



## Collaboration to Accelerate Stunting Reduction in Laksamana Subdistrict

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**Abstract.** Stunting is a major public health problem that has long-term impacts on the quality of human resources, affecting physical growth, cognitive development, and socio-economic outcomes. The Indonesian government has identified the acceleration of stunting reduction as a national priority, requiring cross-sector collaboration and active community participation. This article aims to describe the implementation and outcomes of a Community Service Program (Community Service) based on a collaborative approach to support stunting reduction efforts in Kelurahan Laksamana. The program employed a participatory method through health education, interactive discussions, and partnership strengthening among the community, health workers, and educational institutions. The results indicate an increased level of community awareness and understanding regarding stunting, the importance of routine health check-ups, and the role of families in stunting prevention. Furthermore, the program strengthened partnerships and enhanced community trust in local health services. This community service activity contributes positively to building collective awareness and serves as a strategic initial step toward sustainable stunting reduction at the local level.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stunting remains a complex and multidimensional public health problem in Indonesia. Stunting not only reflects impaired physical growth in children but also indicates chronic nutritional problems that have the potential to have long-term impacts on the quality of human resources. Children who experience stunting are at risk of delayed cognitive development, reduced productivity in adulthood, and increased vulnerability to various non-communicable diseases (World Health Organization, 2022).

The Indonesian government has designated accelerating stunting reduction as one of its national development priorities. This is based on the recognition that stunting cannot be resolved through health interventions alone but requires a collaborative approach involving various sectors, including education, social, economic, and community empowerment. Stunting prevention efforts must be integrated, starting from preconception, through pregnancy, and through the first 1,000 days of life (HPK), a critical phase in determining the quality of a child's growth and development.

At the local level, stunting is often exacerbated by limited public knowledge about parenting practices and balanced nutrition, as well as low utilization of basic health services. Communities still tend to view child growth solely on the surface without understanding more

comprehensive health indicators. This often leads to stunting going undetected early and only becoming aware of it when the child has already experienced significant growth impairment (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2023).

Laksamana Village, as part of an urban area, is not immune to these challenges. Despite having access to healthcare facilities, gaps remain in optimal utilization of healthcare services, particularly in terms of child growth monitoring and family nutrition education. Social and economic factors, as well as community behavior patterns, also influence the success of stunting prevention programs at the village level. Therefore, a more hands-on approach based on real needs on the ground is needed.

Basic health checks and monitoring of children's nutritional status are crucial steps in supporting stunting prevention efforts. Routine health checks can help detect the risk of growth disorders early, allowing timely intervention. Several studies have shown that early detection and ongoing health education play a significant role in reducing the prevalence of chronic nutritional problems in children (American Diabetes Association, 2023; Mayo Clinic, 2023).

In this context, the role of higher education institutions is highly strategic. Universities not only serve as centers for scientific development but also have a social responsibility through community service. Community service activities enable the transfer of academic knowledge into real-world practices that can be directly experienced by the community. Through collaboration with healthcare facilities and local governments, educational institutions can become driving forces for changes in public health behaviors (Smith & Jones, 2022).

As a higher education institution, STIA Lancang Kuning is committed to actively contributing to the national program to accelerate stunting reduction. Through Community Service (PKM) activities, STIA Lancang Kuning strives to build synergistic collaboration between the community, health workers, and stakeholders at the village level. This collaboration is expected to strengthen promotive and preventive efforts in public health services, particularly related to stunting prevention.

Cross-sector collaboration is considered an effective approach to improving the quality of public health services. Partnerships established between educational institutions, healthcare workers, and the community can create a more sustainable support system. Through this synergy, various resource constraints can be addressed collaboratively, ensuring that stunting prevention programs are not merely short-term but also have a long-term impact on improving the community's quality of life (World Health Organization, 2022).

Based on this background, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity focuses on building and strengthening collaboration to accelerate stunting reduction in Laksamana

Village. This activity aims not only to increase public knowledge about stunting but also to encourage changes in attitudes and behaviors toward healthy lifestyles, optimal utilization of health services, and active community involvement in supporting child growth and development. With a collaborative and participatory approach, this activity is expected to make a tangible contribution to supporting the national stunting reduction agenda.

## **2. METHOD**

This Community Service activity was conducted in Laksamana Village and involved the local community, particularly pregnant women, families with toddlers, and health workers. The method used was a participatory approach, which placed the community as the primary subject in the learning and discussion process.

The activity phase began with coordination with the village government and health workers to identify community health needs and challenges. Next, educational materials were developed, focusing on understanding stunting, the importance of balanced nutrition, routine health check-ups, and the role of families and communities in stunting prevention.

The activity was implemented through interactive presentations, followed by an open discussion that allowed participants to share their experiences and challenges. The activity also involved healthcare workers who explained available healthcare services and procedures for using them. The activity was evaluated qualitatively through observations of participant participation and responses during the discussion.

## **3. RESULTS**

The Community Service (PKM) activity, titled "Collaboration to Accelerate Stunting Reduction" in Laksamana Village, proceeded smoothly and received a very positive response from the community. The activity was attended by various community elements, particularly housewives, health workers, and representatives of community leaders who play a strategic role in child care and development. Attendance was high, reflecting the community's strong need for information and support related to stunting.

Throughout the activity, participants demonstrated active engagement, both during the presentation and during the discussion and question-and-answer sessions. Participants acted not only as listeners but also openly shared their experiences, problems, and obstacles they faced in maintaining family health, particularly for toddlers and pregnant women. This demonstrated that the PKM activity successfully created a communicative and participatory atmosphere.

Initial observations prior to the presentation indicated that most participants still had limited understanding of stunting. Many attributed stunting solely to hereditary factors or believed that short growth in children was a normal condition and did not require special attention. Furthermore, there was still a perception that meeting children's nutritional needs is solely related to the quantity of food, rather than the quality and balance of nutrients.

After systematically delivering the material and providing examples relevant to everyday situations, there was a significant increase in understanding. Participants began to understand that stunting is a condition of stunted growth caused by chronic malnutrition, repeated infections, and unsupportive parenting and environmental practices. This understanding was reflected in the questions participants asked, which began to focus on stunting prevention efforts from pregnancy through the first two years of a child's life.

In addition to increasing knowledge, this activity also led to increased public awareness of the importance of regular and periodic health check-ups. Participants recognized that health check-ups are not only performed when a child or family member is sick, but also serve as a preventative measure and to monitor overall health conditions. This awareness was particularly evident in discussions regarding the importance of monitoring child growth through integrated health posts (Posyandu) and nearby health facilities.

The results of the activity also demonstrated a shift in public attitudes toward utilizing healthcare services. Participants reported that after participating in the activity, they better understood the function and benefits of available healthcare services, such as community health centers (Puskesmas) and integrated health posts (Posyandu). The community became more open and less hesitant to consult with healthcare professionals regarding nutrition, child growth and development, and maternal health.

In terms of partnerships, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity has successfully strengthened the relationship between the community, healthcare workers, and educational institutions. The presence of educational institutions in this activity is seen as a partner capable of bridging community needs with available healthcare services. The community feels more confident in expressing their aspirations and needs, while healthcare workers gain a clearer picture of the real conditions facing the community on the ground.

Furthermore, this activity had a positive impact in building collective awareness regarding the important role of families and communities in stunting prevention. Participants began to realize that stunting prevention efforts are not solely the responsibility of health workers or the government, but also require the active involvement of families and the community as a whole. This awareness serves as the starting point for building a shared

commitment to creating an environment that supports optimal child growth and development.

Overall, the results of this activity demonstrate that this Community Service Program (PKM) not only provides benefits in the form of increased knowledge but also encourages changes in attitudes and community awareness regarding stunting issues. This activity is an important first step in building sustainable collaboration between the community, health workers, and educational institutions to accelerate stunting reduction in Laksamana Village.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The Community Service (PKM) program in Laksamana Village demonstrated significant achievements in terms of both community participation and increased understanding of stunting issues. Throughout the program, community attendance was high and they actively participated in every session. Participants' enthusiasm was evident from the beginning, particularly during the presentations on stunting, balanced nutrition, and the importance of regular health check-ups.

Observations during the activity indicated that most participants previously had limited understanding of stunting. Many believed that short stature in children was a hereditary factor that could not be prevented. However, after participating in the presentation and interactive discussion, there was a significant shift in understanding. Participants began to realize that stunting is a preventable condition through adequate nutrition, improved parenting practices, environmental sanitation, and optimal utilization of health services.

In addition to improving conceptual understanding, this activity also increased public awareness of the importance of regular and periodic health check-ups. Participants stated that previously, health check-ups were more often conducted after an illness had already appeared. Through this PKM activity, the community began to understand that health check-ups serve as a preventative measure to detect health problems early, particularly in pregnant women and toddlers, who are vulnerable groups to stunting.

Another equally important outcome was the establishment of closer partnerships between the community, healthcare workers, and educational institutions. This activity provided an effective dialogue space for the community to express complaints, challenges, and expectations regarding healthcare services in their area. The community gained clearer information about the role of medical personnel, the types of healthcare services available, and the mechanisms for accessing healthcare facilities. This increased public trust in healthcare services and encouraged a greater willingness to utilize them more actively.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Community service activities, including collaboration to accelerate stunting reduction in Laksamana Village, have significantly contributed to increasing public understanding and awareness of the importance of stunting prevention. The community has not only gained new knowledge about stunting and its causes, but has also begun to shift its perspective on the importance of regular health check-ups as a preventative measure.

This activity also successfully strengthened partnerships between the community, health workers, and educational institutions. Establishing more open communication and mutual trust provides crucial social capital to support the success of public health programs, particularly in accelerating stunting reduction efforts. This collaboration demonstrates that stunting management cannot be done in isolation but requires sustained synergy from various parties.

Overall, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity can be seen as a strategic initial step in supporting stunting reduction efforts at the sub-district level. To enhance its long-term impact, program sustainability is needed through regular mentoring, strengthening the role of health cadres, and policy support from local governments. This way, efforts to accelerate stunting reduction can be more optimal and contribute to improving the quality of human resources in the future.

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