

OPTIMIZING FAMILY RESILIENCE TO PREVENT STUNTING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically changed the order of our lives in various aspects. One of the significant impacts is the increased risk of stunting in children. Stunting is a condition of failure to thrive caused by malnutrition and lack of nutrients over a long period of time. Children who are stunted have a shorter height than other children of their age and tend to experience delays in physical and mental development. Stunting can have a long-term impact on a child's quality of life, including problems with health, education and future productivity. Family resilience has a central role in preventing stunting in children. In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, an appropriate strategy is needed to reduce the occurrence of stunting, especially in Cijujung village, Sukaraja sub-district, Bogor Regency. The strategies are increasing access to nutritious food and providing training on how to generate additional income so that fulfillment of nutritious food can still be carried out, education on nutrition, good sanitation, routine health checks, exclusive breastfeeding and social support can help families prevent stunting in pandemic period. Thus, the role of the family in providing adequate nutrition and supporting the growth and development of children is very important in maintaining a healthy and strong generation in the future.

Keywords: Family Resilience, Stunting, Pandemic COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically changed the order of our lives in various aspects. One of the significant impacts is the increased risk of stunting in children. Stunting is a condition of failure to thrive caused by malnutrition and lack of nutrients over a long period. Children who are stunted have shorter heights than other children of their age and tend to experience delays in physical and mental development. Stunting can have a long-term impact on a child's quality of life, including problems with health, education, and future productivity.

In a pandemic situation like recently, families play an important role in preventing stunting and ensuring their children get adequate nutrition. Therefore, it is important to optimize family resilience to fight stunting during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The handling of stunting must of course be carried out cross-sectorally, not only from the health department. Because stunting is a complex process that requires joint handling, starting from the availability of nutritional intake for mothers and children, education about healthy and prosperous families, education about the importance of toddler nutrition, and knowledge and

understanding of children's growth and development.

The availability of nutritional intake when the mother is pregnant and after the child is born requires a lot of money, while less affluent people cannot buy this nutritious food.

One of the villages in Bogor Regency, namely Cijujung village, Sukaraja sub-district, has a population of 6,601 families where most of the mothers are housewives who do not work. The local potential that exists is that cassava can be turned into oven cassava chips. When these two potentials are combined, the level of social welfare will be even better.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The approach method used in this activity is:

- 1) Participatory Approach
- 2) Organizational approach
- 3) Kinship approach
- 4) An approach based on community character

Described in the flow below:

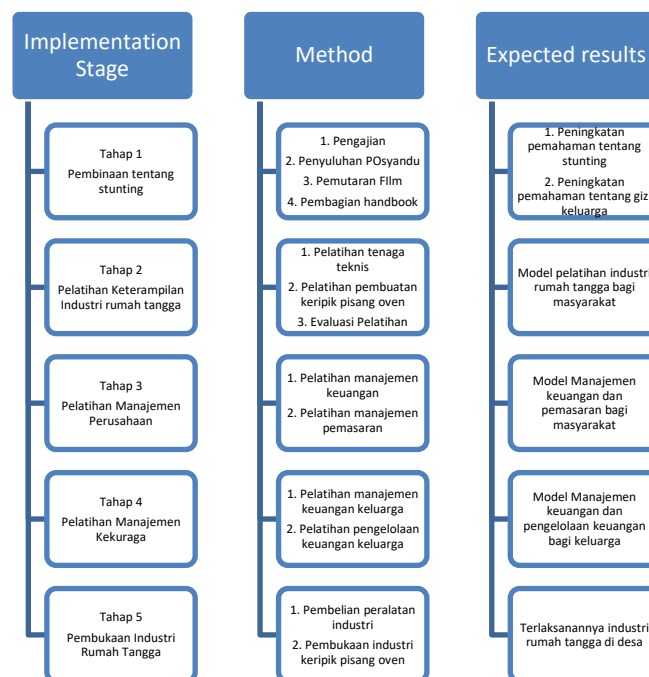


Figure 1: Implementation method

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the social and economic conditions of many families around the world. Significant economic impacts, such as reduced income, unemployment, and decreased access to health services, have exacerbated the stunting problem. Limited resources and difficulties in meeting nutritional needs can cause children to become stunted.

Apart from that, the pandemic has also had an impact on changes in diet and lifestyle. Restrictions on movement and lockdowns make access to nutritious food difficult while the

stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic can affect diet and the quality of nutrition consumed. All of this contributes to the increased risk of stunting amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

This also happened in the village of Cijujung, Sukaraja sub-district. Cijujung Village, Sukaraja sub-district, Bogor Regency is a village located in the Bogor district, West Java province which has an area of 411 Ha. Cijujung Village consists of 14 Community Units (RW), 82 Neighborhood Units (RT), and 5 Hamlets with a population of 25,562 people.

Cijujung Village is a village located in a lowland area with an altitude of approximately 148-179 meters above sea level (masl). Most of the village area is agricultural/paddy/moor land with 100% flat land surface. Most of the area is agriculture with cassava as its main commodity.



Figure 2: Map of the location of Cijujung village

Family resilience has a central role in preventing stunting in children. In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, optimizing family resilience is very important. Family resilience includes aspects such as food availability, food security, access to health services, and knowledge of good nutrition. By strengthening family resilience, we can reduce the risk of stunting and maintain children's health amid a pandemic.

Family Resilience Optimization Strategy

- a. Increasing access to nutritious food: Families need to ensure the availability of sufficient nutritious food at home. However, considering that during the pandemic, many were laid off or experienced a decrease in income, to be able to meet the need for nutritious food, additional income was needed.

Provision of training on how to process cassava into Oven Cassava Chips has been given to the people of Cijujung village, with the hope that housewives can produce and market these oven chips so that they can increase income which in turn will be able to help fulfill nutritious food for the family.

The training does not only extend to production but also family financial management training, and business financial management training so that housewives are expected to be financially independent and able to meet their nutritional needs.

To improve welfare, training is provided on how to produce Oven Cassava Chips. The process and method are:

Materials and tools :

Ingredients: Cassava, cooking oil, whiting, salt, flavoring.

Tools: Plastic tray, knife, oven, filter, stove, stirrer.

How to make :

1. Peel the cassava and then slice it thinly
 2. In a bowl, mix salt and water, stir well, and set aside.
 3. Drain the cassava until dry
 4. Preheat the oven, and arrange the cassava in a baking dish
 5. Bake cassava at medium temperature for 15 minutes
 6. Oven cassava chips are ready to serve.
- b. Education about nutrition and a balanced diet: Families need to understand the importance of nutrition and adopt a balanced diet. They can get nutrition information from reliable sources and ensure that every family member gets food that contains the necessary nutrients, such as protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals. For this reason, counseling was given in Cijujung village about stunting and also about nutrition and a balanced diet.



Figure 3: Extension activities at Posyandu RW 8 Cijujung Village

- c. Improved sanitation and hygiene: Maintaining good hygiene and sanitation at home can help prevent diseases that can affect children's nutritional status. Families need to ensure the cleanliness of the water used for cooking and drinking, wash hands before eating and maintain the cleanliness of the environment around the house.
- d. Routine health checks: families need to keep monitoring the growth and development of children through regular checkups, families can detect early signs of stunting and take appropriate action.
- e. Exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary foods: Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of a child's life is very important to prevent stunting. After that, proper complementary feeding of ASI must also be considered. Families need to understand the importance of breastfeeding and ensure that children get the right food according to their age.
- f. Social and mental support: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of stress and pressure to families. Therefore it is important to have adequate social and mental support. Families can seek support from other family members, neighbors, or available mental health services

Counseling activities regarding Sanitation and hygiene and the importance of exclusive breastfeeding are carried out together with routine health checks carried out at POSYANDU, especially in RW 8. Likewise, social and mental support was given during the counseling.

CONCLUSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, stunting is a serious threat to children. But by optimizing family resilience, we can prevent stunting and maintain children's health. Strategies such as increasing access to nutritious food, providing training on how to generate additional income, education on nutrition, good sanitation, routine health checks, exclusive breastfeeding, and social support can help families prevent stunting during a pandemic. Thus, the role of the family in providing adequate nutrition and supporting the growth and development of children is very important in maintaining a healthy and strong generation in the future.

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