and the height for age measurement index (TB/U) and the results are below the child growth standards set by the World Health Organization. Stunting can occur in the first 1,000 days of life and many factors cause stunting including socio-economic, food intake, infection, nutritional status of the mother, infectious diseases, micronutrient deficiencies, and the environment. High rates of anemia and malnutrition among young women before marriage are also causes of stunting.

Children who experience stunting are a group that is disadvantaged socio economically and tend to be underachieving in school, for the long term as adults they will have low incomes, this is a burden for a country because it contributes greatly to poverty and income inequality between generations (World Health Organization, 2018). Stunting as a health problem with such a large impact on human social life requires prevention efforts involving several parties, both from health workers and non health workers.

According to Siswati (2018), there are two stunting intervention efforts including, firstly sensitive interventions or interventions that are not directly related to health where the targets are broader which reach the general public and many institutions, and are long term in nature. Both specific interventions or interventions that are directly related to health, with the main target being children in the first 1,000 days of life and are short term in nature.

Efforts to deal with stunting still face many challenges, so that the prevalence rate of stunting is still high and stunting is one of the priority issues to be resolved. Based on the publication results of the World Health Organization in 2021, as many as 149.2

million toddlers or as many as 22 percent of children in the world are still stunted. For Indonesia, the national prevalence of stunting according to the Indonesian Nutrition Status Study in 2021 is 24.4 percent or as many as 5.33 million children under five in Indonesia are stunted.

The high prevalence of stunting can be an obstacle to sustainable development and is a problem that is still being faced today. Therefore, in overcoming the problem of stunting, new breakthroughs and sustainable health services are needed. As the second goal of the sustainable development goals, namely no hunger with an indicator of the prevalence of stunting (short and very short) in children under five with a target of achieving 14 percent in 2024, a strategy is urgently needed to accelerate the reduction in the current stunting rate.

Many strategies have been developed to prevent and accelerate the reduction in stunting rates in a comprehensive manner. One of the strategies made by the government in preventing stunting is the National Strategy for the Acceleration of Prevention of Dwarfing (stunting) for the period 2018 to 2024. Prevention of stunting is not only related to addressing the causes of serious nutritional problems. directly or indirectly, but also related to cross-sectoral coordination issues at all levels of government, private sector and the business world as well as the community. Therefore, to address the causes of stunting, supporting prerequisites are needed which include: political and policy commitment to implementation, active government and non-government roles, and capacity to implement.

Supporting prerequisites have phenomena in the handling of stunting related to health promotion. This phenomenon in efforts to prevent stunting can be seen with a health promotion approach. Health promotion as a process to empower people to be able to control risk factors that cause disease so that their health status can increase, a strategy is needed. People who are so complex and lack awareness of the importance of health

and socio cultural differences mean that health promotion activities sometimes do not work as expected. Therefore it is necessary to develop a health promotion plan that can be implemented optimally and can involve several social elements (Susilowati, 2016).

The realization of health promotion efforts as a support for many phenomena that occur related to health, of course there must be a good strategy. According to the World Health Organization, health promotion strategies include: advocacy, namely an approach to stakeholders to provide support in the form of policies, atmosphere building or social support from various layers in the community, and the last is community empowerment with the aim of increasing the community's ability to maintain health so that their health status can increase (Nurmala et al., 2018).

A health promotion strategy in an effort to tackle stunting in Humbang Hasundutan District has been implemented. Based on the initial survey that has been conducted, advocacy for stakeholders has resulted in policy support, namely the issuance of Humbang Hasundutan Regent Regulation Number 3 of 2021 concerning Convergence for the Acceleration of Prevention and Reduction of Stunting in Humbang Hasundutan Regency with the aim of improving the nutritional quality of individuals, families and communities as well as the goal is to improve the nutritional status of the community and human resources. Of course, this regulation was made to be implemented by all parties, with indicators of declining stunting rates in Humbang Hasundutan Regency.

Based on interviews conducted with the health promotion and empowerment section at the Humbang Hasundutan Health Office, apart from advocating for stunting prevention they have also empowered the community with stunting campaigns, disseminating information about stunting both through print and electronic media, empowering health cadres, implementing interventions specific nutrition and sensitive

nutrition. Even though empowerment has been carried out, its implementation has not been maximized because the community has not participated in stunting prevention.

In the implementation of this empowerment, it seems that the community only provides support or participates in stunting prevention only when government programs are implemented and the community depends on government programs in the hope of being rewarded, so that community participation is not carried out in the long term and independently, even though community involvement should be needed in stunting prevention. and consciously and responsibly participate actively. According to the health promotion and empowerment section, the health promotion strategy for building an atmosphere has not been implemented properly, besides that the community still does not want to be actively involved, the utilization of existing resources in the village has not been maximized.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of overcoming stunting from the perspective of advocacy and community empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This type of research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is the type used in this study, with an exploratory approach, namely to find an idea or idea which is then formulated the problem and in the end it is concluded whether new research is needed (Ansori, 2020). This study intends to explore the experiences of the participants so that information that describes the phenomenon is revealed (Emzir, 2011).

This study has a sample known as informants. The side technique in this qualitative research is purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is in determining the sample must be with certain considerations that are considered to be able to provide maximum data related to the topic under study. Before or during the research it could be the time to determine





In 2020 Humbang Hasundutan Regency has a population of 197,751 people with a female population almost the same as the male population, namely 98,793 people and a male population of 98,958 people. The population density in each sub-district in Humbang Hasundutan Regency is quite diverse where Baktiraja Sub-District is the sub-district with the highest density, which is 339.62 people/km<sup>2</sup> and Parlilitan Sub-District is the lowest, which is 27.33 people/km<sup>2</sup>.

Humbang Hasundutan Regency in 2017 had a total of 98,348 residents who entered the workforce with 97,151 residents who were already working and 1,197 residents who were unemployed. The agricultural sector is the largest livelihood in Humbang Hasundutan Regency, namely 75,650 workers, the manufacturing sector has 3,040 workers, while the service sector has 18,461.

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Advocacy that has been carried out has received political support, policy support, and social support from the community. This can be seen from the existing policy products that regulate programs, budgets, and teams involved in handling stunting. However, there are still obstacles in advocacy activities, namely the insufficient budget for the construction of facilities and infrastructure, coordination problems from Humbang Hasundutan Regency government institutions and even though there is social support from the community, the poor lifestyle of the Humbang Hasundutan Regency people is still an obstacle in the stunting prevention program so that it still cannot be maximized.

Community empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency is carried out by cross-sectors and the budget is from the service and also village funds. Several empowerment activities have been carried out but still need to be maximized, such as community leaders who are also given

training, counseling to the community is more innovated and the cadres are also well empowered so that there are more activities that encourage the active role of the community. Utilization of the Integrated Service Post has increased, but the community still lacks a role in empowerment, such as not utilizing the yard as a potential for fulfilling nutrition, not participating when there are meetings for reasons of work, and still lacking awareness in fulfilling child nutrition for stunting prevention when given direct cash assistance.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The results of the research show that advocacy that has been carried out has received political support, policy support, and social support from the community. Community empowerment in Humbang Hasundutan Regency is carried out by cross-sectors and the budget is from the service and also village funds.

Based on the research results, the researcher's suggestions are:

1. The Humbang Hasundutan Regency Government and related Regional Apparatus Organizations can coordinate well in tackling stunting without any sectoral egos.
2. The Humbang Hasundutan Regency Government continues to maximize infrastructure facilities in Humbang Hasundutan Regency to accelerate the reduction of stunting.
3. Health workers and village government can increase their commitment to maximize community empowerment, both in terms of involving community leaders, cadres, and the community to participate in stunting prevention.
4. Health workers are increasingly innovating in providing counseling and socialization so as to encourage community participation.
5. For future researchers, it is suggested to expand the exploration of the stunting prevention phenomenon from a health perspective with the support of

information from secondary data such as the amount of the budget in each health promotion strategy activity.

### **Declaration by Authors**

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