

## Managerial Approach in Overcoming Stunting through Health and Nutrition

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### ABSTRACT

Stunting is one of the main problems in public health that is still widely encountered in developing countries, including Indonesia. Stunting not only has an impact on children's physical growth, but also has long-term implications for the quality of human resources, productivity, and national development. Given the importance of this issue, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of managerial approaches in overcoming stunting through health and nutrition programs implemented at the regional level. The research method used is a literature study, by analyzing various scientific sources related to health and nutrition program management and stunting prevention efforts. Data was obtained from journal articles, research reports, and relevant policy documents. The results of the study show that the implementation of management functions, namely planning, organizing, directing, and controlling, is systematically able to increase the effectiveness of health and nutrition programs in reducing stunting rates. Key success factors include strategic coordination between health workers in the field, policy support from local governments, active community involvement, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs. This study also found that weak managerial capacity is one of the main obstacles in the implementation of the program, so efforts are needed to strengthen managerial competence in all lines of program implementation. Thus, this study recommends the need to strengthen management capacity, develop more effective collaborative strategies, and supervise sustainable programs to achieve the national stunting reduction target. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers and public health practitioners in designing and implementing management-based interventions to tackle stunting in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** managerial approach, stunting, health programs, nutrition programs, public health

## 1 Introduction

Stunting or child growth retardation due to chronic malnutrition is still a serious public health problem in Indonesia. Based on the results of national research, the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia is recorded quite high even though in recent years it has shown a downward trend. Although various efforts have been made, the problem of stunting remains a major challenge that requires special attention from all parties to achieve sustainable improvement. The impact of stunting is not only limited to physical aspects such as a shorter posture than children their age, but also extends to the child's cognitive, emotional, and potential future productivity. Children who experience stunting are at risk of experiencing obstacles in the learning process, have lower levels of intelligence, and are more susceptible to diseases as adults. If this problem is not immediately handled seriously, it will have an impact on the quality of a nation's human resources in the future.

A number of programs have been initiated by the government and non-governmental institutions to deal with stunting, such as family-based health programs, balanced nutrition programs, and national movements in supporting the first thousand days of life. However, in its implementation, the results achieved in various regions show considerable variation. There are areas that have managed to significantly reduce the prevalence of stunting, while other areas are still experiencing stagnation or even increase. This shows that the success of the program does not only depend on the content of

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the program, but also on how the program is managed. One of the main factors that determine the effectiveness of health and nutrition programs is the managerial approach in their implementation. A good managerial approach includes well-directed planning, optimal resource organization, program implementation with the right methods, and continuous control and evaluation. Without the implementation of effective managerial functions, even well-designed programs have the potential to fail or fail to achieve the expected targets.

Optimizing managerial approaches is becoming increasingly important considering the challenges in the field that are quite complex. Limited human resources, financing constraints, low levels of public awareness, and obstacles in cross-sector coordination are often the main obstacles in program implementation. Through structured and adaptive management, these challenges can be anticipated so that program implementation can be more effective and sustainable. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the contribution of managerial approaches in overcoming stunting through health and nutrition programs. The importance of a managerial approach in health and nutrition programs cannot be separated from the need to identify problems appropriately from the planning stage. In the context of handling stunting, an in-depth analysis of the causative factors in each region is needed, including social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects. Without a comprehensive understanding of the problem at hand, the intervention strategy applied can be not on target. Therefore, the role of management in conducting needs assessments and adapting programs according to local characteristics is very crucial.

In addition to careful planning, resource organization is also an important aspect in supporting the success of the program. The management of health workers, posyandu cadres, and support from various sectors such as education, agriculture, and community empowerment needs to be carried out in a synergistic manner. A well-managed multisectoral approach will strengthen the effectiveness of nutrition and health interventions, as stunting is not a stand-alone problem, but is closely related to many other determinant factors. The implementation of programs based on a managerial approach requires a clear work mechanism, regular supervision, and active community involvement as the main subject of change. In many cases, the failure of stunting alleviation programs occurs not because of a lack of interventions, but because of a lack of active participation from families and communities. An effective managerial function must be able to design communication and education strategies that build public awareness and commitment in supporting stunting prevention efforts.

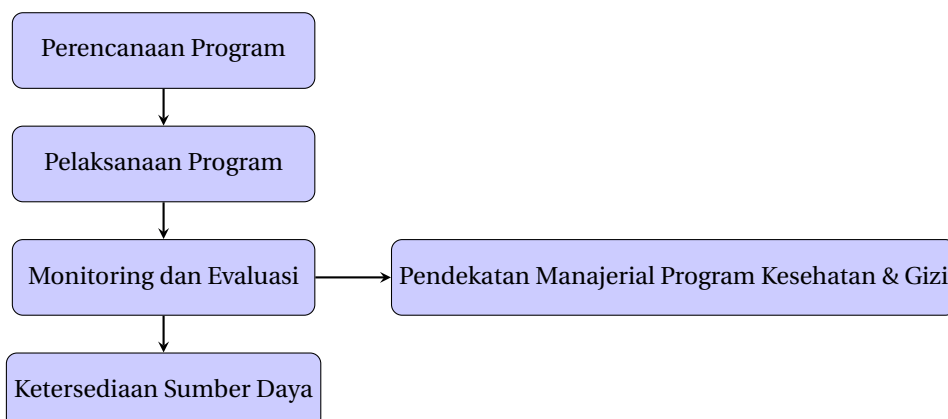
Evaluation and monitoring are also key components in the managerial approach. Programs that have succeeded in reducing stunting rates generally have an integrated monitoring system and are able to provide accurate data on a regular basis. With systematic evaluation, program managers can make strategic adjustments based on the results obtained in the field. The evaluation aims not only to assess the achievement of targets, but also to identify obstacles and opportunities for improvement on an ongoing basis. In the context of government decentralization in Indonesia, the role of local governments is very important in implementing stunting prevention programs. The managerial approach at the regional level must be able to optimize the use of funds, strengthen the capacity of local human resources, and build collaboration across sectors and actors. Thus, each region can develop an intervention model that is appropriate to their specific conditions, while contributing to the national target of stunting reduction.

This research is expected to contribute to enriching understanding of the importance of managerial functions in health and nutrition programs, especially in efforts to overcome stunting. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to be a reference for policy makers, health practitioners, and various other related parties in designing and managing intervention programs that are more effective, efficient, and sustainable in accelerating the reduction of stunting prevalence in Indonesia.

Tabel 1. Literature Studies

No.	Writer	Year	Heading	Topics Covered	Methodology Used
1	A. Hidayat	2023	Implementation of Stunting Prevention Policy in Simpung Layung Village, Tabalong Regency	Stunting control policy at the village level	Case studies, policy analysis
2	E. A. Saragih & F. P. Gurning	2023	Efforts to Accelerate Stunting Prevention Programs with a Cadre Development Approach in Medan City	Acceleration of stunting prevention programs, cadre development	Field research, interviews with cadres
3	A. Mulyani, F. Hidayatullah, H. Rahmah, S. Sugiharta	2024	Strategy of the Central Java Provincial Health Office in Overcoming Stunting	Stunting control strategy by the health office	Strategy analysis, interviews with related parties
4	N. Ketut, A. Mirayanti, K. Sukraandini, P. G. Subhaktiyasa, N. K. Citrawati	2022	Stunting Prevention Education and Parenting Management in Nutritional Fulfillment in Toddlers	Education and parenting management in toddlers	Complementary therapy approaches, literature review
5	T. Abdurrahman	2024	Increasing Nutrition Awareness and Stunting Prevention through Socialization and PMT in Karangbangun Village	Socialization and supplementary feeding for stunting prevention	Socialization, supplementary feeding programs

## 2 Literature Review



## 3 Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to analyze the application of managerial approaches in the implementation of health and nutrition programs to overcome stunting. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand and interpret various studies that have been conducted previously, so that they can build a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between management strategies and health program outcomes in various contexts. The literature study method is carried out by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing various relevant secondary sources, such as scientific journal articles, research reports, policy documents, nutrition program technical guidelines, and program evaluations published by national and international institutions. These sources were selected based on the criteria of relevance to the research focus, data freshness, and credibility of the publisher.

The data analysis process is carried out with a thematic analysis approach. The initial stage of analysis includes the coding process, which is identifying data pieces related to program planning, resource organization, implementation of activities, and program control and evaluation. The pieces of data are then categorized into main themes to reveal patterns of application of managerial approaches in efforts to overcome stunting. Furthermore, data interpretation was carried out by following an interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and simultaneous drawing of conclusions. The validity of the results of the literature study is strengthened through the source triangulation technique, which is comparing findings from various literature to get a more comprehensive and reliable picture. The principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are also applied to maintain the validity of research results.

Using this literature study method, the research is expected to be able to provide an accurate theoretical and practical picture of the contribution of managerial approaches in health and nutrition programs to overcome stunting in Indonesia. Through this literature review, the research not only identifies effective managerial practices, but also reveals various challenges that often arise in the implementation of health and nutrition programs to reduce stunting rates. Cross-source analysis allows researchers to compare approaches across different regions, understand the contextual factors that influence the success of the program, and formulate strategic recommendations based on findings that have been validated from previous studies. Thus, this study is expected to be a foundation for the development of more structured and evidence-based managerial policies and interventions in an effort to accelerate the reduction of stunting in Indonesia.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 1. Local Data-Based Planning

Local data-based planning is the initial foundation that determines the direction and effectiveness of stunting control programs. In the context of this study, the collection of accurate data on stunting rates, nutritional status of toddlers, sanitation conditions, and access to health services is the main

focus. This local data is not only quantitative, but also involves qualitative information such as people's behavior towards nutrition and sanitation. The importance of local data lies in its ability to describe real conditions on the ground. Each region has different social, economic, and cultural characteristics, so a generic approach is often ineffective. By understanding these differences, intervention planning can be sharper, more specific, and directly target the root of the stunting problem in each region. The use of local data also helps in identifying priority areas, where stunting rates are very high and require immediate attention. This prevents the waste of resources in areas that may not be too problematic, making interventions more efficient. In addition, local data analysis supports the preparation of realistic and measurable program success targets and indicators. Cross-sector collaboration in collecting and processing local data is a key factor in planning success. Local governments, health workers, academics, and local communities must work together to ensure that the data collected is valid and representative. Community participation in this process also increases the sense of belonging to the program. With a local data-based approach, stunting programs have not only become more responsive, but also more adaptive to changes in the situation on the ground. Regularly updated data allows the program to adjust its strategy without having to wait for a long annual planning cycle. Finally, local data-driven planning strengthens program accountability. Program decisions can be held accountable because they are based on solid evidence, not assumptions. This increases public and stakeholder trust in the program, which in turn strengthens support for the implementation of stunting interventions.

## **2. Organizing through Cross-Sector Work Teams**

Organizing through the formation of cross-sector work teams is a crucial step in ensuring the integration of stunting control programs. This team integrates various sectors that are directly and indirectly related to the determinants of stunting, ranging from the health, education, agriculture, to social sectors. Each sector brings unique perspectives and resources that are invaluable in an effort to reduce stunting rates. For example, the agricultural sector can ensure the availability of nutritious food, while the education sector can strengthen nutrition education from an early age. This approach expands the range of interventions and enriches the solutions implemented. A clear organizational structure is essential in these cross-sector teams. Each team member should have a specific description of the task, as well as an effective coordination mechanism to avoid overlapping activities. Designating team leaders, secretaries, and field coordinators helps optimize workflows. Regular communication between team members is the main support for the smooth running of the program. Periodic coordination meetings, both face-to-face and online, are conducted to evaluate achievements, discuss obstacles, and formulate solutions. With this communication mechanism, each member feels involved and responsible for the success of the program. One of the challenges in cross-sector teams is the difference in priorities and approaches between sectors. Therefore, from the beginning, it is necessary to build a common understanding regarding the main goal: reducing the prevalence of stunting. This commitment is the foundation in synergizing the various efforts and resources available. With good organization, cross-sector teams not only accelerate the achievement of program targets, but also build stronger local capacity to address other public health issues in the future. This creates a sustainable institutional legacy at the local level.

## **3. Briefing through Effective Communication**

The briefing stage in the stunting control program is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the communication built between health workers, cadres, and the community. Effective communication is not only about delivering information, but also how to build understanding and active community involvement. Health workers and posyandu cadres play a central role as the spearhead of communication in the field. They not only provide counseling on balanced nutrition, but also educate the public about environmental hygiene practices and prevention of infectious diseases related to stunting. The participatory communication approach is the method applied in this program. The public is encouraged to actively ask questions, discuss, and express their opinions about the problems they face. It builds a two-way relationship that strengthens trust and increases the effectiveness of socialization. The use of various communication media, such as posters, leaflets, audio visuals, and local social media, also supports the wider spread of messages and is easier to understand by various segments of society. Adapting communication materials according to the local cultural context is very important to increase the acceptance of messages. Evaluation of the effectiveness of communication

is carried out periodically through the measurement of the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the community related to nutrition and children's health. The results of this evaluation are used to improve communication strategies to be more relevant and impactful. With effective communication, people not only become passive recipients of information, but also become active actors in stunting prevention efforts. This builds a sense of community ownership of the program, which ultimately improves the success and sustainability of the intervention.

#### **4. Routine Program Control and Evaluation**

Program control and evaluation are carried out systematically to ensure that the stunting control program runs in accordance with the planned that has been set. Control is carried out by monitoring key indicators periodically. Some of the main indicators monitored include the coverage of posyandu services, the nutritional status of toddlers based on anthropometric indicators, and the level of community compliance with the interventions provided. This monitoring data is collected by the field team through regular surveys and reporting. The evaluation also includes an analysis of obstacles that arise in the field, such as the lack of cadre attendance, logistical constraints, or low community participation. Identifying this problem is the basis for making quick and targeted program improvements. The importance of external evaluation through the involvement of regional health offices and independent agencies is to maintain the objectivity of program assessments. With external evaluation, the program can gain broader new input and strengthen accountability. Control is also carried out through a direct supervision mechanism by superiors or regional coordinators to ensure that each program implementer understands his duties and executes them according to procedures. This supervision includes field visits, document audits, and interviews with beneficiary communities. With consistent control and evaluation, programs can continue to grow, improve their shortcomings, and strengthen their impact on reducing stunting rates. Programs that are adaptive to the results of the evaluation will be better prepared to face new dynamics and challenges in the field.

#### **5. Integration of Management Functions and Their Impact on Stunting Reduction**

This study emphasizes that the success of stunting control programs is highly dependent on the integration of management functions. Each function—planning, organizing, directing, and controlling—is interrelated and reinforcing of each other. Robust planning based on local data is the starting point that determines the direction of the program. Without accurate data, programs run the risk of being mistargeted and ineffective. Cross-sector team organization strengthens implementation by ensuring collaboration of various relevant parties. Briefings conducted with effective communication ensure that all parties understand their role and that the community feels actively involved. This creates a sense of ownership that strengthens the community's commitment to the program. Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure that the program stays on track, corrects deficiencies quickly, and maintains the quality of interventions. Without a good evaluation, the program easily loses focus and its impact on stunting becomes less than optimal. Data from this study shows a decreasing trend in the prevalence of stunting in the study area. Although specific figures are not specified, these results are a strong indication that effective managerial integration has a real impact on the success of the program. Thus, the success of stunting prevention requires a structured, coordinated, and adaptive management approach. The integration of management functions not only strengthens the implementation of the program, but also improves the quality of life of the community more broadly and sustainably. .

### **5 Conclusion**

The managerial approach has proven to play a central role in strengthening the implementation of health and nutrition programs to address stunting problems. Through the implementation of management functions such as planning based on local data, organizing cross-sector work teams, briefing through effective communication, and systematic control and evaluation of programs, stunting control programs can run more effectively and directionally. This approach allows the program to adapt to the needs of the local community, strengthen coordination between stakeholders, and increase active community participation. The results of this study show that the integration of managerial functions in each stage of the program has a positive impact on reducing stunting rates in the study area. Based on these findings, it is suggested that strengthening managerial capacity at the field implementation

level is a top priority to accelerate the achievement of the national target for stunting reduction. Comprehensive program management training, adequate provision of resources, and ongoing policy support are needed to ensure the effectiveness of program implementation at the local level.

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