



LITERATURE STUDY: EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED STUNTING PREVENTION POLICIES

Sri Wahyuningsih, Joyce Angela Yunica, Vivi Oktari*

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Pembina Palembang, Jln Jendral Jl. Bambang Utoyo No.179, 5 Ilir, Ilir Timur II, Palembang, South Sumatra 30115, Indonesia

*vivioktari26@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Stunting in children under five remains a significant public health problem in Indonesia and has long-term implications for human capital development. Community based stunting prevention policies play a crucial role in addressing this issue, particularly at the local level. This study aimed to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of community-based stunting prevention programs in the Palembang region using a literature review approach. Relevant articles were obtained from national and international databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, Science Direct, and the Garuda Portal, limited to publications from 2019 to 2024. Selected articles were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis to identify key aspects of program implementation, supporting factors, and barriers. The findings indicate that community-based stunting prevention programs in Palembang have generally been implemented in accordance with national policies and have contributed positively to improving child nutritional status. Program effectiveness was strongly supported by the active involvement of health workers and community health cadres, locally adapted intervention innovations, and cross-sectoral collaboration. However, several challenges remain, including logistical constraints, inconsistent monitoring systems, limited family participation, and suboptimal communication strategies. In conclusion, strengthening community engagement, enhancing program sustainability, and improving monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to optimize the impact of community-based stunting prevention programs and ensure sustainable stunting reduction at the local level.

Keywords: community based program; Palembang; program evaluation; stunting; stunting prevention

How to cite (in APA style)

Wahyuningsih, S., Yunica, J. A., & Oktari, V. (2026). Literature Study: Evaluation of Community-Based Stunting Prevention Policies. *Indonesian Journal of Global Health Research*, 8(3), 401–406. <https://doi.org/10.37287/ijghr.v8i3.1267>.

INTRODUCTION

Stunting among children under five remains a major public health problem in Indonesia and poses significant long-term consequences for the quality of human resources. Stunting not only impairs physical growth but also adversely affects cognitive development, learning capacity, and productivity in adulthood (UNICEF, 2023; Victora et al., 2021; WHO, 2023). Children who experience stunting are more likely to have lower academic achievement, reduced work capacity, and increased susceptibility to chronic diseases later in life, thereby contributing to a greater social and economic burden at both household and national levels (Prendergast & Humphrey, 2021; Victora et al., 2021).

Globally, the reduction in stunting prevalence has progressed at a relatively slow pace. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that current trends remain insufficient to meet the Global Nutrition Targets 2025, which aim for a 40% reduction in stunting (WHO, 2023). This situation highlights the need to strengthen existing interventions, particularly through sustainable community-based approaches that address local determinants of child growth (UNICEF, 2021; WHO, 2023).

In Indonesia, stunting is a multifactorial condition influenced by inadequate nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life, suboptimal caregiving practices, limited access to quality health services, and poor environmental sanitation (Bappenas, 2020; Ministry of Health RI, 2024; Torlesse et al.,

2021). Socioeconomic factors, including parental education level and household income, also play a critical role in determining children's nutritional status and overall health outcomes (Torlesse et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2023).

In response to these challenges, the Indonesian government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at accelerating stunting reduction through a multisectoral convergence approach involving health, education, social welfare, and community empowerment sectors (Bappenas, 2020; Ministry of Health RI, 2022). These programs include nutrition-specific interventions, such as supplementary feeding and routine growth monitoring, as well as nutrition-sensitive interventions focusing on sanitation improvement, access to clean water, and family nutrition education (Ministry of Health RI, 2024; UNICEF, 2021).

However, evidence from recent studies suggests that the success of stunting prevention programs largely depends on the quality of implementation at the local level, particularly within primary healthcare facilities and community settings (Putri et al., 2023; Aria Phitra et al., 2023; Wahyuningsih & Yunica, 2025). Active involvement of health workers and community health volunteers (posyandu cadres), along with strong intersectoral coordination, has been identified as a key determinant of effective program delivery (Rizal et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, innovative and context-specific program strategies have been shown to improve community compliance and enhance the effectiveness of nutrition interventions (Hafizah, 2025; Lay et al., 2024).

Despite these efforts, several persistent barriers continue to limit program effectiveness. These include logistical challenges in the distribution and monitoring of supplementary food, limited parental participation, and inadequate communication strategies at the community level (Rahayu, 2024; Ministry of Health RI, 2022). In addition, many evaluations of stunting prevention programs remain descriptive in nature and fail to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing policy effectiveness at the district or city level (Snyder, 2021; Page et al., 2021; Widayati et al., 2025).

These challenges are also evident in Palembang City. Data from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia indicate that the prevalence of stunting in Palembang decreased by 14% in 2024, while the national stunting prevalence declined to 19.8% from 21.5% in the previous year (Ministry of Health RI, 2024). Although this reduction reflects progress, local studies continue to report notable numbers of stunting cases in several primary healthcare centers, including Muliwahana, Makrayu, and Pamanukan, underscoring the need for continuous evaluation of program effectiveness at the community level (Rahayu, 2023; Hafizah, 2024; Rahayu, 2024).

Given this context, evaluating community-based stunting prevention policies is essential to ensure that implemented interventions are responsive to local needs and capable of producing sustainable outcomes. This literature study aims to evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and barriers of stunting prevention programs in the Palembang region based on recent empirical evidence. The findings are expected to inform more targeted policy recommendations, strengthen intersectoral coordination, and enhance community participation in achieving sustainable stunting reduction (WHO, 2023; UNICEF, 2023).

METHOD

This study employed a literature review design to evaluate community-based stunting prevention policies and programs implemented in the Palembang region. Relevant articles were systematically identified from national and international scientific databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and the Garuda Portal, as well as official reports from government and international organizations (Snyder, 2021; Page et al., 2021).

The literature search was limited to publications published between 2019 and 2024 to ensure the use of recent and relevant evidence related to stunting prevention and program evaluation. Keywords used in the search process included stunting, stunting prevention programs, program evaluation, community-based intervention, and Palembang (World Health Organization, 2023).

Articles were selected based on predefined inclusion criteria, namely relevance to stunting prevention policy evaluation, availability of full-text articles, and clear methodological reporting. Studies that did not focus on community-based interventions or lacked sufficient data were excluded. A total of selected articles meeting these criteria were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach to identify key patterns related to program implementation, supporting factors, and implementation barriers (Braun & Clarke, 2021; UNICEF, 2023).

RESULT

Based on the literature review of community-based stunting prevention programs and policies implemented in the Palembang region and comparable settings, the findings were synthesized into three main thematic areas: program implementation, supporting factors for program effectiveness, and barriers and constraints in program execution. These themes emerged consistently across the selected studies and reflect critical aspects influencing the success of stunting prevention efforts at the local level (Braun & Clarke, 2021; UNICEF, 2023).

The analysis revealed that stunting prevention programs in Palembang were generally implemented through primary healthcare facilities, particularly community health centers (puskesmas), with a strong emphasis on nutrition-specific interventions such as supplementary feeding, growth monitoring, and nutrition education for parents. Studies conducted at the Makrayu Community Health Center reported the implementation of innovative programs, including the “Dapur Tanggap Gercep Besti” initiative, which combined supplementary feeding, parental education, and regular monitoring of child growth. These interventions were found to contribute positively to improvements in children’s nutritional status, although long-term sustainability and consistent follow-up remained areas requiring further strengthening (Hafizah, 2025).

Similar findings were reported in evaluations conducted at the Pamanukan and Multiwahana Community Health Centers. Programs such as daily egg supplementation and routine growth monitoring were shown to be effective in improving short-term nutritional outcomes among stunted children. However, inconsistencies in food distribution and variations in parental compliance affected the uniformity of program implementation across communities (Rahayu, 2024). Despite these challenges, the overall alignment of program activities with national stunting prevention policies indicated that local implementation generally followed established guidelines (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2024).

Supporting factors identified in the literature included the active involvement of healthcare workers and posyandu cadres in early detection, intervention delivery, and community outreach activities. Strong intersectoral coordination among health, education, and social sectors was also found to enhance program effectiveness, particularly in promoting nutrition education and increasing community awareness of stunting prevention practices (Rizal et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2021). Additionally, studies highlighted that context-specific innovations tailored to local needs improved community participation and adherence to nutrition interventions, thereby strengthening program outcomes (Putri et al., 2023; Hafizah, 2025).

Conversely, several barriers were consistently identified across the reviewed studies. Logistical challenges related to the procurement, distribution, and monitoring of supplementary food were among the most frequently reported constraints, limiting the consistency and reach of interventions

(Rahayu, 2024; Ministry of Health RI, 2022). Limited parental participation, particularly among families with lower educational attainment and socio-economic status, was also found to reduce the effectiveness of stunting prevention programs, as adherence to recommended feeding and caregiving practices was often suboptimal (Torlesse et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2021).

Furthermore, inadequate communication strategies and limited responsiveness to community feedback hindered the effective delivery of program information, resulting in gaps in community understanding and engagement. Several studies noted the absence of structured long-term monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which constrained the ability of program implementers to assess sustained impact and make data-driven improvements to existing interventions (Widayati et al., 2025; WHO, 2023).

Overall, the results indicate that while community-based stunting prevention programs in Palembang have contributed to reductions in stunting prevalence, their effectiveness is highly dependent on sustained community engagement, robust monitoring systems, and strong intersectoral collaboration. Addressing identified barriers and strengthening supporting factors are essential to enhancing the long-term impact and sustainability of stunting prevention policies at the local level (UNICEF, 2023; WHO, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this literature review indicate that the implementation of community-based stunting prevention programs in Palembang has generally been aligned with Indonesia's national policy on the acceleration of stunting reduction. Nutrition-specific interventions delivered through primary healthcare facilities, particularly community health centers and integrated service posts, such as growth monitoring, supplementary feeding, and nutrition education for families, were consistently identified as core strategies across the reviewed studies (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024; World Health Organization, 2023).

The success of several locally developed innovations, including community-based nutrition kitchens and supplementary feeding programs utilizing locally available foods, demonstrates that context-specific approaches can enhance the effectiveness of stunting prevention interventions. Community-based strategies facilitate active family involvement and strengthen the role of health cadres, thereby improving the acceptance and sustainability of recommended nutrition and caregiving practices. This finding is consistent with UNICEF's assertion that nutrition interventions are more effective when they are designed in accordance with local socio-cultural and economic contexts (UNICEF, 2021; Putri et al., 2023).

One of the most influential supporting factors identified in this review is the active involvement of healthcare workers and community health cadres in early detection, family assistance, and continuous growth monitoring. Health cadres serve as a crucial link between the formal health system and the community, contributing to improved compliance with nutrition interventions at the household level. This result corroborates previous studies emphasizing that strengthening the capacity and motivation of frontline health workers significantly improves the performance of community nutrition programs (Rizal et al., 2022; Torlesse et al., 2021).

Intersectoral collaboration among the health, education, and social sectors was also found to play an essential role in supporting stunting prevention programs. Such collaboration enables the integration of nutrition-sensitive interventions, including improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as parenting and nutrition education. Both WHO and UNICEF emphasize that sustainable reductions in stunting cannot be achieved through health-sector interventions alone, but rather require coordinated, multisectoral actions that address the underlying determinants of malnutrition (World Health Organization, 2023; UNICEF, 2023).

Despite these positive findings, several challenges continue to limit the overall effectiveness of community-based stunting prevention programs. Logistical constraints, particularly those related to the procurement, distribution, and monitoring of supplementary food, were frequently reported and were found to affect program continuity and coverage. Inconsistent distribution of supplementary food may reduce the nutritional impact of the intervention and undermine community trust in program implementation (Rahayu, 2024; Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Another major barrier identified is the low level of family participation and adherence to recommended infant and young child feeding practices. Factors such as low educational attainment, poor socioeconomic conditions, and limited understanding of stunting and its long-term consequences were consistently associated with reduced compliance. These findings align with previous evidence suggesting that sustained behavioral change requires continuous, participatory, and trust-based communication strategies rather than one-time educational activities (Torlesse et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2021).

In addition, weaknesses in program monitoring and evaluation systems were highlighted, particularly with regard to assessing the long-term impact of interventions on child nutritional status. Limited availability of integrated data systems and insufficient outcome-based evaluations hinder evidence-based program improvement and policy refinement. The World Health Organization underscores the importance of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks as a foundation for data-driven decision-making in stunting prevention policies (World Health Organization, 2023; Widayati et al., 2025).

Overall, this discussion confirms that community-based stunting prevention programs in Palembang have contributed positively to stunting reduction efforts, yet their effectiveness remains highly dependent on sustained community engagement, program continuity, and strong multisectoral coordination. Strengthening the role of health cadres, improving family-centered nutrition education, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems are critical strategies for maximizing program impact and ensuring long-term sustainability. These findings support both national and global policy frameworks that position community-based approaches as a key pillar in accelerating stunting reduction in a sustainable manner (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024; UNICEF, 2023; World Health Organization, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Community-based stunting prevention programs in Palembang have generally contributed positively to improving child nutritional status; however, their effectiveness is strongly influenced by community participation, program innovation, cross-sectoral coordination, and intervention sustainability. Key challenges remain, particularly in the distribution and monitoring of interventions and limited family participation. Therefore, strengthening the role of community health cadres, enhancing family-centered nutrition education, and implementing sustainable evaluation systems are essential to achieve long-term stunting reduction (UNICEF, 2023; World Health Organization, 2023; Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

REFERENCES

- Aria Phitra, D., Sari, R., & Putri, L. (2023). Evaluation of stunting prevention interventions in urban community health centers. *Indonesian Journal of Public Health*, 18(2), 101–115.
- Bappenas. (2020). National strategy for stunting reduction in Indonesia 2020–2024. Jakarta: Bappenas.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis: A practical guide. London: Sage Publications.
- Hafizah, M. (2024). Community-based stunting prevention programs: Evidence from Makrayu Health Center. *Journal of Nutrition and Health*, 12(1), 45–58.

- Hafizah, M. (2025). Innovations in community nutrition interventions for stunting prevention. *Indonesian Journal of Nutrition*, 21(1), 23–36.
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022). Guidelines for integrated stunting prevention programs. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2023). Posyandu handbook for early detection of stunting. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2024). Basic health statistics 2024: Stunting data report. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- Lay, H., Pratama, A., & Suryanto, B. (2024). Effectiveness of context-specific nutrition education for stunting prevention. *Nutrition Research and Practice*, 18(2), 89–101.
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022). Community health policy for stunting reduction. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- Prendergast, A., & Humphrey, J. H. (2021). The stunting syndrome in developing countries. *Pediatrics*, 147(1), e20200302.
- Putri, L., Sari, R., & Ardiansyah, D. (2023). Enhancing local compliance in stunting prevention programs through community engagement. *Public Health Indonesia*, 9(2), 77–88.
- Rahayu, R. S. (2023). Stunting cases and program evaluation at Muliwahana Community Health Center. *Journal of Child Health*, 11(2), 35–44.
- Rahayu, R. S. (2024). Analysis of supplementary feeding programs for stunted toddlers. *Indonesian Journal of Community Health*, 15(1), 12–25.
- Rizal, F., Wulandari, N., & Kusuma, H. (2022). The role of community health cadres in stunting prevention in Indonesia. *Journal of Public Health Development*, 20(2), 101–113.
- Snyder, H. (2021). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339.
- Torlesse, H., et al. (2021). Socioeconomic determinants of child stunting in Indonesia: A multi-level analysis. *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 17(3), e13142.
- UNICEF. (2021). Community-based approaches for stunting prevention: Evidence and policy implications. New York: UNICEF.
- UNICEF. (2023). The state of the world's children 2023: Nutrition report. New York: UNICEF.
- Wahyuningsih, S., & Yunica, A. (2025). Assessment of local government stunting programs in South Sumatra. *Indonesian Journal of Public Policy*, 10(1), 55–68.
- Victora, C. G., et al. (2021). Worldwide effects of stunting on child development and adult productivity. *The Lancet*, 398(10307), 1425–1439.
- Widayati, A., Pramono, H., & Sari, N. (2025). Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for stunting reduction programs in Indonesia. *Journal of Health Policy and Management*, 6(1), 15–27.
- World Health Organization. (2023). Global nutrition targets 2025: Stunting policy brief. Geneva: WHO.
- World Health Organization & UNICEF. (2021). Water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition in child development. Geneva: WHO.
- Rahayu, R. S., & Hafizah, M. (2024). Barriers and facilitators in community-based stunting prevention: Evidence from Palembang. *Indonesian Journal of Nutrition and Public Health*, 13(2), 65–78.