

Original Paper

Community Empowerment in Stunting Prevention through Smart Parenting

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Received: 17-05-2024; Accepted: 30-06-2023;

Abstract

Stunting is a chronic malnutrition problem caused by insufficient nutritional intake for a long time due to feeding that is not in accordance with nutritional needs. Stunting can occur from the time the fetus is still in the womb and only appears when the child is two years old and if it is not offset by declining growth. The problem of stunting is a public health problem associated with an increased risk of morbidity, mortality, and obstacles to growth, both motor and mental. The implementation method that will be carried out is the community education method through community seminars. The seminar method is carried out to conduct counseling for Sukabungah Village residents about stunting prevention. The seminars and socialization that have been carried out by the service team in Sukabungah Village provide new insights and knowledge to the local community about the importance of preventing stunting by providing adequate nutrition and nutrition to infants and pregnant women as well as knowledge of the mental readiness of prospective parents to become parents. Thus, the socialization of stunting prevention provides a small movement for the impact of positive changes on stunting prevention through optimizing the role of parents as smart parenting.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Community Empowerment, Smart Parenting, Stunting

JEL Classification: I12, I15, I18

How to cite: Suryani, P. S., Nurhidayah, S., Basri, H., Putrianika, P., (2024). Community Empowerment in Stunting Prevention through Smart Parenting, *Entrepreneurship and Community Development (ECD)*, 2(1), 41-50



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1. Introduction

Stunting is a problem of chronic malnutrition caused by insufficient nutritional intake over a long period due to the provision of food that is not in accordance with nutritional needs. Stunting can occur from the time the fetus is still in the womb and only appears when the child is two years old, and if it is not balanced by lagging in growth and development, which results in decreased growth (Danapriatna et al., 2023; Nurhidayah et al., 2023). The problem of stunting is a public health problem that is associated with an increased risk of morbidity, death, and obstacles to both motor and mental growth. Stunting is formed by inadequate slowing of a child's growth and development, which reflects an inability to achieve optimal growth. Stunting is a condition where children do not thrive, caused by chronic malnutrition, and occurs during a critical period of growth, usually in the first 1,000 days of life, from the time the baby is in the womb until the age of 1-2 years. (Pratidina et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2015).

Stunting is characterized by a child's height being shorter than the average age. A child can be called stunted if his height is below the standard that should be appropriate for his age. The diagnosis of stunting is usually based on measuring the child's height and comparing it with established growth standards, such as using the World Health Organization (WHO) z-score or relevant local growth standards (Lawaceng & Rahayu, 2020). The condition of failure to thrive in children under five (babies under five years) is a result of chronic malnutrition, so the child is too short for his age. Malnutrition happens when the baby is in the womb and in the early days after the baby is born; however, the condition of stunting can only appear after the baby is 2 years old. The incidence of stunting is the impact of inadequate nutritional intake, both in terms of quality and quantity, high levels of illness, or a combination of both. This condition is often found in countries with poor economic conditions. If a child's height is below the specified limits, it can be assumed that the child is suffering from growth retardation. Fortification can be prevented by making efforts to improve children's nutrition from the start of life. Apart from providing important nutrition to prevent stunted growth, newlywed couples can take the following steps to ensure optimal health and growth for their future baby. (Beal et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2023; Sutarto et al., 2018).

The government is making policy steps to reduce the prevalence of stunting, which is increasingly becoming a nutritional problem in Indonesia. These matters have become a special main topic to invite the government and related institutions to focus on and implement the interventions that have been put together to reduce the incidence of stunting. These steps have been taken by the government so that it is hoped that the government's burden on health, especially in the field of nutrition, will decrease. Nutrition programs and interventions in Indonesia specifically address the direct causes of nutritional problems in the form of food intake and the emergence of infections in children under five. In contrast, sensitive nutrition interventions more broadly cover indirect problems related to nutrition and policies in other supporting sectors such as agriculture, education, hygiene, water and sanitation, social protection, and women's empowerment (Wardani et al., 2021). Nutrition programs implemented include micronutrient interventions to overcome hunger and improve education. The next program is malaria control, increasing immunization coverage for infants, toddlers and children. The curative program carried out is giving worm medicine to school children and complete treatment of tuberculosis. Research and development programs aimed at increasing food production are aimed at reducing hunger, maintaining biodiversity, and mitigating the effects of climate change (De Onis & Branca, 2016; Wicaksono et al., 2021).

The negative impacts that nutritional problems in the short term can cause are disruption of brain development, intelligence, physical growth disorders and metabolic disorders in the body. Meanwhile, in the long term, the bad consequences that can arise are decreased cognitive abilities and learning achievement, decreased immunity so that people get sick easily, and a high risk of developing diabetes, obesity, heart and blood vessel disease, cancer, stroke, and disability in old age as well as uncompetitive work quality which results in low economic productivity (Rahman et al., 2023). Budiastutik & Nugraheni (2018) stated that the impact of stunting in the long term has a negative impact not only on children's growth and development but also on emotional development, which results in economic losses both on a small scale (family) and on a large scale. In the short term, stunting affects children's nutrition, thereby creating a risk of degenerative diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, coronary heart disease, hypertension, and obesity. This has an impact on children's mental and learning abilities, which become less than optimal. In fact, their learning achievements tend to be worse than other children (Dasman, 2019; Erwina Sumartini & Keb, 2020).

Sukabungah Village is a village in Bojongmangu District, Bekasi Regency, which is the target of the service team in carrying out community service related to stunting prevention. Based on the results of observations and interviews with one of the village officials, it was said that there were still several toddlers who experienced stunting due to low economic levels and parental awareness of the nutrition in food needed by children in their first 1000 days of age. Therefore, the service team consisting of lecturers and students from Islamic University 45 Bekasi carried out a stunting

education program for the community in Sukabungah Village by applying a smart parenting style so that parents are more alert and have full attention to their children, especially in the first 1000 days of their children's lives.

2. Method

The implementation method for community service activities applies community education methods through community seminar activities (Basri et al., 2023; Nurhidayah et al., 2024). The seminar method was carried out to provide education to the residents of Sukabungah Village about preventing stunting. The activities carried out in this program go through three stages. The first stage is to carry out direct observations by interviewing village officials and the village Health Service regarding the problem being studied. The second stage is outreach with the program "IMPORTANCE OF WHO IS WHO," which is taken from the sentence Stunting Prevention by Consuming Your Harvest, which is carried out by conducting seminars and guiding the community in its application in daily life for approximately two weeks to consume food from processed harvests, which are owned. The third stage is a reflection carried out with village residents telling and bringing processed harvest products in the form of processed rice, cassava, corn, bananas, and others, and at the end of the event we held a nutritious eating festival from the village community's harvest. The novelty of this method lies in its unique approach to examining the intersection of technology and social behavior. By employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of technology on interpersonal communication in the digital age

Based on the solutions and output targets of the program implementation plan, the team determined the following activity methods: Training Method. This method is aimed at transferring knowledge and technology to overcome problems through increasing insight and understanding. The team determined this method approach to overcome problems and solutions to achieve the set output targets, namely Community Empowerment in Stunting Prevention through Optimizing the Role of Parents as Smart Parenting. Socialization and Mentoring This method is aimed at transferring knowledge to parents in Stunting Prevention. This training is carried out directly in the field provided by expert speakers in their field. The Community Empowerment Method in Preventing Stunting Through Optimizing the Role of Parents as Smart Parenting is carried out by means of mentoring. Assistance steps are carried out using a problem-solving or problem-solver approach, which is carried out with an initial process in the form of problem identification, formulating alternative problem solutions, selecting the best alternative, and then implementation problem solving and finally program evaluation. This method aims to transfer skills to parents in Stunting Prevention. This training takes place directly in the field and is delivered by resource persons who are experts in their fields.

3. Results

The activity entitled "Community Empowerment in Stunting Prevention Through the Role of Parents as Smart Parenting" is carried out in several main stages, which can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Stages of Community Empowerment in Stunting Prevention Through the Role of Parents as Smart Parenting

NO	Activity	Indicator	Parties involved	Activity time	Location
1.	KKN provision	Submission of the concept and objectives of implementing KKN	Sukabungah Village Apparatus Sukabungah Village KKN students	January 30-31, 2024	UNISMA
2.	Observation of Sukabungah Village	Agreement between Sukabungah Village KKN Students and Sukabungah	Health Service, Sukabungah	February 5, 2024	Sukabungah Village

		Village officials to carry out a KKN program in Sukabungah Village	Village Apparatus, DPL, Reviewer, Sukabungah Village KKN students		
3.	Program Planning	Planning for the socialization of stunting and efforts to prevent stunting among the Sukabungah Village community by implementing the "IMPORTANCE OF WHO IS WHO" program	Health Service, Sukabungah Village Apparatus, Sukabungah Village KKN students	February 6, 2024	UNISMA
4.	Coordination with Sukabungah Village Officials	Agreement between Sukabungah Village KKN students and village officials and the Sukabungah health service to conduct outreach on the "IMPORTANT WHO IS SI" program	Sukabungah Village Officials, Sukabungah Village KKN Students	February 16, 2024	Sukabungah Village
5.	Observation of posyandu and puskesmas	Agreement between Sukabungah Village KKN students and the health service (Posyandu) as resource persons in the "IMPORTANCE OF WHO IS SI" counseling program in Sukabungah Village	Health Service, Sukabungah Village Apparatus, Sukabungah Village KKN Students, Sukabungah Village Residents	February 20, 2024	Sukabungah Village
6.	Stunting prevention counseling	Providing Stunting outreach and Stunting prevention efforts to the Sukabungah Village community by implementing the "IMPORTANCE OF WHO SI" Program, namely Stunting Prevention by Consuming Your Own Harvest	Health Service, Sukabungah Village Apparatus, Sukabungah Village KKN Students, Sukabungah Village Residents	February 21, 2024	Sukabungah Village
7.	Pre-marital Educational Counseling on Mental Readiness in Forming a Family	KKN students provide counseling to village residents regarding mental readiness to become prospective parents in starting a family	Health Service, District KUA Apparatus. Bojongmangu Sukabungah Village Apparatus, Sukabungah Village KKN Students, Sukabungah Village Residents	February 27, 2024	Sukabungah Village
8.	Educational outreach about good and adequate nutrition and nutrition for	KKN students carry out a socialization program on the importance of consuming adequate nutrition and nutrition for themselves.	Health Service, Sukabungah Village Apparatus, Sukabungah Village KKN Students,	February 27, 2024	Sukabungah Village

	parents, pregnant women, children, and teenagers		Sukabungah Village Residents		
9.	Implementation of the "IMPORTANT WHO IS IMPORTANT" Program	KKN students surveyed residents' daily lives regarding food consumption from their harvest and processing of food that had been made. The review was carried out comprehensively for toddlers, children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. The following are also prospective parents (pre-marital) and parents and pregnant women. KKN students also provide additional snacks to complement nutrition, especially for toddlers and pregnant women.	Sukabungah Village KKN Students, Sukabungah Village Residents	February 27, 2024 – March 5, 2024	Sukabungah Village
10.	Evaluation of the implementation of the "IMPORTANT WHO IS IMPORTANT" program by holding a Food Festival	Achievement of the "IMPORTANT WHO IS IMPORTANT" program with village residents consuming nutritious food from their harvest. As well as holding a food festival involving residents bringing their own harvests that have been processed.	Sukabungah Village KKN Students, Sukabungah Village Residents	March 6, 2024	Sukabungah Village

The results of the seminar that was held in Sukabungah Village, precisely at the Sukabungah Village Office, with the first seminar providing counseling on pre-marital education on mental readiness in forming a family, was held on 27 February 2024 with the resource person, Mrs. Siti Bilqis Adawiyah. Marriage is not only about a legally or socially binding relationship but also about emotional, psychological, and spiritual readiness to make a long-term commitment to a partner. In marriage, there needs to be sufficient mental readiness up to the family stage. Mental readiness includes the ability to communicate effectively, resolve conflict, manage stress, have healthy emotional skills, and have a realistic understanding of what to expect from marriage. With adequate mental preparedness, a person may be able to maintain a healthy and happy marital relationship (Hidayat et al., 2023; Khasanah, 2015). Pre-marital education aims to equip prospective couples with the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to build healthy, mutually understanding, and lasting relationships in marriage. In this case, it covers topics such as effective communication, conflict management, roles and responsibilities in marriage, family finances, as well as relevant religious and cultural aspects. (Dini & Nurhelita, 2020). If a couple marries without having adequate mental preparation for married life, the husband and wife may face various challenges and problems in their relationship. Some possible consequences of a lack of mental readiness in marriage are:

1. The emergence of conflict in the household
2. Causing stress to the point of depression
3. Risk of divorce
4. Another negative impact of mental health

5. Lack of harmonious love for children
6. Not ready to be a parent

Thus, couples need to realize the importance of mental readiness before marriage and, if necessary, seek help or resources to strengthen preparations for married life. This may include attending pre-marital training, pre-marital counseling, or attending other marriage support programs. Therefore, this seminar helps pre-marital couples and prospective parents to prepare themselves mentally for building a household. Because, a household is made by two different people who will later have children, with mental preparation, the family will be harmonious.

A second seminar on stunting prevention education by community health center officials and midwives in Sukabungah Village followed this. This seminar is interrelated because the mental readiness of prospective parents in marriage will influence their mental readiness to become parents when they have children. If parents are mentally prepared, parents need to pay more attention to their children, especially to prevent stunting. This stunting prevention seminar conveys the dangers of stunting that occurs in babies and toddlers. The stunting that occurred in Sukabungah Village has shown the smallest figure, namely that only one child was recorded as stunted (Bekasi District Health Service, 2023). However, as of this date, it is in good condition. Sukabungah Village does not have children who are indicated to be stunted. Stunting prevention counseling is carried out as a reminder and education to increase insight for parents as smart parents in caring for and providing adequate nutrition to children to prevent stunting. Stunting occurs between the ages of babies and toddlers. Stunting can be seen from body weight, height, eye bags, and body shape, which do not correspond to age-appropriate characteristics. Parents can prevent stunting by always maintaining cleanliness, consuming adequate nutrition, providing appropriate MPASI, and maintaining health. Some preventive steps that can be taken are: (Wardani et al., 2021):

1. Provide exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life.
2. Providing quality and nutritious formula breast milk (MP-ASI) after 6 months, in accordance with baby feeding guidelines.
3. Encourage children to eat a balanced and quality diet, including foods rich in nutrients such as protein, vitamins, and minerals.
4. Avoid stress and negative environmental factors that can affect children's growth and development. Access to adequate health and nutrition services, including prenatal health services for pregnant women.
5. Parents and families should be educated about good nutrition to ensure children receive adequate and balanced nutrition. Stunting prevention involves a holistic approach that includes nutritional, health, environmental, and social factors.

Apart from providing important nutrition to prevent stunted growth, newlywed couples can take the following steps to ensure optimal health and growth for their future baby:

1. Reproductive health: Ensure that married couples receive adequate and comprehensive reproductive health services, including health services for their children, pregnancy checks, maternal and baby health checks during pregnancy, and postpartum care.
2. Health education: educating couples about the importance of good nutrition, reproductive health, and child care. This education can help them understand the importance of adequate nutritional intake before, during, and after pregnancy.
3. Family planning: By implementing family planning wisely, you can ensure that each pregnancy is planned and managed well. This includes using safe and effective contraceptive methods and consulting with a healthcare provider to discuss appropriate pregnancy plans.
4. Mental health and psychosocial well-being: supporting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of married couples. Good mental health can influence healthcare decisions, nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle.
5. Regular health monitoring: Couples should undergo regular health check-ups and consult with healthcare providers to monitor their health status and identify possible health problems affecting fertility and pregnancy.

6. Supporting economic prosperity: stable and adequate economic conditions can help married couples meet the nutritional and health needs of themselves and their future children.

The next service seminar material is related to nutrition and nutrition. Nutrients and nutrition are different, interrelated substances needed by the body. Everyone, including babies, children, pregnant women, teenagers, and the elderly, needs adequate nutrition and nourishment in the body. Nutri is divided into two: macronutrients come from heavy foods, namely carbohydrates, protein, and fat, which can be consumed at every meal. Meanwhile, micronutrients come from minerals and vitamins such as fruit and nuts (Damayanti, 2020; Hita et al., 2020). Adequate nutrition consumed by pregnant women will affect their babies. Likewise, ASI consumed by babies and children, with balanced nutrition, will increase the body's immunity, prevent disease, and also prevent stunting. It is not just nutrition and nutrition that must be fulfilled in everyday life. To maintain health, every human being must exercise and get enough rest. Thus, conveying the importance of adequate nutrition and nutrition is suitable for the residents of Sukabungah Village always to pay attention to nutritional nutritional needs, especially for pregnant women and babies, to prevent stunting and the risk of other diseases.



Figure 1. Stunting Prevention Seminar

4. Discussion and Benefits

Stunting is a serious problem that negatively affects children's growth and development. Efforts to prevent stunting need to be carried out through a comprehensive approach, including nutritional interventions, access to quality health services, improved sanitation and hygiene, as well as education and support for mothers. Cross-sector collaboration and integrated interventions are needed to overcome the problem of stunting effectively. In this case, community participation is also needed in supporting stunting prevention programs, including public awareness, community support, and active participation in program implementation. The government and society also need to examine the role of environmental factors, including sanitation, access to clean water, and other environmental conditions, in preventing stunting.

Seminars and outreach that Sukabungah Village KKN students have carried out have been sufficient to provide new insight and knowledge to the local community about the importance of preventing stunting by providing adequate nutrition and nutrition to babies and pregnant women and what is no less important is the mental readiness of prospective parents to become parents. Delivering a seminar on the importance of preventing stunting is suitable for prospective parents and parents to always pay attention to their children in their growth and development so as to minimize the presence of stunting in their family environment and the Sukabungah Village environment. Parents' mental readiness is an important influence on children's growth and development, in addition to adequate nutrition and nutritional intake.

The stunting prevention outreach program can increase public awareness about the importance of preventing stunting and involve various parties, especially the role of government, which plays an important role in preventing stunting in the regions. The success of this program can encourage the government and related institutions to develop and implement more effective policies in preventing stunting. Thus, the success of the community service program, which focuses on empowering the community to prevent stunting through the role of parents as smart parents, has a significant and sustainable impact.

5. Conclusion

The community service program related to community empowerment in preventing stunting through the role of parents as smart parents in Sukabungah Village has had a successful impact in the form of reducing stunting rates because this program makes parents more aware and educated about nutrition and good parenting practices for children. Will receive better nutrition and more appropriate care during the child's growing years. Children who receive adequate nutrition and good care will grow up healthier, both physically and mentally. This program helps parents understand the importance of their role in stunting prevention and gives them the skills to manage their children's nutrition and health effectively. Parents will better understand how to choose healthy food, manage hygiene, and provide the stimulation necessary for children's development. The success of the community service program in empowering parents as smart parents to prevent stunting has had a broad and sustainable positive impact. From reducing stunting rates and improving children's health to strengthening families and communities and developing better policies, this program has the potential to create significant changes in the health and well-being of future generations.

Community empowerment in preventing stunting through optimizing the role of parents has various significant managerial implications. This implication relates to how organizations, both at the government level and non-governmental institutions such as managers, must design effective training programs for parents, which include knowledge about nutrition, health, and good childcare practices. Managers need to establish partnerships with various stakeholders' interests, such as community health centers, posyandu, and community organizations, to ensure that stunting prevention programs can reach all families in need; managers responsible for community empowerment programs for stunting prevention through smart parenting must develop comprehensive and coordinated strategies. This includes parent training, collaboration with various parties, use of technology, management of financial resources, and development of supporting policies. With a holistic approach, these programs are expected to reduce the prevalence of stunting and improve the quality of life for children.

Recommendations

Recommendations that our service team can provide are related to increasing stunting prevention so that it becomes a new zero stunting area in the form of intervention through the government, activating various interventions that support improving the quality of nutrition and health for children, pregnant women, and prospective parents or parents, which aims to ensure that all sources resources are directed and allocated to support and finance priority activities, especially increasing the coverage and quality of nutrition services in the community through intelligent parenting.

To increase community empowerment in preventing stunting by optimizing the role of parents as smart parents, such as increasing capacity and educating parents by providing education about the importance of balanced nutrition and how to serve nutritious food with affordable local ingredients. Use of technology for education and monitoring, applications that allow parents to report and monitor children's growth and health periodically. Strengthening communities and support networks, Establishing parent discussion groups in the community to share experiences and solutions regarding child care.

Limitations and avenues for future community services

Suggestions for further research and service include more significant nutrition and nutritional mapping in the agricultural sector in Sukabungah Village so that land use and work areas are more useful. There is also ongoing counseling for prospective brides and prospective parents regarding mental readiness for starting a household and taking full responsibility for their children.

Acknowledgment

The community service team would like to express their deep gratitude for their extraordinary support and cooperation to the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) Islamic University 45, which has collaborated with the Bekasi Regency Government and the community of Sukabungah Village, Bojongmangu District, Bekasi Regency during the implementation of the related community service program stunting and people's quality of life. This program will be an important milestone in the service team's efforts to understand, overcome, and provide education to the community regarding stunting prevention through the role of parents as smart parents.

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