



Zero Stunting Villages: Analyzing the Challenges and Imperatives of Actor Collaboration

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the Kreet village government in making Kreet village a zero stunting village in Ponorogo Regency. This type of research uses qualitative methods with data collection technique of interviews, observation, and documentation. The key informants in this study were the village head, health cadres, and community leaders. The results of this study show that the Kreet village governments carry out its role by conducting educational socialization, nutritional intervention, increasing access to clean water and sanitation, empowering the family economy, and collaboration with various parties. Kreet village has shown full commitment to reducing stunting rates. Various programs, ranging from counseling, coaching, and socialization, have been implemented. However, the village government realizes that these efforts are not enough if they only rely on the budget. The conclusion that can be drawn from the research conducted is that its implementation, the zero stunting designation was not balanced with role of the actors, so the Kreet village government still has difficulties in making the village a zero stunting village. The village government needs active participation from all parties in an effort to solve the stunting problem.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of stunting is a strategic issue, both national and global, until 2024. The stunting rate in Indonesia is still quite high, namely 21.6% based on a survey conducted by the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) in 2022 and in 2023 according to the Indonesian Health Survey (SKI), the national stunting prevalence is 21.5%. The global issue of stunting has become a serious topic of discussion by the world health council, data obtained from UN statistics shows that in 2020 more than 149 million (22%) toddlers throughout the world experienced stunting, of which 6.3 million were toddlers in Indonesia (Eko, 2023).

Reducing stunting is also the main goal of the six goals in the global nutrition target for 2025 presented by WHO. This is of course in line with what was stated by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs that this is a key indicator in the second sustainable development goal, namely zero hunger (Beal et al., 2018). The seriousness of the world health agency in dealing with stunting indicates that the problem of stunting is a problem that also affects countries other than Indonesia (Li et al., 2022; Metwally et al., 2020; Padigapati et al., 2024; Schneider, 2023).

Various interventions have been carried out at the international level to overcome this problem, ranging from nutritional supplementation programs, increasing access to maternal and child health services, to educational campaigns regarding the importance of nutrition. Global policies such as Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and food aid programs from UNICEF and WHO have helped reduce stunting rates in several developing countries (Mitra, 2015). However, challenges

remain, especially in terms of program sustainability and the involvement of various parties in policy implementation. A community-based approach involving local government, health workers and the community has an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of interventions carried out to reduce stunting rates in a sustainable manner.

The problem of stunting cannot be solved only with a top-down model, but community participation becomes very important and dominant in preventing stunting from the time women get married and give birth to their children. They need correct and continuous education so that the health cycle of the baby to be born can be controlled properly and correctly. The existence of Health cadres who have been formed by the Ministry of Health is at the forefront in providing education about what stunting is, how it occurs, the factors that influence it, and how to treat children affected by stunting (Aprillia et al., 2023; Saadah et al., 2022). The various problems that arise from stunting both in regions and villages require actor collaboration, this is of course intended to be handled appropriately in accordance with their duties.

Handling stunting requires the involvement of various actors within the pentahelix framework, which includes government, academics, business actors, media and society. This approach accelerates stunting reduction in Indonesia by ensuring that policies and interventions are carried out in a coordinated and sustainable manner. The government acts as a regulator and policy facilitator, while academics provide data and evidence-based research to support treatment strategies (Firdaus et al., 2023). Business actors participate in providing resources and innovation, while the media is tasked with

disseminating information and increasing public awareness regarding the importance of preventing stunting (Zuhri et al., 2024).

Collaboration between actors in implementing stunting policies is the key to program success at the regional level. Previous studies show that in Landak Regency, the involvement of various actors, including local government, health workers, and community organizations, drives the effectiveness of stunting management programs (Kusnadi & Nge, 2024). Through a multi-actor based approach such as the quadruple and quintuple helix explained by Mustari, synergy between the public and private sectors is able to create policy innovations that are more adaptive and appropriate to local conditions. (Mustari et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of stunting prevention programs also depends on well-formed collaborative networks. Herlianti highlighted how the synergy of actors in the stunting management network in Bulukumba Regency resulted in a program that was more sustainable and had a wider impact. By adopting a partnership-based strategy, each actor is able to contribute according to their respective capacities, both in aspects of funding, education and policy implementation (Herlianti, 2022). Cross-sector collaboration is a key factor in achieving the national target of reducing the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia.

Various previous studies that have been presented actually provide the meaning that resolving stunting cases cannot be resolved by one actor alone, but requires real steps together and collaboration between actors to end the problem of stunting in the regions. Stunting is a serious health problem in Ponorogo Regency, which is influenced by various intrinsic factors and prevention policies. There is research which reveals that intrinsic factors, such as the mother's nutritional status during pregnancy, parenting style, and family economic conditions, play a significant role in the incidence of stunting in children aged 24-59 months in Pulung Village, Ponorogo. Mothers' lack of understanding regarding proper nutrition and limited access to health services exacerbate this condition. Therefore, education-based interventions and increasing access to health services are important steps in reducing stunting rates in the region (Kusnadi & Nge, 2024).

In an effort to accelerate stunting reduction, Ponorogo Regency has also implemented various strategic policies. Implementation of policies to accelerate stunting reduction in Ponorogo involving cross-sector collaboration, including the Health Service, Social Service and posyandu cadres. This approach includes providing additional food for toddlers, increasing the capacity of health workers, as well as educating prospective parents about the importance of nutrition during pregnancy. However, the effectiveness of this program still faces challenges, especially in terms of coordination and public awareness. Therefore, a community empowerment-based approach, such as a preventive education model for prospective married couples implemented in other regions, could be a relevant solution to be adapted in Ponorogo to increase awareness and readiness of families in preventing stunting from an early age (Ananta et al., 2019; Octavia et al., 2023; Widyaningsih et al., 2024).

This article will take a deeper look at the handling of stunting carried out in Ponorogo Regency with a focus on Kreet Village, Jambon District, looking further at the role of

actors in handling stunting at the lowest level of government. The presence of stunting in Ponorogo Regency has actually decreased from 2021-2023, namely in 2021 by 14.9%, in 2022 by 13.1%, and in 2023 by 9.3%. In 2024, Ponorogo Regency is targeting a decrease of 7%.

The existence of Kreet Village has actually been declared a zero stunting village by the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022, but after two years, handling stunting in Kreet Village is not as easy as turning the palm of your hand, extra work and support from various parties is needed to solve this stunting problem.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach that focuses on the activities carried out by actors to prevent stunting in Kreet Village, Ponorogo. Researchers obtained data by conducting interviews with informants using open questions, using field observation sheets, and documentation. The key informants in this research were village heads, midwives and Posyandu cadres, as well as community leaders. Direct interaction with informants and exploring their perspectives provides valuable insight into the social, economic and cultural dynamics of Kreet Village.

This research was carried out in Kreet Village, this is in line with the existence of Kreet which has been declared by the Regent of Ponorogo that this village is a zero stunting village. However, researchers want to look more deeply into whether what was conveyed by the Regent of Ponorogo is true and analyze the relationship between actors in the implementation of handling stunting.

The data analysis used in this research is an interactive model where the process of searching and compiling data is carried out systematically, originating from data obtained from interviews, notes and documentation by organizing the data into categories and describing it into units as well as compiling and making conclusions (Pahleviannur et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Village Government And The Stunting Issue

Stunting is a serious problem that threatens the future of the nation's next generation. In Kreet Village, the village government together with students has united to face this challenge. With various innovative programs and activities, they strive to break the chain of stunting and provide a better life for children. The role of the community or usually already become a posyandu cadre who helps the community itself. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes community empowerment as the process of encouraging communities to be actively involved in the formulation, planning, and implementation of policies to achieve change respond to problems of concern, and make decisions that will affect their lives. Posyandu cadres are part of community empowerment because they have the ability to encourage the community to help revive social spirit by inspiring, fostering enthusiasm, directing, and motivating others to act. Cadres have an important role in community empowerment by carrying out this social spirit (Hamdy et al., 2023).

Intensive and programmatic socialization methods reduce community pressure and raise awareness of the dangers and importance of handling stunting for child growth. For some time, the phenomenon of inequality in child development has been handled in terms of malnutrition or undernutrition in

children. However, with the emergence of new studies and the development of the term stunting, which refers to the problem of child growth and development as a whole, this phenomenon has become more complex (Hamdi et al., 2023).

Of course, there are also external roles outside the village government, one of which comes from Diponegoro University through students who are carrying out Real Work Lectures (KKN). This group of students held a socialization and demonstration of making Moringa Leaf Pudding, moringa leaves (*Moringa oleifera*) are one of the plants that are richest in essential nutrients and are very beneficial for the health of pregnant women and the development of toddlers. Its high vitamin, mineral, and protein content supports healthy growth and strengthens the immune system. Sixteen members of the integrated health post from Kreet Village attended the socialization and demonstration of making moringa pudding at the Kreet Village, Jambon District, Ponorogo Regency, on Thursday, August 11, 2022. To prevent stunting, this community teaches how to make moringa leaf pudding. Integrated health post cadres are provided with information that is easy to understand and can be applied in every integrated health post using poster media and cooking demonstrations. Through this socialization and demonstration of making moringa leaf pudding, the people of Kreet Village, especially integrated health post members, are expected to be able to optimize the nutritional health of residents by utilizing the natural wealth there.

With this new knowledge, the cadres are expected to be able to inform others about the importance of maintaining a balanced nutritional intake to prevent stunting, especially in children. Moringa leaves a natural ingredient that is easily found everywhere, have a high nutritional content that can be used to make delicious foods such as pudding. Therefore, Moringa leaves can help improve the quality of life of the community in an easy and effective way. Hopefully, this small effort can help reduce stunting rates in Kreet Village and make the community more aware of the importance of fulfilling good nutrition.

Towards Zero Stunting Village: A New Hope

The village government hopes that with these programs, the stunting rate in Kreet Village can be reduced significantly. However, the village government realizes that this effort cannot be done alone. Therefore, the door to cooperation is wide open for various parties, both non-governmental organizations, companies, and individuals to participate. Community participation is highly expected in efforts to overcome stunting. The community can play an active role by providing support for government programs, as well as participating in counseling and socialization activities. In addition, the role of the family is also very important in preventing stunting by providing good nutritional intake to children from an early age. To ensure the success of the stunting prevention program, the village government, community, and all related parties need to make a joint commitment. This commitment is realized in the form of a joint agreement signed by all parties. This agreement is the basis for all parties to work together synergistically in achieving common goals, namely realizing a healthy, intelligent, and competitive golden generation of Kreet Village.

Zero stunting village is actually a program that aims to reduce or eliminate stunting rates in Indonesian children.

When this program is implemented in Kreet Village, of course various activities must be well designed by the village head so that a zero stunting village can run. The success of this program means that the Kreet village head must implement five pillars in preventing stunting which are in line with those conveyed by the Team for the Acceleration of Prevention of Stunted Children (TP2AK), namely first, leadership commitment and vision, second, behavior change campaigns and communication, third, convergence of central, regional and village programs, fourth, food and nutrition security, and fifth, monitoring and evaluation. These five pillars have of course also been implemented in Kreet Village, this can be seen from table 1.

Table 1. Implementation of the Five Pillars of Stunting Prevention in Kreet Village

Pillars	Activity
leadership commitment and vision	The village head makes an integrity pact and collective agreement during village deliberation meetings to ensure that the policies made by the village government are appropriate.
behavior change campaigns and communications	The village government is assisted by universities in real work or mentoring activities that provide education about stunting, inviting the media and other private institutions.
convergence, coordination and consolidation of central, regional and village programs	Village government aligns planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and control of cross-sector activities carried out in development planning meetings and village annual work plans
food security and nutrition	The village government provides assistance to the community regarding fulfilling nutritious food, provides information and training on the development of processed food crop products. In children's health measurement activities (posyandu), health cadres also provide healthy food to children.
monitoring and evaluation	Providing quality services to the entire community and educating the community to continue monitoring health service delivery activities, also involving schools to provide information about nutritious food to students. Every six months the village government evaluates children's health.

Activities in the program in Kreet Village towards a zero stunting village are carried out through a national program that has been launched. The village government has implemented it

by involving several actors, starting from involvement in planning, implementation, to evaluation.

Regional Government Policy Support

Efforts to reduce stunting rates in East Java Province have become a public health policy priority, with various strategies implemented to target vulnerable groups. Research by Laksono highlights that policies at the provincial level focus on handling children under two years of age by ensuring targeted interventions (Laksono et al., 2024). Programs such as providing additional food, iron supplementation for pregnant women, as well as increasing education about parenting and nutrition are the main steps in reducing stunting rates. However, the challenge of determining the right target beneficiaries is still a major obstacle in implementing this policy.

In Ponorogo Regency, the policy for accelerating stunting reduction has been regulated in Regent Regulation number 33 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Villages, which emphasizes the importance of intervention at the village level. The policy made by the regional government involves various programs, such as regular monitoring of children's growth at posyandu, increasing access to maternal and child health services, and involving village cadres in nutrition education. The implementation of this policy has shown quite positive results, especially in increasing public awareness regarding the importance of preventing stunting from an early age (Aisyah, 2023).

Factors that influence the success of this policy include the socio-economic conditions of the community, the mother's level of knowledge regarding children's eating patterns, and access to nutritious food. From previous studies, it is clear that the diversity of household diets plays an important role in determining children's nutritional status (Mahardhani & Wulansari, 2023; Mahmudiono et al., 2017). In East Java, families with limited access to nutritious food are more likely to have children who are stunted. Therefore, apart from direct intervention through health services, policies that support family food security are also needed to address the root causes of stunting in this region.

Various actors are involved in implementing stunting policies, including local governments, health workers, posyandu cadres, and the community itself. In Ponorogo, the role of village cadres is very important in providing education and ensuring that government programs run effectively at the community level. Apart from that, coordination between the Health Service, Social Service and other related agencies is also a determining factor in the success of the stunting reduction acceleration program. With a collaborative and community-based approach, it is hoped that the stunting rate in East Java, especially in Ponorogo, can continue to decrease significantly.

Multi-Sectoral Approach For Stunting Prevention

Tackling stunting is essential for improving the well-being of rural populations and achieving village development objectives. Stunting is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors, requiring a comprehensive approach that involves various stakeholders (Priyono, 2020).

To realize a healthy and intelligent golden generation, the Village Government was formed in collaboration with the Central Government and has shown a strong commitment to

combating stunting and external parties, one of which is the University. This village has succeeded in creating a conducive environment for optimal child growth and development. One of the strategic steps taken is the provision of nutritious food assistance. Assistance in the form of meat and eggs that are rich in protein, rich in vitamins, and minerals is an important intake for pregnant women and toddlers. The completeness of the nutrition contained in the food is very crucial in supporting the physical growth and brain development of children from an early age.

The research framework model shows three main components that are connected as a triple helix model. Diponegoro University and research institutions (BRIN) as sources of knowledge to produce integrated activities, research institutions also need support from funds, infrastructure, and appropriate technology. Furthermore, the community receiving knowledge is an important part of the collaboration between academics, industry, and government because of the role of the local government as a regulator that sets local policies and supports collaboration between academics, institutions, and the community. The community continues to play an important role as recipients and users of innovation and the knowledge produced, even though they are not included in the three main actors in the triple helix.

The Triple Helix of university-society-government interactions, highlighting the enhanced role of the university in the transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society, has become widespread in innovation and entrepreneurship studies (Mahardhani, 2024). The explanatory power of Triple Helix has been strengthened by integrating various social science concepts, e.g., Simmel's triad, Schumpeter's organizational entrepreneur, institutional logic, and social networks, into its framework. As scholars and practitioners from various disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research fields, e.g., artificial intelligence, political theory, sociology, professional ethics, higher education, regional geography, and organizational behavior, join Triple Helix studies or find integrated perspectives, new directions appear for Triple Helix research (Cai & Etzkowitz, 2020).

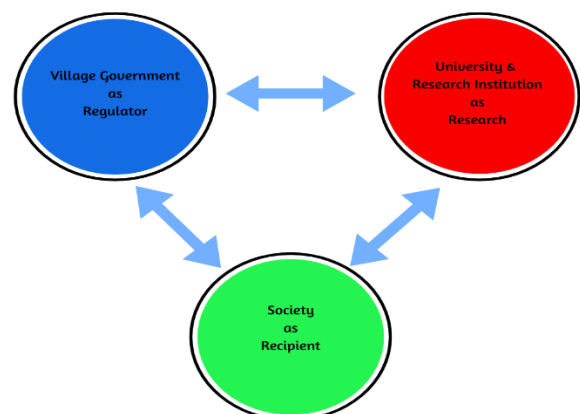


Figure 2. Triple Helix Model in Kreet Village

In addition, the Village Government is also actively conducting socialization and training for pregnant women. This program aims to increase the knowledge of pregnant women about the importance of balanced nutrition during pregnancy, nutritious food processing, and good childcare

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practices. With adequate knowledge, it is hoped that pregnant women can provide the best nutrition for their fetuses. Through various efforts, the village has succeeded in creating an ecosystem that supports optimal child growth and development. It is hoped that the stunting rate in this village will continue to decline until it reaches the target of 0%. This achievement is not only a source of pride for the villagers but also an inspiration for other regions in efforts to realize a stunting-free Indonesia. To reduce the incidence of stunting in the Jambon area, the active role of the local Health Center deserves appreciation. With the support of the Pokmas or Community Corner program, the Jambon Health Center has succeeded in distributing local food supplements to 39 target people. This initiative is very important because nutritious food is one of the keys to preventing and treating stunting in children.

The Jambon Health Center has taken concrete steps to address the problem of stunting by providing local food supplements to the community. The Pokmas program has reached 39 targets is a manifestation of the Health Service's commitment to meeting the nutritional needs of the community, especially children. This local, nutritious supplementary food is expected to improve the nutritional status of the community and ultimately reduce the incidence of stunting.

The government is expected to create constructive and innovative regional policies to accelerate stunting prevention (Nurak, Anitha, Lina Andayani, 2023). There is no doubt that a strategy is needed to realize the desired hopes to achieve something. In this case, the government functions as a unit of apparatus to carry out the most important activities and programs for them (Reonald Songgot, David Ginola, Yudistira Fachry Tegar, 2023).

It is hoped that through all efforts to prevent stunting, there will be continuous progress to reduce the number. This is necessary if the government and society are truly committed to solving this problem. It is hoped that the Indonesian government will end malnutrition, stunting, and wasting of toddlers by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program (Sustainable & Goals, 2016). In addition, Indonesians have joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.

The 1,000 Days of Life Movement—also known as the 1,000 HPK Movement—aims to accelerate the improvement of nutrition for Indonesian children in the future. Various sectors and policy makers are involved in this movement to work together to reduce stunting and other poor nutritional conditions in Indonesia (Hutabarat, 2023).

The socio-economic life of the people in Kreet Village is quite prosperous with cooperation between individuals and government agencies. In order for cooperation between regions to run smoothly and effectively in advancing the economy, local governments need to have the same understanding and strong commitment (Guampe et al., 2022).

The majority of the population has adequate education, and some have university degrees. Families in this village take good care of their children, not much different from families in urban areas. The environment around the children is also healthy and supports their growth. The WHO conceptual framework helps us to comprehensively review research on the factors causing stunting in children in Indonesia. Findings based on <https://doi.org/10.35308/jpp.v11i2.11024>

observations conducted by WHO indicate that factors within the household and family, such as short maternal height, premature birth, low birth weight, low maternal education, and low household income, are significant contributors to stunting in children in Indonesia. (Beal et al., 2018). However, an interesting fact is that one of the stunting in this village is children's reluctance to eat nutritious food; that is, children prefer snacks or less nutritious foods even though their parents have provided balanced and nutritious food. For parents, changing their children's eating patterns is a challenge in itself.

Environmental sanitation plays an important role in determining stunting factors, both as an early cause of child developmental disorders and as a direct cause of child developmental disorders. Digestive disorders can be caused by a lack of sanitation in the environment and digestive disorders, which divert growth to the body's defense against infection. As well as limited food accessibility and poor sanitation (Regita & Prathama, 2023).

Kreet Village has succeeded in overcoming the problem of clean water shortages which have been the main obstacle. Thanks to the support of the central and regional governments, the clean water drilling project which began in 2024 has provided an effective solution. It is hoped that by 2025, all residents of Kreet Village will be able to enjoy clean water evenly and the stunting rate can be minimized.

CONCLUSION

The problem of stunting is not only a physical health problem, but also has a significant impact on the overall quality of human beings. The existence of a zero stunting village that has been initiated is the first step in overcoming stunting from below. The Kreet Village Government is very active in overcoming stunting to achieve a zero stunting village. Support from various parties, including the media, universities, and the existence of supporting units in the village provide support in the implementation of Ponorogo Regent Regulation Number 33 of 2022 concerning the acceleration of stunting reduction at the village level. In this study, of course, the researcher hopes that the village government must be more proactive in seeking support from external parties so that solving the stunting problem is more effective and efficient, in addition, later if there is success in Kreet Village in completing a zero stunting village, it must be disseminated to other villages in Ponorogo Regency.

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