



Public Health Behavior Change Communication Strategies in Accelerating the Reduction of Stunting in North Minahasa Regency

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Abstract

Communication Strategy for Community Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in North Minahasa Regency, through aspects (1) Announcing: socialization and counseling to pregnant women and parents who have children under 5 years old through lectures, presentations and questions and answers. (2) Motivating: Pay attention to nutritional intake, Conduct regular health checks for pregnant women and toddlers, Overcome the problem of children having difficulty eating by providing variants in food, Maintain environmental sanitation, provide education to pregnant and lactating women in the "Hope of the Lover of the Heart" program, Carry out complete vaccination of babies born as recommended. (3) Educating: Education on proper and nutritious eating patterns with the "Fill the Plate" program in a Canteen. Parenting education Education risks the threat of infectious diseases if not using sanitation and clean water. (4) Information Dissemination (Informing): Directly by means of socialization with verbal communication, also using paflet media, posters and videos. (5) Supporting decision making: Supported by the PPKB Office, Health Office, Social Service, PMD, Food Office, Disdukcapil, Private Sector, TP-PKK, TNI. Communication Strategy for Public Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction contributes to increasing public knowledge and sustainable social strengthening through efforts to accelerate stunting reduction.

Introduction

The problem of stunting is a serious concern from the central government to local governments. Stunting is a condition of failure to thrive in children due to chronic malnutrition, so that children are too short for their age. The national stunting case rate is at 27%, while in North Sulawesi Province the figure is at 21%. The Governor of North Sulawesi Province targets the stunting rate to be at 14% by 2024 (Yadika et al., 2019).

Stunting cases are also a problem in North Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province. In 2018, North Minahasa Regency became an area with a high stunting prevalence category in North Sulawesi with a rate of 35.44%. In January – March 2022, the number of stunting cases in North Minahasa reached 288 cases. The local government is committed to accelerating stunting reduction in North Minahaa Regency (Between, 2022). Accelerating stunting reduction requires integrated and sustainable interventions. Involving cross-sectors and priority groups can improve child nutrition and development as well as stunting prevention. Efforts to reduce the number of stunting cases are carried out by stunting prevention. For this reason, a sustainable and settled community behavior change communication strategy is needed. Strategy is planning to make conscious and continuous efforts and managed to choose the best alternative in achieving the goal. Communication strategy is planning in delivering messages through a combination of various communication elements so that the message conveyed is

easily received and understood and can change attitudes or behaviors in accordance with the purpose of communication (Mulyana, 2013).

Communication strategy is effective planning in delivering messages so that they are easily understood by communicants and can accept what has been conveyed so that it can change one's attitude or behavior (Onong, 2014). Communication strategies are carried out by notifying, motivating, educating, informing, and supporting decision making (Liliweri, 2011). With the right communication strategy, it can change public health behavior and accelerate the decline of stunting in order to ensure the quality of the golden generation, the community avoids malnutrition in children, malnutrition in pregnant women but otherwise healthy mothers and children can be the capital of development in North Minahasa Regency.

Literature Review

Strategy or planning is essentially an effort that is made consciously and continuously and managed to choose the best alternative to achieve a particular goal (Widjaja, 2012 : Astuti, 2018). The objectives of the strategy are (5): - *Notify (announcing): The main purpose of the communication strategy is to inform about the capacity and quality of information to be promoted wherever possible and can use the help of print media and social media with the addition of interesting images.* - *Motivating (motivating) : Dissemination of information must be sought so that the information disseminated can motivate people to care.* - *Educating: Providing education to the community.* - *Information Dissemination (informing): One of the goals of a communication strategy is to disseminate information to the public or audience that is our target.* *Supporting decision making: Information collected, categorized, analyzed in such a way that it can be used as key information for decision makers.*

Strategy is an important element in an organization that functions for: (1) Identify and establish problems (2) Give direction (focus) or guidance on the goals to be achieved (3) Minimize the occurrence of waste of resources in order to achieve goals effectively. (4) Estimate the obstacles that may occur and the results to be obtained. (5) Control so that implementation always remains within the established planning corridor (6) Provide an opportunity to choose the best alternative to get better results (7) Overcoming complicated things by finding a way out of the problem at hand (8) Set a priority scale on what to do first (9) Establishment of monitoring mechanisms and measuring instruments for evaluation purposes

Communication is the delivery of information or ideas using symbols, words, images, etc. Communication is the process of transferring information from communicator to communicant. Effective communication can be obtained if between the disseminator of the message and the recipient of the message can cause a common understanding of the message to be conveyed (Liliweri, 2011). Communication strategy is the best combination of all communication elements ranging from communicator, message, channel (media), receiver, to influence (effect) designed to achieve optimal communication goals (George, 2022). Communication strategy is the action that must be taken to achieve the goal, which must also pay attention to whom the communication program is aimed, with the equipment and in what period of time it can be achieved, and how to measure (evaluate) the results obtained from the program (Hikami, 2022).

So, communication strategy is a planning and management to achieve certain goals in operational practice. Effective communication strategies are: a. *How to change the attitude* b. *Change the opinion* c. *Change behavior.* Health behavior change is the target of promotion to change behavior (behavior change). Health behavior change as the goal of health education, at least has 3 dimensions, namely; (1) Changing negative (unhealthy) behavior into positive behavior (in accordance with health values); (2) Develop positive behaviors (formation or

development of healthy behaviors); (3) Maintain behavior that is already positive or behavior that is in accordance with health norms / values (healthy behavior) Supratman (2003).

The relationship between health and behavior is very close and mutually sustainable. The most important benefit of healthy living is to increase our productivity with all our abilities and potential. In health behavior, the problem of formation and behavior change is the goal of health education as a support for other health programs. The change in question is not just *covert behavior* but also *overt behavior*. In health programs, in order to obtain behavior change in accordance with health norms, concrete and positive efforts are needed.

Stunting is a child growth and development problem characterized by a child's low height, while his weight may be normal according to his age. Children are said to be stunting if their height does not increase significantly according to their age. Children suffer from stunting and wasting if the child has a short / stunted body and his body is also very thin, accompanied by impaired brain development and delays in children's abilities ⁽¹⁾. Stunting is a chronic nutritional problem due to lack of nutritional intake in the long term, resulting in impaired growth in children. Stunting is also one of the causes of stunted children's height, lower than children their age. Genetic factors have little influence on a person's health condition compared to environmental factors and health services. Usually, *stunting* begins to occur when children are still in the womb and is seen when they enter the age of two years (Rahmayana, 2014).

Parenting, environmental sanitation factors and psychosocial stimuli are also associated with the incidence of stunting in children aged 24-59 months. Children affected by stunting can be hampered by brain development. After adulthood, intelligence and educational performance become not optimal, in addition to being exposed to the risk of metabolic diseases (Rahmayana, 2014). The number of stunting cases in North Sulawesi Province is currently still relatively high, where the presentation of the national stunting rate is at 27%, while in North Sulawesi Province the figure is at 21%. Therefore, the Governor of North Sulawesi Province targets the stunting rate to be at 14% by 2024 HOS (2019). Children affected by stunting affect the quality of Indonesian society. Not only does it interfere with physical growth, but children also experience impaired brain development that will affect their abilities and achievements. In addition, children who suffer from *stunting* will have a history of poor health due to poor immune system. Stunting can also pass down to the next generation if not taken seriously (Kemendes, 2018).

Methods

This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach, aimed at: - Collect detailed actual information that describes existing symptoms, - Identify problems or examine applicable conditions and practices, - Make comparisons or evaluations, - Determine what others are doing in dealing with the same problem and learn from their experience to set future decision plans (15). Qualitative research methods are used to understand "Communication Strategy for Public Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction". The focus of this research refers to the Communication Strategy from Alo Liliweri (2011), namely: How Communication Strategy for Community Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in North Minahasa Regency, through aspects of notifying, motivating, *educating*, informing, and supporting decision makers (*supporting decision making*).? Data collection was carried out using methods commonly used qualitative approaches, namely observation (participation), in-depth interviews (*indept interviews*), and document studies. This is done with the aim of capturing and understanding events experienced by married couples of different cultures holistically, then data collection is carried out by interacting with informants: in this study the main techniques used by researchers are: In qualitative research, data analysis is carried out

from the beginning and throughout the research process. In this study, qualitative data analysis will be used with an interactive model developed by miles and Huberman (Lexi, 2011). namely: Data Reduction, Data Presentation and Conclusions (Soegiono, 2002).

Results and Discussion

Stunting is a disorder of growth and development of children due to chronic malnutrition and repeated infections, which is characterized by their length or height being below the standard. Stunting is short or very short based on length or height according to age that is less than -2 standard deviations (SD) on the WHO growth curve which occurs due to irreversible conditions due to inadequate nutritional intake and/or repeated or chronic infections that occur in the first 1000 days of life (HPK). Stunting can result in underdeveloped brain conditions, including resulting in non-optimal mental abilities and having a risk of chronic diseases in the future such as obesity, hypertension and diabetes. The health and nutritional conditions of the mother before and during pregnancy and after childbirth greatly affect fetal growth and the risk of stunting.

Stunting cases are a problem in North Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province. In 2018, North Minahasa Regency became an area with a high stunting prevalence category in North Sulawesi with a rate of 35.44%. Then in 2019 according to the Indonesian Toddler Nutrition Status Survey, the stunting rate of Minahasa Regency became 16.16%. And based on the survey results from e-PPGBM at the end of December, the number of stunting cases in North Minahasa reached 9.4%. The results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey show that the stunting prevalence rate in North Minahasa Regency is 20.5%, an increase of 1.4% from 2021. Based on the Community-Based Nutrition Recording and Reporting (e-PPGBM) lectronics in February 2023, there are 358 toddlers categorized as stunting or 3.39% of the 10,560 toddlers measured. With stunting, it will affect the quality of human resources. Therefore, the local government is committed to accelerating stunting reduction in North Minahaa Regency.

The government's commitment in the implementation of accelerating stunting reduction is contained in the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of North Minahasa Regency for 2021 – 2026. Communication Strategy for Public Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in North Minahasa Regency, through aspects of:

Notify (*announcing*)

The North Minahasa Regency Government informed the community about stunting through socialization or counseling activities. As done by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) and the North Minahasa Regency Government in their commitment to reduce stunting, socializing to pregnant women, mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old and cadres in North Minahasa Regency, including in Tiwoho Village.

The purpose of this information or socialization is to provide knowledge and insight into stunting prevention, as well as to increase public awareness to make changes in community behavior for healthy living. The government as a communicator tells or provides information to the public that stunting can be prevented early, even from pregnancy to the child aged two years as the first 1000 days of life. Activities inform the community through socialization to increase public knowledge about stunting prevention. Socialization was carried out both by BKKBN North Minahasa Regency, Village Government, Pokja Posyandu, and extension workers.

The method used in socialization activities is carried out by lectures, presentations, and questions and answers with pregnant women, mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old. Socialization or counseling in it occurs interaction between BKKBN North Minahasa Regency,

Village Government, Pokja Posyandu, and extension workers to pregnant women, mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old, in which there is an exchange of messages carried out verbally by conveying in the form of words that can be understood and using leaflets, LCD and power point media. In the presentation of the material accompanied by interesting pictures so that the community as communicants are easy to understand and interested in what is conveyed.

In socialization there is an exchange of information or two-way communication, not always pregnant women and mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old only as listeners, but also actively provide ideas, ideas and opinions related to the content of the message conveyed. The government provides information to the public not only directly through socialization but also indirectly through pamphlets.

BKKBN North Minahasa Regency, Village Government, Pokja Posyandu and extension workers as communicators provide knowledge to pregnant women, mothers who have Toddlers are less than 5 years old, so there is a learning process and additional knowledge that leads to changes in health behavior as an effort to prevent stunting.

Motivating

The dissemination of information carried out by the government is carried out so that information is spread to the public. In addition to increasing knowledge, the dissemination of information makes people motivated to care about changing their health behavior to avoid stunting.

To motivate changes in public health behavior, the government directs health behaviors that are expected to be carried out by the community, such as:

Pay attention to nutritional intake

The village government motivates pregnant women and toddlers to eat nutritious food. Motivation is carried out by conveying messages that encourage people to eat fish, eggs, fruits and vegetables to improve nutrition to avoid stunting.

Economic circumstances also make pregnant women less motivated to eat a full meal. They consume only rice, fish and vegetables because they don't have much money. The money they must also use to support the household and other children. However, because nutritional intake is very important for them, motivation is done so that people avoid stunting.

Conduct regular health checks for pregnant women and toddlers

The government motivates pregnant women and mothers with children under five to check their health regularly. Therefore, in the North Minahasa Regency government, in this case, Tiwoho Village innovated by making "Sabua Kantin" (All Trying to Reduce Stunting) as an effort to provide routine health services for pregnant women and toddlers in the form of health checks and nutritious feeding once a month and motivate pregnant women and parents who have toddlers to routinely check their health.

Overcoming the problem of children who have difficulty eating by giving variants to food

The government of Tiwoho Village, Wori District, North Minahasa Regency motivates parents who have toddlers to consume and provide varied foods to children. Food should not only be rice and fish every day, but must be added with meat even though not every day. Consumption of eggs, fruit and milk is also important for children's development so that they are not malnourished and stunted.

For this reason, the Tiwoho Village government provides motivation and services through the Additional Makakan (TMT) program for pregnant women and toddlers by providing food variants that must be consumed by pregnant women and toddlers.

Maintain environmental sanitation

The government motivates the public to maintain the cleanliness of food and drinking water consumed. Lack of access to clean drinking water and poor sanitation can increase the risk of infection and other health problems. Therefore, maintaining the cleanliness of the environment is also very important to prevent stunting.

Providing counseling education for pregnant and lactating women

The government provides counseling for pregnant and lactating women in the "Harapan KasihHati" program to monitor the success of exclusive breastfeeding for stunting prevention carried out at the Tiwoho Village Health Center. In it there is motivation conveyed by health workers about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for pregnant and lactating women.

Complete vaccination of babies born as recommended

The government also provides motivation and complete vaccination services for babies born as recommended. The community is given motivation to bring babies born as recommended to the puskesmas to be vaccinated as an effort to prevent stunting.

Educating

As an effort to reduce stunting, the North Minahasa Regency government educates the community to make changes in good behavior regarding diet, parenting and improved sanitation and access to clean water.

The government provides proper diet education to pregnant women to eat good nutritious food during pregnancy, as well as to mothers who have children under five. But it also educates not to eat certain foods that can cause impaired health. Because the problem of stunting is influenced by low access to food in terms of the amount and quality of nutrition, it is often not diverse or not varied.

"Fill the Plate" with balanced nutrition explained and accustomed in daily life both for pregnant women and toddlers who are in their infancy, must multiply protein and must get used to consuming fruits and vegetables. In a canteen, it is explained to pregnant women and parents who have children under five that in one portion of food, half the plate is filled with vegetables and fruit, the other half is filled with protein sources, both nabatu and animals with more portions of carbohydrates.

Poor parenting also affects children's growth which will lead to stunting. Therefore, the government provides education about reproductive health and nutrition for adolescents as the forerunner of the family, to expectant mothers so that they understand the importance of meeting nutritional needs during pregnancy and stimulation for the fetus, and diligently checking the womb four times during pregnancy.

The government also provides education to pregnant women to give birth in health facilities, breastfeed children from an early age (IMD) and strive for babies to get colostrum breast milk (ASI) and complementary food for children, as well as monitor the growth and development of children by bringing them to Posyandu every month.

The community should not neglect immunization, but must provide complete immunization so that children get immunity from dangerous diseases, where health services can be obtained by the community at no cost at Posyandu or Puskesmas.

Low sanitation and access to clean water will affect public health. For this reason, the government provides education through education about the risk of infectious diseases if they do not use sanitation and clean water in their daily activities. People are also taught to get used to washing hands with soap and running water, and not to defecate carelessly.

Educating by providing education affects the understanding of pregnant women and parents who have toddlers and even the children themselves in paying attention to health and nutrition so that changes in behavior can lead to improving the nutritional health of mothers and toddlers as an effort to prevent stunting.

Information Dissemination (*informing*)

One of the goals of a communication strategy is to disseminate information to the community or audience that is our target. Dissemination of information is carried out by face-to-face or direct communication, namely through socialization and education to the public about stunting. Also indirectly by using pamphlet media, posters, videos, etc.

Socialization is carried out to the community because many people do not know about stunting and prevention efforts. Directly through verbal communication, the government explains about stunting, what causes it and how to prevent stunting. Also used pamphlets, posters and videos because it is a medium consisting of symbols or simple symbol words that are easily accepted by the public.

Pamphlets and posters are strong visual media because there are colors, images and messages that attract people's attention. Video is used because it is an audio-visual medium that can reveal objects and events as in real life.

Supporting *decision making*

Stunting cases in North Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province, in 2018 were quite high, where North Minahasa Regency became an area with a high stunting prevalence category in North Sulawesi with a rate of 35.44%. In January – March 2022, the number of stunting cases in North Minahasa reached 288 cases. The local government is committed to accelerating stunting reduction in North Minahasa Regency.

Stunting reduction activities in North Minahasa Regency are supported by various sectors, such as the PPKB Office, Health Office, Social and PMD Office, Food Office, Disdukcapil, TNI, private parties, to TP-PKK in Districts and Villages in North Minahasa Regency. Guidance and socialization and education are carried out to parents who have stunted children or children at risk of stunting, as well as to rural communities about the importance of paying attention to the lifestyle of pregnant women and also providing good food or nutritional intake to pregnant women and children under five. It is very necessary to change health behavior in the community so that children avoid stunting, be it diet, parenting and sanitation and access to clean water in the lives of the people of North Minahasa Regency.

The communication strategy of the North Minahasa Regency government in changing community behavior as an effort to reduce stunting through effective planning in delivering messages so that they are easily understood by the message recipient community. Communication strategies are carried out by considering elements in communication, namely, communicators, communicants, message content, media used, and expected effects.

While communication activities in the activity provide information carried out by BKKBN North Minahasa Regency, Village Government, Pokja Posyandu and extension workers as communicators in providing knowledge to pregnant women, mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old. The elements of communication that occur in these activities are; (1) There is

a purpose. Every communication carried out has a predetermined goal and is in line with the government's goal, namely changing the public health behavior of North Minahasa Regency in accelerating stunting reduction; (2) There is an exchange. Each communication involves two or more people (communicators and communicants), namely BKKBN North Minahasa Regency, Village Government, Pokja Posyandu and extension workers as communicators and pregnant women, mothers who have toddlers less than 5 years old as communicants; (3) Contains information. Various ideas, opinions, instructions become the content of messages contained in communication where the form can vary depending on the situation, conditions, and goals; (4) Utilize personal or impersonal channels. Every communication can be done face-to-face or interpersonal communication, socialization or group communication, utilizing special media, or mass media in order to reach many people; (5) Using symbols or signals, meaning methods or tools used to communicate both verbally and non-verbally so that they can be understood by the recipient of the message; (6) Achievement of targets or goals, where the goal is to accelerate stunting reduction through changes in public health behavior which is the goal of the North Minahasa Regency Government.

Conclusion

Communication Strategy for Community Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in North Minahasa Regency, through aspects (1) *Announcing*: socialization and counseling to pregnant women and parents who have children under 5 years old through lectures, presentations and questions and answers. (2) *Motivating*: Pay attention to nutritional intake, Conduct regular health checks for pregnant women and toddlers, Overcome the problem of children having difficulty eating by providing variants in food, Maintain environmental sanitation, provide education to pregnant and lactating women in the "Hope of the Lover of the Heart" program, Carry out complete vaccination of babies born as recommended. (3) *Educating*: Education on proper and nutritious eating patterns with the "Fill the Plate" program in a Canteen. Parenting education Education risks the threat of infectious diseases if not using sanitation and clean water. (4) Information Dissemination (*Informing*): Directly by means of socialization with verbal communication, also using pamphlet media, posters and videos. (5) Supporting decision *making*: Supported by the PPKB Office, Health Office, Social Service, PMD, Food Office, Disdukcapil, Private Sector, TP-PKK, TNI. Communication Strategy for Public Health Behavior Change in Accelerating Stunting Reduction contributes: increasing public knowledge and sustainable social strengthening of the community through efforts to accelerate stunting reduction. As a suggestion, it is expected to provide sufficient budget for the implementation of the stunting reduction acceleration program in North Minahasa Regency.

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