# APPLYING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AS AN INTERVENTION IN STUNTING REDUCTION

# An Empirical Community Empowerment Model in Sukabumi District

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to formulate a community empowerment model to increase locals' capacity to engage more actively in collaborative governance. By using descriptive methods, qualitative approaches, and data collection using interviews, observations, and documentation, the focus and locus of this study limited to specific coverage area in Sukabumi Regency. Data analysis used an interactive model, and its finding reveals the community empowerment model which has implies consideration in the Community Empowerment Process, include the limitations of Community Participation, Volunteering, collective Regeneration, Empowerment, and action, and Increasing community capabilities. Stunting reduction is a part of regional development, while Sukabumi district is considered as an area that is an integral part of the government's hard efforts to fight stunting. Finding shown that development programs in stunting reduction require more involvement from the state and society. Increasing community participation can be encouraged by building community capabilities to participate more in collaborative processes.

**Keywords:** Community Empowerment; Stunting Reduction; Collaborative Governance.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan model pemberdayaan masyarakat untuk meningkatkan kapasitas masyarakat agar lebih aktif terlibat dalam tata kelola pemerintahan yang kolaboratif. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif, pendekatan kualitatif, dan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, fokus dan lokus penelitian ini dibatasi pada wilayah cakupan tertentu di Kabupaten Sukabumi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif, dan temuannya mengungkapkan model pemberdayaan masyarakat yang memiliki implikasi pertimbangan dalam Proses Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, meliputi batasan Partisipasi Masyarakat, Kesukarelaan, Kaderisasi kolektif, Pemberdayaan, dan aksi, dan Peningkatan kemampuan masyarakat. Penurunan stunting merupakan bagian dari pembangunan daerah, sementara Kabupaten Sukabumi dianggap sebagai daerah yang menjadi bagian integral dari upaya keras pemerintah dalam memerangi stunting. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa program pembangunan dalam penurunan stunting membutuhkan lebih banyak keterlibatan negara dan masyarakat. Peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat dapat didorong dengan membangun kemampuan masyarakat untuk berpartisipasi lebih banyak dalam proses kolaboratif.

**Kata kunci:** Pemberdayaan Masyarakat; Pengurangan Stunting; Tata Kelola Pemerintahan Kolaboratif.

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of quality public service delivery, health is an important aspect that needs to be strengthened sustainably in an area. A presence and intervention of the government are crucial, especially in pursuing public health resilience (Senoputra, 2021) in society to ensure proper development progress. One of the critical issues in community development in the health sector is stunting, which the Indonesian government responded by issuing a stunting intervention program. The Stunting Prevention program is consistent with one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the 2nd goal – eliminating hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 and achieving food security. Based on that goal, stunting is a health problem that requires special attention from the government. It is no longer just a simple problem in the development process but identified as one of the global health priorities (Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014; Ssentongo et al., 2021). Although the destructive power of stunting is generally recognized by many countries, the actions that would operationalize its reduction are not quite well understood (Roediger et al., 2020). At the policy level, such action is also recognized as critical in tackling malnutrition for children in society (Puri et al., 2017). However, policy cannot be the only thing that plays an important role considering the role of the relevant stakeholders (Shen et al., 2020).

Specific and sensitive interventions must be implemented to reduce the prevalence of stunting and improve public health. Most specific interventions are related to the health factors of stunting,

while sensitive interventions are considered an effort to reduce stunting rates through the collaboration of various parties responsible for and interested in realizing community welfare (Widianingsih et al., 2018). The example of sensitive interventions is the provision of early childhood education facilities, health services for mothers, children, and adolescent girls, and access to water and sanitation. Building community welfare requires cooperation from various parties to make collaborative efforts in handling stunting (Soakakone et al., 2021).

Stunting, a disorder marked by hindered growth and development in children as a result of inadequate nutrition and recurring illnesses, remains prevalent worldwide due to a blend of socioeconomic, environmental Poverty is a major factor that restricts access sufficient and nourishing food, uncontaminated water, and appropriate sanitation. Impoverished families frequently lack the financial means to provide a nutritionally balanced food, resulting in persistent malnourishment among children. Insufficient maternal nutrition healthcare during pregnancy can lead to low birth weight and inadequate growth in newborns, thus continuing a cycle of starvation and stunting throughout generations.

Moreover, the problem is worsened by the absence of adequate access to highquality healthcare. Children residing in lowincome and rural regions are at a higher risk of experiencing recurrent infections, such as diarrhea and respiratory ailments. These infections can impede the absorption of nutrients and result in stunted growth. Inadequate sanitation and unhygienic

behaviors also contribute to the elevated prevalence of infectious diseases that might hinder growth. Moreover, there is frequently a deficiency in knowledge and instruction regarding appropriate feeding habits for infants and young children, resulting in lessthan-ideal breastfeeding and supplemental stunting, feeding. To tackle comprehensive strategy is needed that encompasses strengthening the nutritional status of both mothers and children, improving the availability of clean water and sanitation facilities, and delivering improved healthcare and education services to disadvantaged groups.

In Indonesia, the pattern collaborative stunting control driven by local governments, particularly at the district/city level, is based on the Eight Convergence Actions mandated by the Ministry of Home Affairs. These eight actions include situation analysis, preparation of action plans, stunting consultations, Regent/Mayor Regulations on village roles, training of human development cadres, stunting data management systems, measurement and publication of stunting, and annual work reviews. These eight actions formally involve several Regional Working Units (SKPD) which must coordinate and work together in planning, implementing, and reporting the results of convergence actions. Moreover, in practice, the implementation of convergence actions also invites other partners to work together, including companies or business owners, academics, the community. However, and implementation of this convergence is more often in the form of inter-regional working units coordination with a more limited role

from other stakeholders or partners, especially in regencies/cities that do not yet have a shared commitment that clearly describes the duties and responsibilities of each actor involved in reducing stunting. Collaborative management of the stunting reduction program remains suboptimal.

Previous research revealed that there are many causes of stunting in Indonesia (Beal et al., 2018), with these various risk factors also have the potential to harm children who are in their infancy or when they are studying (Lestari et al., 2018). According to the 2021 Indonesian Toddler Nutrition Status Survey (SSGBI), the prevalence of stunting is currently still at 24.4 per cent or 5.33 million among children under five years old. Even though the prevalence of stunting has decreased from the previous years, this value is above the standard tolerated by WHO (below 20 per cent). Around 37.2% of toddlers in Indonesia are stunted, that is equivalent to 1 in every 3 Indonesian children (Nengsih & Warastuti, 2020). The prevalence in West Java in 2018 was 29.9% (17.1% for short toddlers and 12.8% for very short toddlers). For Sukabumi Regency, the prevalence of stunting according to the results of Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) in 2018 is about 37.1%, this makes Sukabumi included one of the 13 priority districts/cities for stunting handling in West Java.

Even though there was a decrease in the number of stunting in toddlers in Sukabumi Regency from 2017 - 2020 (10 per cent to 6 per cent), the percentage for the last three years (2018 - 2020) seems to be running stagnant without significant decrease (Wiguna et al., 2022). At the national level, the central government issued

regulations as guidelines for local governments, which have been known as Guidelines for the Implementation of **Integrated Stunting Reduction Interventions** in Regencies/Cities issued by the Ministry of **National** Development Planning/Bappenas, as efforts to reduce stunting rates through specific nutrition interventions and nutrition-sensitive interventions. Stunting prevention policy implemented by the local government of the Sukabumi Regency is carried out through the Sukabumi District Health Office as an element of the regional apparatus in charge of health affairs (Wiguna et al., 2022). Various empirical studies have been carried out related to stunting, especially on the phenomenon of stunting reduction at the village and sub-district levels in Sukabumi (Nengsih & Warastuti, 2020; Rifiana & Agustina, 2018; Utami et al., 2022). While some findings in Sukabumi Regency reveal that with better micronutrients taken in stunted toddlers, the incidence of infection could be lower soon as possible (Asiah et al., 2020). It shows important information that the incidence of infection in stunting toddlers is related to the intake of micronutrients needed to maintain the immune system. This is an interesting gap in reviewing the topic of this research, that although there has been a form of intervention that has been planned on a national scale through the Ministry of National Development Planning, at the local government level, especially in Sukabumi Regency, the stunting prevalence has not changed significantly for the last three years.

Interestingly, various parties in Sukabumi Regency (government and local society) are involved in joint efforts to

address stunting and face the problem of malnutrition in toddlers (Afriani et al., 2022; Febrianti et al., 2022; Riajaya & Munandar, 2020; Wiguna et al., 2022). However, the fact has shown that many elements of society do not understand the importance of the stunting reduction acceleration program. This is reflected in the low level of public knowledge about parenting for children and toddlers, causing the implementation of the stunting reduction acceleration program to be suboptimal (Afriani et al., 2022). This condition shows a practical gap that after the implementation of the national policies, the impacts on stunting reduction and public health fall short of expectation, especially in Sukabumi Regency, West Java. At the operational level, the actors playing a role in overseeing the expected changes are inconspicuous. The presence of the state alone is inadequate to reduce stunting prevalence, so it has to collaborate and synergize with the various actors involved.

One of the limited roles or participation in convergence action is by a community in particular areas. By design, convergence action can only be successful with the support of community engagement, especially in stunting counselling and fostering human development cadres. Stunting counselling is carried out in a participatory manner starting from the village level, while human development cadres are representatives from community who are selected or assigned by the village as cadres who support stunting Even reduction programs. communities have strong interest in solving stunting, their role in convergence action is often insignificant because of their lack of knowledge and weak power to determine

their affairs. The community is less able to communicate interests and encourage program initiatives, so their level of participation is limited to formality and requiring encouragement from the authority. With a limited quality of community participation, convergence action remains to be perceived as the government agenda and not a stunting management strategy shared by community and other actors.

Increasing the significance of the community's role is a critical step in realizing a collaborative stunting reduction program. With village funds, people in villages can develop initiatives to solve their own problems, including those related to stunting. Transforming convergence action from an initial mandate from the Ministry of Home Affairs into a collective strategy owned collectively requires a major role from the community. This is what drives the need for an empowerment strategy or model that increases community capacity and their role in collaborative governance such as stunting reduction convergence actions. It is this strategy or model that is the focus of this research. Stakeholders in collaboration need to create shared values and declare a stronger commitment to quality collaborative governance (Afandi et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2019).

In developing a community empowerment model that supports collaborative governance, this research draws on empirical studies in Sukabumi District. In 2018, the prevalence of stunting and stunting under five in Sukabumi Regency reached 41.4 (BPS, 2020), higher than the national average. This has made the district one of the areas that must focus on

reducing stunting rates, including through sensitive interventions that involve many parties. One of the efforts made in Sukabumi Regency was carried out by the local Community and Village Empowerment Service (DPMD), namely by assisting Human Development Cadres (HDC). HDC in the district formed a forum in the form of a non-profit organization of cadres. By forming an organization, HDC can engage in a collaborative process of handling stunting, not only as an individual but also collectively.

Collective steps are an important part of the community empowerment process. Empowering the community to have the capacity and opportunity is important in increasing their participation in the collaborative process of reducing stunting (Bogale et al., 2018). Therefore, a strategy to empower the community, especially HDCs, needs to be formulated. This research focuses on gathering information related to community empowerment based on case studies on the participation of HDC in the Sukabumi District in handling stunting. Then based on the results of the empirical studies, a community empowerment model will be formulated. The model is focused on the empowerment strategy to increase the locals' capacity to engage in collaborative governance. This study aims to develop a community empowerment model as the application of collaborative governance in the process of intervening in reducing stunting in the Sukabumi district, west Java Indonesia.

Reduced domination of development and increased involvement of stakeholders raises the importance of the

concept of governance. The governance process allows for continuous interaction society between and the state development. The application of the concept of governance will incorporate elements that were often said to be outside the public policy process, namely civil associations, private sector organizations, community groups, and social movements. Thus, the concept of governance shows relationship between civil society and government, between those who regulate and those who are regulated, and between those who are governed and those who rule (Bianchi et al., 2021; Douglas et al., 2020). For this reason, the governance process is said to be successful if it meets the indicators of good governance, namely: participatory, consensus oriented. accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient.), equitable and inclusive (equality and inclusion), and follows the rule of law (following legal provisions).

In the concept of governance, the role of stakeholders is very important. Stakeholders are parties who are influenced, influence, and carry out development, including in the aspect of public health (Colarič-Jakše & Ambrož, 2015; Godakandage et al., 2017; Puri et al., 2017). The involvement of all stakeholder groups is to improve the quality of public decisions and avoid conflicts in the development process. The involvement of stakeholders results in public institutions no longer voicing the interests of the government alone, but are controlled by the spirit of prioritizing the interests of the community, and this is very much needed in social innovation (Ibrahim, 2017). Thus, governance facilitates the occurrence of

cooperation among stakeholders in making decisions that are carried out in a formal, consensus-oriented manner through negotiation.

Good governance in planning is an effort to transform perceptions through dialogue to gain consensus from the participation of stakeholders. Participation arises when there is trust and involvement of stakeholders in the collaborative planning process. Good governance in planning places more emphasis on process, more as a learning model which seeks to change perceptions and desires to become more fundamental, and the relationship between moral and cognitive is established at every level (Gupta et al., 2017; Hatipoglu et al., 2016). However, the involvement of the government as a stakeholder is often unavoidable, especially in developing countries, because planning activities require financial resources that are usually owned by the government, although, in essence, planning can occur in a community group involving actors between different administrative areas to solve the problems faced without the involvement of the government.

The of dominance certain stakeholders must be avoided if the governance paradigm that emphasizes the collaborative process is implemented. Consensus needs to be agreed upon by the parties who have a dialogue because there is economic inequality and social status which is a reality in society. If the process of involvement of stakeholders in collaborative governance is well managed, then this can be a trigger in creating the strengthening of confidence cycle, commitment, understanding, communication, and results.

This condition is an indicator of the success of collaborative government (Ansell & Gash, 2017).

Although the practice of the collaboration process has been carried out in various forms, such as Co-Management, Public Participation, and Alternative Dispute Resolution, and has been carried out in various places (Ansell & Gash, 2017; Douglas et al., 2020), the theory of collaborative planning is still doubtful of its effectiveness, both because of the process and ideological foundation. Collaborative processes are difficult to be applied completely (Douglas et al., 2020; Torfing, 2018; Colarič-Jakše & Ambrož, 2015) because it is a process that has a lot of demands and it requires a lot of time, providing low-certainty results, and lack of commitment from stakeholders due to the potential for disputes that occur between Furthermore, groups. free public involvement and obstacles to overcome problems common a conceptual impossibility.

To increase the collaborative process, many factors such as participation, equality, and competence of the actors involved are needed (Ulibarri & Scott, 2017; Vangen et al., 2015). Participation referred to in the collaborative process is the actual participation (citizen power) in the ladder of participation which consist of Partnership, Delegated Power, and Citizen Control, where the community has the power to plan, implement and supervise. In terms of planning public decision-making, the level of high participation is seen from the involvement of the actors in decisionmaking, which means they are not only present and vote, but their voices dominate

the final decision. In general, the level of high participation arises in society that has run the democratic system. Second is the understanding of equality of power. The existence of equality of power means that there are no strata, every actor who has a dialogue is not blocked by the hierarchical boundary, and there is mutual respect. Third is the notion of competence. Competency is communication ability. This is necessary because the dialogue that occurs must be a form of consensus-oriented communication so it requires actors who have optimal motivation, perception, and communication behaviour.

The commitment of stakeholders is related to the rationality that underlies their decision to participate. For stakeholders, market rationality is often the basis of decision-making, so if they do not provide benefits for them, they will decide not to participate. Market rationality is based on "possessive individualism" (Hatipoglu et al., 2016; Purnomo et al., 2021), which could imply on individuals are assumed to be the compiler of society, and their satisfaction of material needs is the main reason for the community to live in social groups.

Collaborative-based development will consider physical and social variables. Collaborative development requires that stakeholders have active roles and contributions ranging from planning, implementing, supervising, controlling, and evaluating. Therefore, stakeholders need to have the same perception and be able to work together so that the vision of development can be achieved (Colarič-Jakše & Ambrož, 2015; Saito & Ruhanen, 2017; Scott et al., 2019). The success of collaborative-based development is no

longer only seen in the achievement of goals (effectiveness) and utilization of resources (efficiency) but also seen in how the achievement process is carried out. This view is based on the thought that development is for people who understand what they need, so development needs to be seen from the perspective of the government and the community.

The collaborative process is described as a cycle in a Collaborative Governance Model, with the process stages as shown above: (1) face-to-face dialogue, which is a negotiation based on good faith (good fight negotiation), (2) building trust (trust building); (3) commitment to the (commitment process to process), characterized by an acknowledgement of interdependence, sharing processes, openness to explore mutual benefits; (4) building a shared understanding, with a clear defining common problems, identifying shared values; and (5) produce intermediate results. In this process, there are three core contingency factors namely time, trust, and interdependence, where there is an interactive impact between trust interdependence. Interdependence fosters participation and commitment to more meaningful collaborations, and trust can be built in situations of high interdependence (Johnston et al., 2010). Previous scholars (Ansell & Gash, 2017; Ansell et al., 2020; Ansell & Trondal, 2018) add the accountability aspect and explain the collaborative process through the trustbuilding and commitment to process phases, in which this process normally occurs in collaboration.

Empowerment as a process of developing, becoming independent, and

strengthens self-help, the bargaining position of the grassroots community against pressure forces in all fields and of life. The concept sectors empowerment (village communities) can also be understood from two perspectives. First, empowerment is interpreted in the context of placing the standing position of society. The position of society is not the object of beneficiaries (beneficiaries) who depend on gifts from outside parties such as the government, but rather in the position of subjects (acting agents or participants) who act independently. Acting independently does not mean being released from state responsibility. The provision of public (health, education, services housing, transportation, and so on) to the public is of course a given duty (obligation) of the state. An independent society as a participant means an open space and capacity to develop creative potential, control the environment and its resources, solve problems independently, and participate in political determining the process strengthening governance. Thus, communities could also participate in the process of development and governance (Ansell et al., 2020; Douglas et al., 2020; Pradesa et al., 2022).

Minister of Home **Affairs** regulations Number 7 of 2007 concerning Community Empowerment Cadres, Article 1 paragraph 8 explains that community empowerment is a strategy used in community development as an effort to realize capability and independence in the life of society, nation, and state. The core meaning of community empowerment is a strategy to realize the ability independence of the community.

Community empowerment aims to enable and become independent of the community, especially from poverty and underdevelopment/inequality/ powerlessness.

Poverty can be seen from the indicators of meeting basic needs that are not sufficient/proper. The basic needs include food, clothing, housing, health, education, and transportation. While under development, for example, low productivity, weak human resources, limited access to land even though dependence on the agricultural sector is still strong, and weakening very local/traditional markets because they are used to supply international trade needs. In other words. the problem of underdevelopment is structural (policy) and Several strategies cultural. be considered and then implemented in community empowerment, including (1) Creating a climate, strengthening power, and protecting. (2) Rural Development Program.

Community empowerment can be carried out by many elements: government, universities. non-governmental organizations, the press, political parties, donor agencies, civil society actors, or local community organizations themselves. The government bureaucracy is of course very strategic because it has many extraordinary advantages and strengths compared to other elements: it has funds, a lot of apparatus, and the authority to make legal frameworks and policies for providing public services. If an HDC has been formed in each village, then the HDC partnership and the village administration need to be encouraged to jointly carry out community empowerment.

When partnerships can accelerate community's economic stability, functioning village effective of the (local political government system), exemplary leaders (local elites), and active community participation, then community's ability and independence in development will be realized properly.

### **METHOD**

This study aims to describe the existing phenomena, particularly concerning the process and level of participation in the community collaboration process to reduce stunting in Sukabumi Regency. It uses a qualitative approach, namely inductive paradigm to decribe phenomena at the field and interpret it in a tentative model. It generates tentative theoretical framework based on interviews and the other included materials. Based on the research objectives, this research uses the case study method, specifically Illustrative case study, to answer about research question that describes the dynamics of the collaborative governance process in the stunting reduction program in Sukabumi Regency. The main objective of the qualitative analysis using the case study method is to identify and classify certain phenomena, with meanings characteristics of an object that are unknown or known but there is no satisfactory explanation about it. A case study is opinion based and highly designed to provoke a potentially reasonable debate. There is no right or wrong answer in this case study. Case studies in research methodology also consist of a literature review, in which it focuses on the research process by the researcher when collecting all available data

through historical documents. Also, materials produced by the people involved in the case studies are primary to gain insight into their lives and experiences. While field research as part of a case study involves participating in interviews and observations directly.

Primary data which is used in this study obtained directly from the relevant key informants, who are considered to understand and involved with the stunting problems in the Sukabumi regency. Primary data were obtained from interviews conducted with key informants for this study such as HDC, the Head of the HDC Forum, the village head, the community, the DPMD service, the Health Service, and the DP3A service. While observation was conducted in this study to reveal the truth in real conditions or circumstances around Sukabumi regency based on research focus. Based on the data analysis, empowerment model that encourages capacity building and participation in collaborating for stunting reduction in Sukabumi Regency developed in this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings show that the stunting convergence process has been carried out. Convergence is an effort to ensure that all stunting reduction interventions reach their targets. In reducing stunting, the central, provincial, district or city, and village governments have their respective roles in carrying out their duties to reduce stunting. In the context of Framework 8 Integration Actions at the District or City Level It is an instrument in the form of activities to increase the integration of interventions in reducing stunting. The implementation of

convergence actions to reduce stunting is carried out through the implementation of 8 (eight) convergence actions, namely (1) situation analysis, (activity plan), (3) Stunting consultation, (4) Role of regulation of mayor in Village, (5) Development of Human Development Cadres, (6) Data Management System, (7) Stunting Data Measurement and Publication, and (8) Annual Performance Review.

The implementation of 8 stunting interventions is carried out by the SKPD which is given the authority related to stunting. Of the 8 actions that have a role in reducing stunting, they are from Bappeda, DPMD, and the Health Regional Office. The 3 SKPDs have their respective roles in implementing the 8 stunting interventions. In the context of the research area conducted in Sukabumi Regency, based on the findings of the data for stunting in Sukabumi district, moderate stunting based on the 2018 Riskesdas data shows a value of 21.9%, achieving moderate convergence. Regulatory support is available, such as the regional action plan for the prevention and treatment of stunting for 2018-2021 through Perpub no. 92 of 2018 and the decision of the regent of Sukabumi regarding the locus of editing. Based on the findings in the field the current conditions implementation of the stunting interventions based on the results of interviews with Bappeda, DPMD, and the Health Office provide an overview of the process of reducing stunting that has been carried out properly and also that the 8 implementation of the stunting interventions has been coordinated with stakeholders related to reducing stunting in Sukabumi Regency.

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The contribution and role of stakeholders in reducing stunting have had a very good impact on districts/cities. Each region has different stakeholder characteristics. The multi-stakeholders are (1) Central/provincial/district government,

(2) District SKPD, (3) Village

Administration, (4) Human Development Cadres (HDC) and Posyandu, (5) NGO, (6) Private, (7) Media, and (8) Academics. Each of the stakeholders above gives their respective roles according to the duties and functions of each stakeholder. The roles can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Role of Stakeholders in Reducing Stunting

No.	Stakeholders	Roles
1	Central/provincial/district government	Regulation, budget allocation, monitoring
2	District Government Agency	Coordination, task and function executors, village monitoring, technical executors, cadre facilitators
3	Village Government	Allocation of village funds, Cadre facilitators, and Village regulations
4	Human Development Cadres (HDC) and Posyandu (Family Planning - Integrated Health Service Center)	Technical executor, accommodating the aspirations of the community
5	Non-Governmental Organization	Technical Support
6	Private Sector	Physical and material assistance
7	Media	Information dissemination
8	Academics	Research and training

Sources: developed in this study

In the stakeholder analysis, there are main roles, supporting roles, and key roles in stakeholders. This can be seen from the implementation of reducing stunting. As for stakeholders who have main, key, and supporting roles as shown in the table below:

Table 2. Distribution of the roles of stakeholders in reducing stunting

NO.	Stakeholder	Remarks
1	Central/provincial/district government	Primary Stakeholders
2	District Government Agency in Sukabumi	Key Stakeholders
3	Village government in Sukabumi district	Key Stakeholders
4	Human Development Cadres (HDC) and Posyandu (Family Planning - Integrated Health Service Center)	Key Stakeholders
5	Non-Governmental Organization	Secondary Stakeholders
6	Private Sector	Secondary Stakeholders
7	Media	Secondary Stakeholders
8	Academics	Secondary Stakeholders

Sources: developed in this study

Table 2 shows that three key stakeholders are well recognized in efforts to reduce stunting in Sukabumi Regency, namely the District Government Agency, Village Government, Human Development Cadres (HDC) and Posyandu (Family Planning - Integrated Health Service Center). These three stakeholders play an important role in strengthening the reduction of stunting. HDCs, whom are mostly adolescents and adults, have great potential in fostering public understanding of the importance of reducing stunting Sukabumi Regency. Based on data in Sukabumi Regency, findings reveal good relationships have been established between stakeholders supporting in stunting interventions in each aspect. For the research area in Sukabumi Regency, the aspect of development partners has a large contribution compared to other aspects.

Several things must be considered in the Community Empowerment process, such as limitations of community participation, volunteering and collective regeneration, empowerment and action and increasing community capabilities. Reducing stunting is part of regional development. With current development encouraging involvement of the government and the village community, reducing stunting will also be more effective if it involves the community. Increasing the role of the community can be realized by building their capabilities to participate more in the collaborative process. The implementation of convergence actions needs to be accompanied by community empowerment efforts. Based on the above notes, a conceptual model was developed as follows:

Stunting limited Increased **Reduction Policies** community community participation capabilities Collaborative Outcomes Governance **Empowerment** Volunteering and collective Multiple Actors and Cadres action Related to Stunting Reduction

Figure 1. Society Empowerment Model

Sources: authors

Based on the model above, an operational explanation of the variables of each element can be carried out so that the

implementation process is easier for stakeholders to understand.

## **Limited Community Participation**

It is said to be a limitation because the majority of people who become Human Development Cadres are people who are also other cadres in the village. The composition of community participation in all villages in Sukabumi Regency has totaled 382 people (one person per village). The majority of HDCs are female, but the HDC Forum chairpersons are men and some HDCs have previous experience as posyandu and PNPM cadres. When this happens, there will be a lack of representation from the community in participatory processes.

## Volunteering and collective regeneration

In line with the limitations of community participation previously been conveyed, it turns out that in terms of community involvement in the village, the existing composition voluntary and/or appointed by the village head. In this case, there is a mix between voluntary and driven by village officials as government representatives at the village level. Many HDCs are experienced as cadres for other government programs such as Posyandu and PNPM. This causes the community's representation participatory process to be lacking. The role of HDC is mostly regulated by the government, with the main task measuring and reporting as part of monitoring the progress of stunting reduction. Determination of the role of HDC by the government places HDC as a 'voluntary' extension of the government. Participation like this is only a formality (tokenism/instrumental). However, HDC in Sukabumi District formed the HDC Forum

which is a community-based organization. The forum opens opportunities for HDC to act collectively as an organization, thereby increasing their bargaining power in interacting with the government. The existence of the HDC forum has the potential increase the level to participation to a level of public and representative control. However, this is not easy to do. Existing strategies are not sufficient to enhance HDC's capabilities and power in convergence action.

## **Empowerment and Action**

Many of the HDCs are experienced cadres, have become posyandu cadres, etc., who later formed the HDC Forum which is a community-based organization, which it is hoped will open up opportunities for HDCs to act collectively as an organization so that it can increase their bargaining power in interacting with the government. The existence of the HDC forum has the potential to increase the level participation to a level of public and representative control. However, this is not easy to do. Existing strategies are not sufficient to enhance HDC's capabilities and power in convergence action. Some of the actions in the convergence framework involve HDC directly so that it also becomes a learning process for them (Action 1 of situational analysis, Action 2 of program planning, Action 3 of stunting consultation). Then Action 4 is the development of HDC cadres, in the form of training organized by the Health Office which of course has something to do with increasing community capabilities.

## **Increasing Community Capability**

Reducing stunting is part of development. regional With current development encouraging the involvement of the government and the village community, reducing stunting will also be more effective if it involves the community. Increasing the role of the community can be realized by building their capabilities to participate more in the collaborative process. The implementation of convergence actions needs be accompanied by community empowerment efforts. In Sukabumi Regency, training and technical assistance for HDC have been held annually. Through the Health Office and the Village Community **Empowerment** Service, we continue to encourage the village government to support HDC and provide training for the development of HDC Cadres. The Regent Regulations in Sukabumi Regency provide a legal basis for the participation of HDC. Apart from that, HDCs independently also do various things to improve their capabilities as HDCs by carrying out various activities, among others, the HDC Forum has been formed which is a community-based organization to strengthen the network of HDCs. Through this forum, HDC does not only participate in convergence actions as an individual but also as an organization so that HDC's interests and ideas can be voiced collectively. Collective movements are normally stronger than individual activities separately, so the presence of the HDC Forum can strengthen HDC's position and voice. The existence of a WhatsApp / Telegram group as an inter-HDC communication network also facilitates the

circulation of information that can increase HDC knowledge.

Strengthening community capacity is an important part of collaborative governance in reducing stunting. With improved capacity, the community is not only a follower of local government instructions in the convergence action process but can also use their ideas and initiatives to actively participate in driving the collaborative process that occurs. Community capacity building can be done formally or informally. Formal methods are carried out through training and technical guidance, while informal methods are carried out through a process of continuous that builds interaction community knowledge about stunting convergence. This interaction process can occur face-toface or indirectly through group chats. The HDC Forum that was formed in Sukabumi District is also an example of collective capacity building because by being organized, people learn to participate and build communication skills. In general, collective capacity building can follow the 3C Model from previous author (Ibrahim, 2017) which starts with building awareness (conscientization) of the reality being faced. In stunting convergence, the community needs to understand the meaning, impact, and strategies to reduce stunting. Apart from that, they also need to be aware of their conditions, including stunting and health in general, their potential, and the problems they face. With this awareness, the community can begin to map out how to solve problems.

Second, building the community's collective capacity through the conciliation stage, when the community realizes that

reducing stunting cannot be done individually but through conciliation. Through a conciliation process, community deliberated to resolve the existing differences and then agreed together to reduce the prevalence of stunting in their village. In collaboration, this conciliation step in increasing collective capacity is actually in line with the unification of a common vision. The third step in building collective capacity is collaboration (collaboration). At this stage, the community realizes that solving the stunting problem cannot be solved by the community alone, but there needs to be a collaboration with other parties from outside the community, this includes SKPD and the private sector. Realizing the importance of this, the public will realize why it is necessary to reduce stunting through With convergence action. collective capacity building through three stages of Conscientization, Conciliation, and Collaboration (Ibrahim. 2017). the government in Sukabumi Regency as a stunting reduction facilitator needs to provide training not only related to knowledge about stunting itself but also the need for training programs that make them aware of the importance of conciliation, cooperation and collaboration in reducing stunting. This collective capacity-building process also needs to be supported by community participation in the whole process.

## **Collaborative Governance**

Convergence action originally belonged to the central government as initiator and regulator while local governments acted as executors at the operational level. Collaboration that is mandated has not yet reached the maximum level of collaborative governance because other actors who do not receive a direct mandate tend to be passive. Creating a sense of shared ownership of the collaboration carried out in reducing stunting could be built up through the direct involvement of other actors. This stunting reduction program needs to be discussed together so that each stakeholder has a concern to make this program successfully implemented. There must be a strong commitment among stakeholders, as well as a clear division of tasks and responsibilities, this applies not only to district government apparatus but also other stakeholders. implementation of this stunting reduction program will be maximized with a large commitment from stakeholders other than the government, and together with other parties the collaboration process can be carried out. The collaborative governance process in the stunting reduction program is expected to provide greater outputs and benefits by maximizing the roles of the actors or stakeholders involved.

## **Other Actors**

The involvement of other actors directly in the entire stunting reduction process, starting from decision-making, program planning, and implementation, to monitoring and evaluation will get better results. Involvement in the process of decision-making and program planning is important because it will make collaboration accommodative. In Sukabumi Regency, it is believed that the increasing awareness of the community to participate in tackling stunting, including adolescents, has a great

opportunity to which is to prevent stunting from being done as early as possible (Afriani et al., 2022; Febrianti et al., 2022).

#### **Policies**

Existing policies followed by the role of village government in reducing stunting are important. Where the village government can allocate a budget from village funds for handling stunting and strengthening village institutions. With village institutions as actors who play a role in changing community behaviour to become healthier, support from the village government is useful in developing and strengthening village institutions and HDC. Through village regulations, a village head facilitate stunting reduction allocating village budget funds, making village regulations on stunting reduction, providing incentives to HDC, and providing facilities for Posyandu and PAUD. The Village Head can also use his leadership capacity to influence the community to adopt healthy living behaviours and encourage activities that support stunting reduction.

### **Outcomes**

entire collaborative The governance in the program of reducing stunting at the district government Sukabumi is considered a process to achieve desired outcome for supporting sustainable development goals. The benefits of this program are not only stunting reduction but also changes in the mindset, attitudes and behaviour individuals in society regarding the impact of stunting. In the long term, a reduction in stunting can have a positive impact on

improving one's quality of life and increasing welfare.

This result goes beyond simply reducing the prevalence of stunting as it also includes long-term societal well-being. Community empowerment is also part of the process as well as the expected outcome of the convergence action being carried out. From studies in the field, several obstacles arise in strengthening the implementation of collaborative governance obstacles in HDC empowerment in the Sukabumi Regency. there are different views government officials on the HDC Forum. On the one hand, the HDC Forum is seen as a threat to the government because of their negotiations in changing the use of village funds. On the other hand, the HDC Forum is considered an important part of driving convergence action because HDC is a key actor. Second, the difficulties in negotiating with the government have made it difficult for the HDC Forum to finance its activities. Sources of budget from non-governmental organizations are still very limited. Third, the incentives currently being given to HDC vary in amount, with an average of under IDR 300,000 per month. Considering the transportation needs in Sukabumi Regency, this amount is not enough. Fourth, HDC training focuses on stunting measurement and reporting techniques, so it has not been focused on how to improve broader community capabilities such management and organization. Fifth, HDC is considered by the government as a of representative the community. Meanwhile, the community considers HDC to be an extension of the government. This condition confirms the volunteer's position, in this case, the HDC, as a 'straddler' which

is a difficult position. They do not get full support from the government and are often seen as apathetic by society. Sixth, as a result, the reduction of stunting which requires public awareness of a healthier lifestyle is less efficient in being disseminated by HDC to members of the community in their villages.

### **CONCLUSION**

study yielded significant This empirical findings that are valuable for researchers and policymakers in relation to the stunting reduction program. Firstly, it is crucial to acknowledge that Human Development Cadres (HDC) serves as a manifestation of societal convergence action, although its makeup remains inadequately representative. As a crucial player in the efforts to reduce stunting in Sukabumi Regency, HDC's participation in convergent action is highly necessary and serves as an extension of the local government. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that HDC Forum has the potential to create chances for society to engage in collective negotiation and action, so ensuring that valuable voices are acknowledged.

Furthermore, another discovery indicates that increased participation might result in improved management of the stunting reduction program. Although the representative's performance is subpar, the current empowering procedure is still insufficient. Several hurdles were noted in the HDC discussion, including reluctance among government officials and a restricted budget. It is important to acknowledge that HDC operates independently from the government. However, HDC is sometimes

tasked with representing the government in addressing issues related to programs aimed at reducing stunting. Collaboration among stakeholders is essential for implementing the community empowerment model to reduce stunting prevalence in Sukabumi Regency. Strengthening the program's collaborative governance is crucial. By utilizing collaborative actor mechanisms, the community empowerment process can enhance the role of development actors in society, particularly in their interactions with other convergence players, despite the existing constraints.

Recommendation of this study are the need to improve the empowerment process that focuses on building the capabilities of the community in Sukabumi Regency as a whole, not just measuring and reporting stunting techniques. By not only limited to stunting convergence action programs, Integrating HDC into village development process bring more benefit would among stakeholders. The need for integration of HDC into village development more broadly, is not only limited to stunting convergence action programs. There is sense of urgency for government openness towards community-based organizations, so that the HDC Forum could be considered as a form of empowerment (increasing community control over the development process) in Sukabumi Regency.

Overall, the analysis identified the most influential actors in the policy landscape for technical support for stunting reduction in Sukabumi District. The information revealed from the results of this study may be useful for targeting empowerment efforts at a larger scale such

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as at the provincial and national levels to produce a conducive policy environment to support, promote and protect stunting reduction programs as an important part of sustainable development in Indonesia. However, various forms of empowerment in the community must later be directed at strategic support for stunting reduction in high-level operational policy documents.

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