#### JURNAL MENGKAJI INDONESIA, 3 (2), 2024: 267-286

E-ISSN: 2963-6787 P-ISSN: 2963-3451

DOI: 10.59066/jmi.v3i2.794

# **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community Participation in Stunting Reduction in Surabaya**

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> Article history: Received: 03 July 2024, Accepted: 15 October 2024 Published: 18 October 2024

**Abstract:** Stunting is a growth and developmental disorder in children caused by several factors, including poor recurrent infections, nutrition, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation. Children are considered stunted if their height-for-age is more than two standard deviations below the median of the Child Growth Standards. Despite efforts, stunting among children under five years old persists in Surabaya. Therefore, the Surabaya City Government, in collaboration with medical professionals, is actively working to treat and prevent stunting to achieve the goal of Zero Stunting in Surabaya. The role of the community is crucial in eradicating stunting among young children to foster a stunting-free golden generation in Surabaya.

**Purpose:** The objective of this study is to describe the forms of community participation under Mayor Regulation No. 79 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Surabaya.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research method employs a survey methodology to collect data. This study gathers information from primary sources, obtained directly from the surveyed subjects, and secondary

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sources, which include existing data and literature relevant to the research topic.

Findings: The research findings indicate that community participation in Surabaya is present and commendable, although it is not yet fully optimal. While several participation indicators show positive results, such as participation in labor, material contributions, social involvement, and skills, there is still a need for improvement in the participation of ideas, particularly in providing input or suggestions related to stunting reduction programs. Therefore, increased community engagement is necessary to achieve the goal of Surabaya Zero Stunting.

**Originality/value:** This study has several distinctions in terms of focus, theme, and research location. It will examine community participation within the context of Surabaya Mayor Regulation No. 79 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Surabaya.

Keywords: Surabaya; Stunting; Participation

Paper Type: Article-Research

#### Introduction

Stunting is a growth and developmental disorder in children caused by factors such as poor nutrition, recurrent infections, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation. Children are classified as stunted if their height-for-age is more than two standard deviations below the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards (World Health Organization 2015). Stunting remains a serious issue in Indonesia. According to the 2022 National Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI), the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia stands at 21.6%, a decrease from the previous year's rate of 24.4%. However, considering the WHO target for stunting prevalence to be below 20% by 2024 (Kementerian Kesehatan 2023), the situation still requires significant improvement. Infants born to mothers with inadequate nutritional intake and recurrent infections are likely to have Low Birth Weight (LBW) or length below the standard. The availability

of food at the household level is not the only factor influencing adequate nutritional intake; child-rearing practices such as early initiation of breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, and accurate provision of complementary foods (MP-ASI) are also crucial. Indirect causes of stunting include urbanization, globalization, food systems, social protection, healthcare systems, agricultural development, and women's empowerment. Addressing the causes of stunting requires supportive prerequisites, such as policy and political commitment to cross-sectoral and government engagement, and capacity for implementation (Nuryuliyani 2023).

Infants born to mothers who consume inadequate nutritional intake and experience infections are likely to have Low Birth Weight (LBW) or lengths below standard. The availability of food at the household level is not the sole factor affecting adequate nutrition; child-rearing practices such as the provision of colostrum (the first milk), early initiation of breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, and accurate provision of complementary foods (MP-ASI) are also essential. Indirect factors contributing to stunting include urbanization, globalization, food systems, social protection, healthcare systems, agricultural development, and women's empowerment. Addressing the causes of stunting requires supportive prerequisites, such as policy and political commitment to cross-sectoral engagement and government collaboration, as well as capacity for effective implementation (Nuryuliyani 2023).

In Indonesia, the government currently prioritizes 12 provinces for addressing stunting. According to Ira Ardiana (Director of Child and Adolescent Resilience at BKKBN), the seven provinces with the highest rates of stunting are East Nusa Tenggara, West Sulawesi, Aceh, Southeast Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, and West Kalimantan. Additionally, the five provinces with the highest populations are West Java, Central

Java, East Java, North Sumatra, and Banten (Indriani 2022). East Java is one of the provinces with a high population where accelerating the reduction of stunting is highly prioritized. Surabaya, the capital of East Java, is commonly known as the City of Heroes. In 2021, Surabaya had the highest prevalence of stunting at 28.9%, ranking 6th among the highest stunting rates in the province. However, in 2022, Surabaya succeeded in reducing its stunting rates.

Table 1 Prevalence of Stunting in Surabaya

Tahun	Persentase Stunting
2021	28,9%
2022	4,8 %

Sumber: Buku SSGI 2021-2022

One of the reasons for the suboptimal reduction in stunting rates in Surabaya is the limited community participation in achieving zero stunting. Community participation is crucial for reducing stunting, as it acts as a vital reinforcing factor. According to Cohen and Uphoff (Nisa and Salomo 2019), participation encompasses community involvement in decision-making, program implementation, and distribution of program benefits in development, as well as community participation in program evaluation. Additionally, participation in program execution involves aspects such as the allocation of resources and funds, administrative activities, and program classification. Given this brief overview, community participation is a critical component of the success of the program itself.

Several studies have previously addressed the acceleration of stunting reduction. For instance, research by Permatasari and Eprilianto indicates that community participation in the stunting alleviation program in Bulak Banteng Village, Surabaya, remains suboptimal (Permatasari and Eprilianto 2023). Factors hindering community participation include employment, education, gender, and cultural beliefs. On the other hand, factors supporting

participation include willingness, availability of time, and opportunities from cross-sectoral engagement. Although the community demonstrates willingness, ability, and opportunity to participate in stunting alleviation programs, they only engage in activities without implementing interventions from the Public Health Center (Puskesmas). Efforts are needed to enhance community participation in stunting alleviation programs (Listiani, Yulianti, and Patriani 2023), taking into account the identified barriers and supporting factors. Empowering communities in stunting prevention is also considered an effective solution, involving various stakeholders and strengthening crosssectoral coordination. Effective coordination among Puskesmas, village administration, and sub-districts is crucial for the success of stunting alleviation programs. Recommendations for addressing nutritional needs, parenting practices, and cultural beliefs are also essential in the effort to achieve zero stunting in Surabaya. Additionally, research by Viona Erlanda and Dida Rahmadanik shows that collaborative strategies between the Surabaya City Government, organizations, and the community have been successful in accelerating the reduction of stunting rates in the city (Erlanda and Rahmadanik 2023). Programs such as Jago Ceting and partnerships with various stakeholders have significantly reduced stunting rates in Surabaya from 12,788 cases in 2020 to 1,219 cases in 2022. Collaborative processes involving face-to-face dialogue, trust-building, and communication among stakeholders have been key to the success in managing stunting in Surabaya. With effective and efficient collaboration, the Surabaya City Government has achieved positive outcomes in its stunting reduction efforts.

This paper highlights significant differences between the research journals previously reviewed and the current study. It is evident that this research has distinct differences in focus, theme, and research location. This study will examine community

participation under Mayor Regulation No. 79 of 2022 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Surabaya. Therefore, this research clearly does not overlap with previous studies. The aim of this study is to describe the forms of community participation in relation to Mayor Regulation No. 79 of 2022 concerning the acceleration of stunting reduction in Surabaya. The urgency of this research lies in enhancing community participation, supporting the policies and programs established by the government, and deepening the understanding of the role and importance of community involvement in combating stunting.

#### Methods

The method used for this study is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. This research employs cluster random sampling techniques, which involve random sampling according to specific areas or regions within a population. This approach aims to investigate aspects that are available or characteristic of particular areas or regions. The study is conducted at the Health Office of Surabaya City, located at Jl. Raya Jemursari No.197, Sidosermo, Wonocolo District, Surabaya, East Java 60239. The research utilizes a theoretical framework with five indicators: cognitive participation, labor participation, skill participation, material participation, and social participation (Sastropoetro 1986). During data collection, audio recordings are used and transcribed as notes for further analysis in interviews and focus group discussions. Data analysis employs triangulation, starting with data collection through observations, and field interviews with informants including Nutrition Staff from the Surabaya City Health Office, Nutrition Staff from the Public Health Center (Puskesmas), and members of the Surabaya community.

# Discussion and Findings Cognitive Participation

Cognitive participation refers to a form of involvement where individuals contribute ideas, opinions, suggestions, critiques, and experiences to support the continuity of an activity. In the context of stunting reduction programs, cognitive participation is a crucial element in formulating effective and sustainable solutions. This includes how the community engages in socialization and education about stunting and provides feedback and suggestions to stakeholders (Izzuddin and Widiyarta 2024). This form of participation can be facilitated through various means, such as raising awareness about nutritional intake and parenting practices (Oxy Handika 2020; Desi and Handayani 2023), and offering input recommendations to the government and other stakeholders (Izzuddin and Widiyarta 2024; Erlanda and Rahmadanik 2023; Listiani, Yulianti, and Patriani 2023). Community enthusiasm in participating in stunting prevention and alleviation socialization activities is commendable, as there is significant engagement in all forms of activities organized. However, it is noteworthy that not many members of the community have provided ideas, suggestions, or feedback in the stunting reduction programs in Surabaya. This observation aligns with findings from previous research, which indicated that during the post-stunting cheerful event (Permatasari and Eprilianto 2023), community members were not very active but merely followed the directives from the series of activities provided by the public health centers (Puskesmas).



Bulan Maret 2021 lalu, Pemerintah Kota (Pemkot) Surabaya meluncurkan aplikasi WargaKu Surabaya yang berfungsi sebagai media pengaduan dan layanan

Gambar 1. Berita Aplikasi Wargaku Sumber: Surabaya.go.id

Despite the efforts of the Surabaya City Government to accelerate stunting reduction, including providing platforms and activities to capture community aspirations, there remains a gap in active participation. The platforms include the Wargaku application and regular community meetings at the local neighborhood offices (RW). Totok and Poerwoko argue that community participation involves the awareness, interest, and commitment of individuals towards development, intending to improve quality of life (Mardikanto and Soebianto 2017).

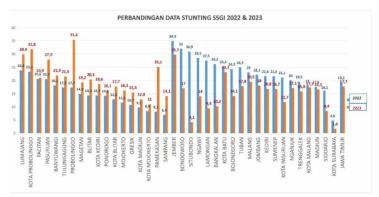
Currently, some community members have contributed ideas, feedback, and suggestions regarding the stunting reduction program. However, there are still others who have not participated in providing input for the stunting reduction program and lack awareness regarding child nutrition for growth and development. As noted by a Nutrition Staff member from the Bulak Banteng Public Health Center, "The awareness of the community here can be considered lacking. Stunting is related to diet, particularly protein intake. People here tend to eat whatever is available without considering nutritional content, such as only consuming rice and vegetables. Although fish is beneficial for children's growth, if a child dislikes fish, it is often not included in

their diet."4 This raises the question of why the community, which is crucial to the stunting program, still shows limited awareness regarding nutritional intake and minimal contribution of ideas and feedback on stunting. One possible reason for the low level of community participation could be low self-confidence and doubt that their suggestions will be heard and acted upon. It is important to remember that community participation is not only the responsibility of the government but also of individuals (Parlindungan 2019; Rahma 2019). Solutions include enhancing trust and a sense of security by providing concrete evidence that previous ideas, feedback, and suggestions from the community have been heard, considered, and acted upon. Additionally, fostering open and friendly two-way communication with the community, utilizing accessible information and communication technologies to spread information, and encouraging community involvement in submitting questions, complaints, and feedback are crucial steps.

#### **Participation of Effort**

Participation of effort relates to the involvement of the community in activities associated with the stunting reduction acceleration program. This means that community engagement is crucial for the success of stunting reduction initiatives. Effective collaboration among all stakeholders is expected to help the programs achieve their goals in reducing the stunting rate in Surabaya City.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Interview with Mrs. Bela, Nutrition Staff at Bulak Banteng Public Health Center, on May 15, 2024.



Gambar 2. Prevalensi Stunting Kota Surabaya 2022-2023

Sumber: Buku SSGI 2022-2023

Efforts to reduce stunting in Surabaya City have garnered active commitment and participation from various parties, including the government, community organizations, and the general public. Data presented indicates that the people of Surabaya have demonstrated commitment and provided their participation in the stunting reduction program, particularly by dedicating their time and effort to engage in all established activities. Notably, in 2022, the prevalence of stunting in Surabaya was 4.8%, which dramatically decreased to 1.6% in 2023. This significant reduction in stunting prevalence is attributed to the concerted efforts of the government, community organizations, and the broader public. As stated by a staff member of the Klampis Ngasem Public Health Center, "The community is definitely involved. The outreach is not solely from the public health center; it also includes Surabaya Hebat Cadres (KSH), PKK, village administrations, and the community always shows enthusiasm in participating in these activities. They consistently attend, and their participation level is quite high and very active."5 community participation is evidenced by their active engagement

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mrs. Rosi, Nutrition Staff at Klampis Ngasem Public Health Center, on May 28, 2024

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in stunting socialization and education activities, assisting in the implementation of stunting programs such as integrated health posts (posyandu) and family counseling, and creating a conducive environment for stunting prevention, such as maintaining environmental cleanliness. Community participation is further supported by the establishment of KSH and TPK. This aligns with the perspective of Cohen and Uphoff, who define participation as the active involvement of the community in decision-making processes regarding what actions to take and how to implement them; participation in program execution and decision-making through resource contribution or collaboration in an organization; and benefiting from development while participating in program evaluation (Nurbaiti and Bambang 2017). This clearly demonstrates that the community is not merely a passive observer but plays an active role as a change agent.

The community in Surabaya City contributes to various stunting reduction programs through several means, such as becoming Surabaya Hebat Cadres (KSH), consistently attending socialization sessions on stunting reduction acceleration, and assisting in providing support to families with stunted children. Such active involvement is crucial for the effective acceleration of stunting reduction efforts in Surabaya City.

#### **Skill-Based Participation**

Skill-based participation refers to the involvement in meeting nutritional needs through the food provided to children. The goal is to ensure that children receive a balanced diet for their growth and development, which relies on the active involvement of parents (Desi and Handayani 2023; Didah 2024; Oxy Handika 2020). The Surabaya City Health Office is actively working to enhance the community's knowledge and skills regarding the importance of healthy and nutritious food for child development. This effort is carried out through training programs provided to public health centers and Surabaya Hebat Cadres (KSH).

Participants of these training programs then disseminate their acquired knowledge by conducting cooking demonstrations for the community in their respective areas.



Gambar 3. Program Pelatihan PMT Lokal Sumber: PKM Klampis Ngasem

The training programs encompass several aspects, including understanding balanced nutrition, the importance of selecting healthy foods for pregnant women, and methods for preparing nutritious and appealing meals for children. Through these programs, the community gains a better understanding of the significance of healthy eating patterns for children and is able to apply this knowledge in daily life (Purnamasari, Ningrum, and Siti Rohimah 2023). One of the key initiatives is the cooking demonstration, commonly referred to as the Local Additional Food Program (PMT Lokal). This program provides practical examples to the community on how to prepare healthy and nutritious meals using locally available ingredients that are affordable. These cooking demonstrations not only offer education on nutrition but also encourage creativity among community members, especially mothers, in crafting meals that children enjoy. As a result, children are more likely to be interested in consuming healthy and nutritious foods. According to the Technical Instruction Manual on Nutritional Education in the Provision of Local Additional Food for Pregnant Women and Toddlers, these educational activities aim to enhance community knowledge and skills in preparing and providing local foods in accordance with balanced nutrition principles for both pregnant women and toddlers (Kemenkes RI 2018).

The community's enthusiasm for this program is very high, as evidenced by their active participation in various socialization and educational events that are organized. The residents of Surabaya show a keen interest in learning about balanced nutrition for children. Ms. J, a member of the Surabaya community, shared her approach to preparing nutritious food in relation to stunting reduction efforts, stating: "usually, there are socialization sessions from the health center. Sometimes, I also create my own recipes by watching YouTube. For example, if my child doesn't want to eat fish in its whole form, I often make it into nuggets or meatballs."

The positive impact of this program is becoming evident, as the community now has a greater understanding of the importance of selecting healthy and nutritious food for children's growth and development. Additionally, there is an increase in creativity in preparing meals that appeal to children. This aligns with the research by Hesti Nur Sahadatilah et al., which indicates that one of the factors influencing children's nutritional status is the education and knowledge possessed by mothers, which in turn affects their parenting practices (Sahadatilah et al. 2023).

#### **Material Participation**

Material participation is a crucial form of community involvement in the prevention and management of stunting. This participation involves providing financial or material support to enhance programs aimed at combating and addressing stunting. Research findings reveal that in Surabaya, all stunting reduction programs are funded by the State Budget (APBN). Libna, a nutrition staff member from the Surabaya Health Office, also

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Interview with Mrs. J, a resident of Surabaya City, on May 27, 2024

indicated that all facilities for the stunting reduction program are provided free of charge to the community, as they are funded by the City Budget (APBD). "For support, we receive funds from the City Budget. Therefore, when discussing the City Budget, it is automatically a plan, meaning that one month before the end of the year, all needs for the following year are already prepared and funding requests are submitted. Thus, at the beginning of the year, each activity can already be implemented."

This indicates that the community does not need to incur costs to obtain milk, high-protein snacks, and other necessities. Although, according to the statement, community participation in terms of material support for the stunting reduction program does not appear to be involved, the researchers found that some community members still contribute. They assist by providing additional support to the stunting reduction program, such as donating funds or essential supplies (milk, vegetables, and groceries). As stated by a nutrition staff member from the Bulak Banteng Health Center: "Everything is free because it is provided by the Health Center and the Health Office, including nutritious food, vitamins, and milk. However, occasionally there are donations from local leaders, including groceries and vegetables."8

Community participation in this context is commendable, even though it remains relatively limited. It demonstrates that there is still a sense of concern among the community regarding the issue of stunting. The community can leverage information and communication technology to access information about stunting and to engage in stunting reduction programs (Ngadiyono, Suparmi, and Musdalifah 2024; Priyono 2020).

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$  Interview with Mrs. Libna, Nutrition Staff at DKK Surabaya, on June 3, 2024  $\,$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Interview with Mrs. Bela, Nutrition Staff at Bulak Banteng Public Health Center, on May 15, 2024.

#### **Social Participation**

Social participation refers to active involvement by individuals or groups in the implementation and monitoring of stunting reduction programs. This participation is driven by the community's awareness and concern for social issues in their environment (Manganti 2023). Based on the data presented, it is evident that community participation in Surabaya is considered effective in the stunting reduction program. This is demonstrated by the collaboration between the community and health centers, the teamwork of health cadres, the general public's assistance in stunting programs, and mothers of stunted children who contribute education, motivation, and a spirit of mutual cooperation. These individuals encourage the community to focus on child nutrition and cleanliness, volunteer in educational and outreach activities about stunting, and engage in collaboration between the government, the community, and non-governmental organizations such as CSR initiatives involved in the stunting reduction program. Ms. U, a member of the Surabaya community, also shared her insights: "I have participated in SOTH and, when asked how I build a spirit of mutual cooperation to address stunting, I am also a PAUD (Early Childhood Education) facilitator. For the upcoming second wave of SOTH, I happen to be a speaker in the socialization event. The government's program involves PAUD facilitators as speakers, so I use this opportunity to motivate and foster a spirit of cooperation among the community to pay more attention to child nutrition."9

This is closely related to the government programs that support community participation in stunting reduction, such as the formation of health cadre teams and the organization of posyandu (integrated health service posts). The community in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Interview with Mrs. U, a resident of Surabaya City, on May 25, 2024

Surabaya has increasingly recognized the importance of stunting prevention and management, resulting in a strong spirit of mutual cooperation and a willingness to collaborate in stunting reduction programs. This is also reflected in the statement of a nutrition staff member from the Surabaya City Health Department, who noted: "currently, the TPK (Nutrition Improvement Team) and KSH (Surabaya Health Cadre) are actively informing the community about the signs of stunting. If there are reports from community members or neighbors about children showing signs of stunting, this information is promptly reported to KSH, and a visit is conducted to measure height and weight. If stunting is confirmed, the child is referred to the health center. Thus, any information received is immediately communicated to KSH and TPK to verify whether stunting is present." 10

Therefore, community participation is an active process where initiatives are taken by the community itself, guided by their own thinking, utilizing means and processes (institutions and mechanisms) through which they can exert effective control (Manganti 2023; Rahma 2019; Parlindungan 2019). By maintaining a high and optimal level of social spirit from all parties, it is possible to accelerate the reduction of stunting in Surabaya and realize a healthy, intelligent, and accomplished younger generation.

### Conclusion

This conclusion is based on data and phenomena obtained by the researcher through the accumulation of data and information from the Surabaya City Health Office and community health centers, as well as direct field visits to the community in Surabaya, accompanied by the Surabaya Hebat Cadres. Community participation in the Surabaya City Mayor Regulation No. 79 of 2022 on Accelerating Stunting Reduction shows positive

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Interview with Mrs. Libna, Nutrition Staff at DKK Surabaya, on June 3, 2024

results. The active participation provided is a crucial asset in achieving the "Zero Stunting" target in Surabaya. However, there are still areas needing improvement, such as increasing public awareness about parenting practices and nutritious food intake, and developing mechanisms that are accessible and transparent for the community to offer ideas, suggestions, and feedback. By continually enhancing community participation and the involvement of all stakeholders, it is hoped that the stunting reduction program in Surabaya can operate more effectively and achieve the set targets.

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