

## Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in Stunting Mitigation Efforts: A Study in Mesuji Regency

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### ABSTRACT

*: In the face of the demographic bonus, a healthy workforce and productive employment are essential. However, stunting poses a significant threat to achieving this potential. Therefore, multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential, involving governments, the private sector, academia, and society. This study explores the dynamics of collaborative governance in overcoming stunting in Mesuji Regency, along with the role of actors. Methods: Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and document analysis, involving 15 key informants. Results: Demonstrate that local governments act as facilitators, while other stakeholders contribute through resources and active participation. Effective interagency coordination, ongoing policy support, and active stakeholder engagement are key supporting factors. Conclusion: The handling of stunting in Mesuji Regency shows the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The government plays the role of facilitator, while other actors are actively involved through resources and participation. Success is underpinned by effective coordination, sustainable policies, and the involvement of all parties.*

**Keywords:** Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration; Government Collaboration; Stunting Control; Stunting Management

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is in the midst of a Demographic Bonus era, which is expected to peak in 2045. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that the number of workers reached 139.81 million people in February 2021. The report indicates an increase in labour productivity in all regions of Indonesia, from 62.98 in August 2020 to 63.82 in February 2021 (BPS, 2021). This shows that almost two-thirds of the population over 15 is working, indicating that Indonesia is experiencing a demographic bonus. In dealing with the demographic bonus, the country needs a healthy workforce, productive jobs, education levels, good infrastructure, and multisectoral interventions to make good decisions (World Bank, 2020; Utomo, 2022). According to Sriwahyuni et al. (2021), the successful implementation of rural policies in Europe can be a reference for applying the rural development revitalization strategy to manage population growth in the face of demographic bonuses. Adapting to the demographic bonus's circumstances requires flexible policy choices in response to sudden changes (UNFPA, 2020; Bloom et al., 2011). Despite the urbanization process, Latin America still has a demographic bonus that raises questions about what is happening in the area (Rios-Neto, 2020). To be part of the demographic bonus in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), student maturity needs to be elevated, especially in terms of skills and the business world (Purnamasari et al., 2022; Kusnadi et al., 2021).

Multi-dimensional factors cause stunting and are not only caused by health factors. Stunting is more common in children born to women with low economic health, low education, and living far from health facilities (Akombi et al., 2017; Rachmi et al., 2016). The prevalence rate of stunting is used to determine the nutritional status of the community and is not affected by temporary acute conditions (Danaei et al., 2016). According to Picauly et al., access to nutritious food, a supportive social environment, supportive health infrastructure (clean water, sanitation), and adequate health services are integrated ways to prevent stunting. In some states, a combination of improved socioeconomic status (SES), food security, and improved sanitation can potentially create conditions that support stunting reduction at the household level (Victoria et al., 2021; Headey & Hoddinott, 2015). The same is true, according to Dhaded et al. Poverty is the main factor that causes fetal growth retardation and growth disorders after birth and is the main factor behind the high rate of stunting and wasting, which is a big challenge (de Onis & Branca, 2016; Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014). The same is true, according to Yunitasari

et al. One of the causes of stunting is the lack of comprehensive knowledge, where there is a significant correlation that sufficient knowledge can prevent stunting (Bhutta et al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2020).

In order to accelerate nutrition improvement, the central and regional governments jointly issue policy regulations as guidelines for nutrition improvement. In 2013, the government issued Presidential Regulation No. 42 of 2013 concerning the *National Movement for the Acceleration of Nutrition Improvement*, which aims to prevent stunting nationally. As a follow-up to this policy as a form of commitment to accelerate stunting reduction, the government has issued Presidential Regulation (*Perpres*) number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. This regulation is the legal basis for the *National Strategy (Stranas)* for Accelerating Stunting Reduction, which was introduced and implemented in 2018. This Presidential Regulation also strengthens the basis for interventions institutions must implement and apply to accelerate stunting reduction. Stunting treatment will be successful if the problem and the resulting solution involve stakeholders in policymaking. Stunting reduction can be accelerated through collaboration between the government and other official institutions. In this case, reducing the prevalence of stunting must be realized in performance targets for government agencies. For programs to converge, it is necessary to strengthen communication and coordination between government agencies. The issuance of Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction, where the *BKKBN* is the Chief Executive, certainly has an impact on the need for program coordination and convergence in the field, so this has a direct impact on the Mesuji Regional Apparatus Organization for Women's Empowerment and Family Planning of the District, which is the intermediary of the *BKKBN* Representative of Lampung Province Indonesia, responsible for accelerating stunting reduction in Mesuji Regency.

The dynamics of collaborative governance carried out by various parties to combat stunting and maintain stunting handling conditions in Mesuji Regency have entered a positive trend that illustrates the partiality of stakeholders (Pratama et al., 2024). Today's collaborative governance is likely to have a more renewable management framework. However, the unorganized nature of the literature on collaboration describes how this concept took shape through various local experiments, usually as a reaction to the regression of pre-existing governance. Collaborative governance has been published in response to the downturn in downstream implementation and regulations' high cost and politicization. It has become an option for coalition pluralism conflicts and managerial accountability failures. Besides the multidisciplinary science and resource allocation, many researchers highlight the supporting factors necessary for implementing collaborative governance and assessing their effectiveness. The emphasis on schematic or institutional outlines in various collaborative governance frameworks focused on project implementation and the classic debate on structure and institutions remains relevant today. Understanding the dynamics of cross-sector collaboration is very important in facilitating various ways of existing government collaboration. Analyzing system effectiveness provides an understanding of how collaborative dynamics and socio-ecological contexts can influence the achievement of goals, which can enrich the policymaking process. To understand these collaboration dynamics, an analysis of the interactions between the two main elements of a collaborative project is needed: the rules, procedures, and structure of the project—collectively known as institutional design—as well as the role of leaders in managing the project.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential in tackling stunting, involving various actors, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academics, and the community, who work together to implement effective stunting control programs. Multisectoral collaboration of interests is aimed at an interactive process where various actors with different perspectives coordinate, carry out joint actions, and share risks, resources, and responsibilities. According to Woldesenbet, the processes, key focuses, and work patterns in multi-stakeholder collaboration in resource management must be researched and understood to find a solid and practical approach to addressing problems sustainably and comprehensively. In addition, we evaluate multi-stakeholder collaborations involving public organizations, healthcare institutions, and the corporate sector. The internalization process indicates that the organization should be encouraged to participate in or strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration in sustainable business model innovation. The actors involved in the multi-stakeholder collaboration include academia, the private sector, the government, the community, and the media. In order to increase overall cooperation for sustainable development, it is sufficient to have multi-stakeholder cooperation that organizes and provides knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to assist in the achievement of sustainable development goals.

However, stunting is a serious threat that can hinder the optimization of *demographic bonuses*. Regional development has a negative impact if the *demographic bonus* does not mediate the relationship between population growth and regional development. Stunting is a national problem in Indonesia due to an imbalance in

nutritional intake in children. One of the preventive measures is to ensure the consumption of diverse and balanced nutritious foods. In the concept of the national strategy, stunting prevention begins with the preparation of supporting facilities, which are described in the five pillars of the national strategy. The implementation of these five pillars is expected to increase the scope of nutrition services that are specific and sensitive to the main targets, which will ultimately reduce the prevalence of stunting. Based on a series of causes of stunting, the national strategy in Indonesia prepares a work plan to facilitate stunting prevention measures. In the concept of the national strategy, stunting prevention begins with the preparation of supporting facilities, which are described in the five pillars of the national strategy. Implementing these five pillars is expected to expand the range of specific and sensitive nutrition services to the main targets, which ultimately aims to reduce the prevalence of stunting. To prevent stunting optimally, support and assistance from the government and health workers and direct parental participation are needed.

In reality, there needs to be cooperation between the government, formal and non-formal institutions, private institutions, the community, and others to deal with this stunting problem and prepare for *Golden Indonesia 2045*. Through a targeted strategy, *demographic bonuses* can increase achievements in education and other fields to achieve the vision of a *golden Indonesia*. To support and manage collaboration between local governments, the Indonesian government seeks to use a decentralization framework (Rahayu et al., 2021). In preparation and review, it is necessary to strengthen academics who collaborate with the community and local government. In connection with the transfer activities, the emphasis is on cooperation between the two countries' governments, the migration process from one country to another (*one-to-one*), and global trends. A complex transfer system or integrated system elements from one country to another is related to development cooperation and political cooperation, while global trends are closely related to globalization and the resulting convergent development direction. Since public understanding and participation are still limited among developing countries, the development of CBT requires the application of the *Penta-Helix* model to strengthen stakeholder cooperation by incorporating model wisdom in the formulation and formulation of tourism policies. However, through continuous interaction, the *Penta-Helix* collaboration can only be realized by optimizing the role of the community, academics, the business sector, the government, and the media.

However, stunting efforts are only effective and efficient if implemented through tiered interventions starting from the district to the family level. In terms of reducing the stunting rate, the availability of facilities and infrastructure is needed as a supporting factor to implement effective program implementation policies and provide quality services. The risk of malnutrition for toddlers due to lack of adequate nutritional intake requires special interventions for integrated stunting management from individuals, families, and communities through multisectoral cooperation in the region. Several important findings reveal the role of stakeholders in stunting intervention, where regional heads are strategic policymakers in stunting prevention. According to Johnson et al., in their research, the obstacles to teamwork are differences of opinion in team responsibility, lack of sufficient resources, weaknesses in legal policies and environmental protection, and communication that is not optimal. The goal of this cooperation is achieved if these obstacles are resolved correctly.

However, the positive trend involving stakeholders is a challenge in multi-stakeholder collaboration between the government, the media, companies, and community organizations. It is necessary to establish new institutions, starting from academia, to deal with complex and controversial issues that require the collaboration of various stakeholders. The collaboration of various stakeholders is dynamic and complex and can support innovative city initiatives. It requires multi-stakeholder collaboration with multiple perspectives and objectives in addressing complex issues for program sustainability. The findings resulting from the multi-stakeholder collaboration forum can be used to evaluate the program. Several research results show the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in producing sustainable model innovation, but very few provide support for companies in the collaborative process to participate actively. Synergy in multi-stakeholder groups is one of the possible steps, and successful collaboration depends not only on facilities and other teaching methods but also on supporting solutions in outreach and communication. However, this starts from a situation where the potential for cooperation between various parties is still limited.

The lack of collaboration is due to the lack of intensive dialogue between stakeholders. Each stakeholder has a limited perspective in each work unit, even though stunting prevention is complex and requires significant resources. Determining roles in complex networks is challenging for local governments, as well as inappropriate opportunities and multi-stakeholder innovations. An institution must collaborate with multiple stakeholders when it can no longer handle recurring threats. Stakeholder engagement in Sweden provides a particular case's institutional and procedural framework. Complex and dynamic multi-stakeholder collaborations influence

innovative city initiatives. Several stakeholders are leading the integration of additional connections at various levels, including government, private, and academia, as well as at various business scales. However, governments still have opportunities to intervene more effectively. Decision-makers seek more in-depth information when faced with negative performance feedback.

*Urgency Research:* This research is important because stunting control cannot rely on just one sector (the Health Office) but requires synergy between stakeholders, such as local governments.

## METHOD

This study adopts an *interpretivism* paradigm to explore the dynamics of collaborative governance in addressing stunting within Mesuji Regency's local government framework. The qualitative approach focuses on understanding the lived experiences and policy implementation processes through descriptive research, recognizing social reality as constructed by participants' perspectives and interactions. By examining the stages of stunting reduction policies, the research aims to uncover the nuanced social constructions shaping governance outcomes.

The study engaged 15 key informants representing diverse stakeholders, including regional stunting task forces, government agencies, media representatives, NGOs, and affected communities in Mesuji Regency. Data collection centered on capturing these stakeholders' insights through *Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)* and in-depth interviews, with particular emphasis on interpreting participants' perspectives alongside relevant policy documents. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures comprehensive representation of voices involved in stunting reduction efforts.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, employing continuous data reduction, presentation, and verification until reaching saturation. The process was supported by qualitative analysis software to systematically organize and interpret the collected narratives. This iterative analytical approach allows for emergent patterns in collaborative governance to be identified while maintaining the contextual richness of stakeholders' experiences in addressing stunting challenges.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the above study show that stunting has become a very important issue in Mesuji Regency, with various government agencies aware of the wide impact it has on health, education, and community welfare. In this context, the concept of collaborative governance is very relevant, because stunting prevention requires the active involvement of various stakeholders.

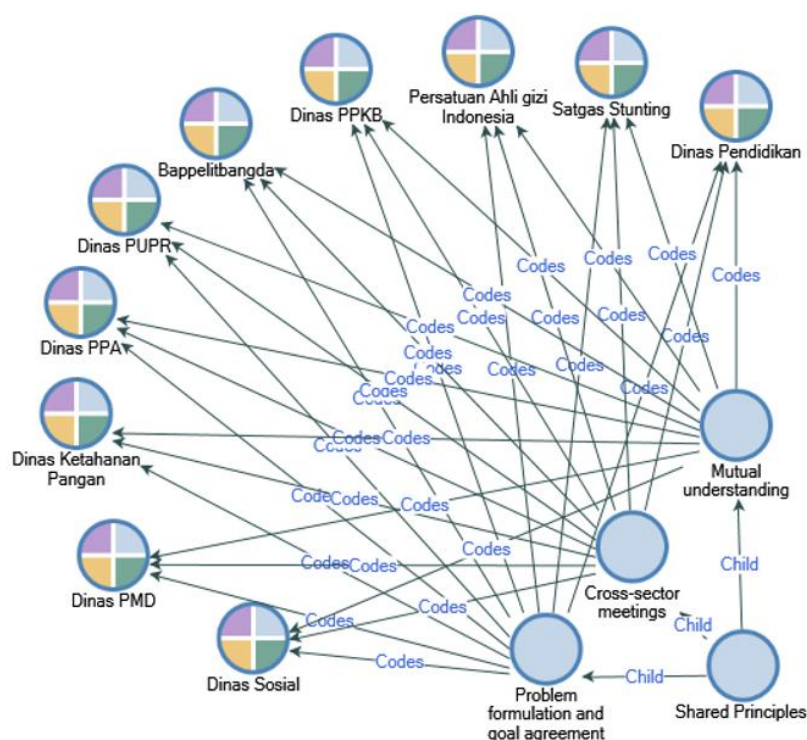


Figure 1. Visualization of Common Principles in Collaborative Governance for Stunting Handling in Mesuji Regency

Awareness of handling stunting as a multidimensional problem is the initial foundation that strengthens cross-sector involvement. Bappelitbangda, the Family Planning Office, the Health Office, the Education Office, and professional organizations such as PERSAGI show a harmonious view on the importance of dealing with stunting holistically. This common understanding then became the basis for the development of a common vision, which is to create a healthy, intelligent, and productive generation of Mesuji Regency. Then Collaborative governance in Mesuji Regency was formed institutionally through strategic forums such as the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS), Stunting Rembuk, Stunting Musrenbang, and Cross-OPD Coordination Meetings. These forums are an important vehicle for aligning views, formulating problems, and strategizing together.

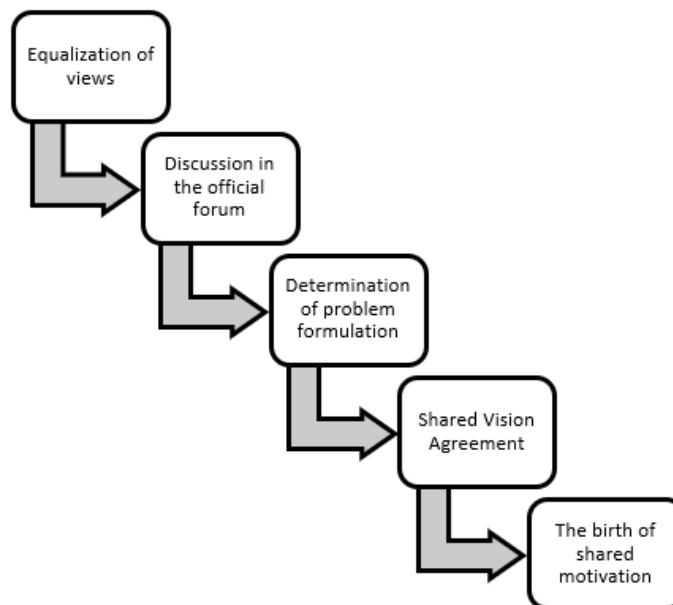


Figure 2. Collaborative Stages Towards Shared Motivation in Stunting Prevention

In the process of cross-sectoral collaboration to handle stunting in Mesuji Regency, the preparation of problem formulations is carried out in a participatory manner and based on contextual data. Actors from various sectors such as PERSAGI, the PPA Office, the Health Office, and Bappelitbangda provided input based on their respective sectoral experiences and data. The reduction of stunting in Mesuji Regency shows that the success of this collaboration is highly dependent on the commitment and active involvement of all stakeholders. Mutual motivation can be seen from the collective awareness of the urgency of handling stunting, which encourages various agencies to participate in the programs that have been designed. The involvement of stakeholders reflects the common goal of improving the health and welfare of the community. The following are aspects of joint motivation in handling stunting in Mesuji district.

The results of the study show that stunting control in Mesuji Regency involves many cross-sector actors through a collaborative approach. One of the main drivers of this collaboration is shared motivation formed through internal legitimacy, collective commitment, and trust between sectors. In the context of stunting control in Mesuji Regency, this legitimacy is formed through formal policies and incentive structures sourced from local governments.



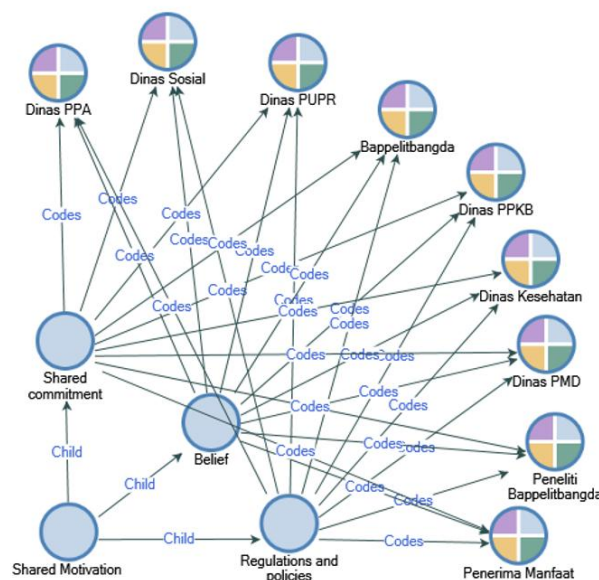


Figure 3. Visualization of Shared Motivation in Collaborative Governance for Handling Stunting in Mesuji Regency

One concrete form of this legitimacy is the integration of stunting issues into the performance indicators of village officials. This statement shows that formal policies such as the Regent Regulation and the preparation of performance indicators are institutional instruments that affirm the urgency and priority of handling stunting. Internal legitimacy stemming from formal policies and recognition of common needs serves as the initial foundation for collaboration in the governance of stunting control in Mesuji Regency. When policies provide a clear direction, a wide space for participation, the collaboration that is built will be more stable and sustainable.

The next element is commitment which also appears strong in practice. The value of togetherness and collaborative commitment between OPDs, villages, and the community is key

in the planning and implementation process of the program. In the context of Mesuji Regency, community involvement in program planning and implementation is critical to ensure that interventions are tailored to local needs. In practice, this commitment is not only manifested in the form of support for the program, but also in concrete actions, such as active involvement in TPPS planning, program integration at the village level, and collaborative allocation of resources.

When internal legitimacy, collective commitment, and trust develop simultaneously, cross-sector collaboration not only becomes possible, but also potentially sustainable and has a real impact on tackling stunting.

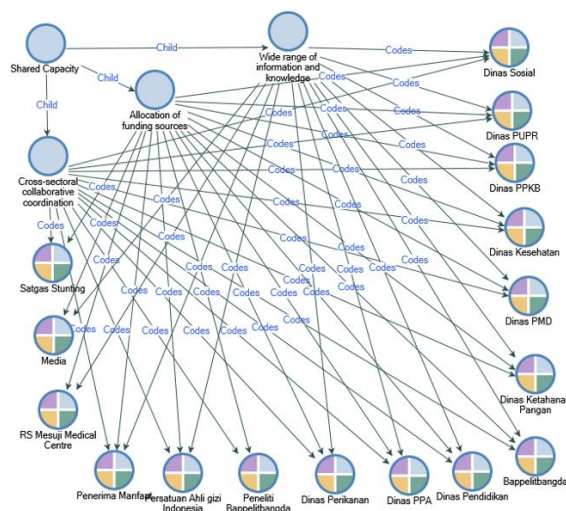


Figure 4. Visualization of Shared Capacity in Collaborative Governance for Handling Stunting in Mesuji Regency

One of the most tangible evidence that shared motivation has been built in collaboration to combat stunting in Mesuji Regency is the emergence of cross-program integration and structured role sharing between organizations.

In the context of stunting prevention in Mesuji Regency, joint action capacity is formed through cross-sector synergy between various government and non-government actors. Based on the visual map above, there is a strong connection between technical organizations such as the Health Office, the Social Service, the Education Office, and professional institutions such as the Indonesian Nutritionists Association.

With a clear institutional structure, budget allocation support, and knowledge sharing, this collaboration can run well and produce a comprehensive program. The integration between various agencies in carrying out mutually supportive programs shows that the capacity for joint action in Mesuji Regency has been well built.

This not only increases the effectiveness of stunting control, but also strengthens synergy between stakeholders in achieving the common goal of creating a healthy and stunting-free society.

This creates a collaborative environment that allows for the exchange of information and experience, as well as facilitates the evaluation and adjustment of necessary programs. Overall, with the existence of institutions, program collaboration with human resource empowerment and budget allocation are key in increasing the capacity for joint action to effectively overcome stunting.

An accurate data-driven approach and targeted policies will ensure that every intervention is on target, especially for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and toddlers. In addition, strengthening the role of the family, parenting, and adequate nutrition for children is very important to avoid stunting since childhood. To reduce the impact of disease on health, accurate data on its prevalence or prevention is needed to determine priorities for health service planning and public health policies 47. In building and strengthening the resilience of individuals, communities, and organizations, information systems can adapt and support an effective recovery process 48. With its focus on its role that is strengthened in the economic development process and close synergy, it has great significance at the national and global levels 49. In cross-sector collaboration, it is important to highlight the role of accurate data and information in supporting decision-making. Research shows that good use of data helps identify the groups most vulnerable to stunting and formulate targeted interventions. These findings show that effective collaboration can address stunting cases and raise the level of health and welfare in the public. Armed with an educational background, academics have centered on a deep understanding of how organizations work to support the management of tensions that arise in collaboration between sectors 21. Thus, it is important to continue to support and strengthen cross-sector collaboration as the main strategy in tackling stunting and other public health issues. Complete and accurate information on Patient information and patient-derived data is essential, as large amounts of data are used to refine clinical formulation tools and support precision treatment initiatives 50.

The synergy between the government, the business world, and the community that is data-based and intensive coordination is important to overcome stunting to realize a Golden Indonesia 2045. By building improved communication and intensive coordination, leadership and teams can speed up the handling process effectively 51. Through this approach, each stakeholder plays an active role in designing and implementing relevant policies and utilizing resources efficiently. With strong leadership and a good collaborative process, it is hoped that innovations can be created in stunting prevention programs that are more effective and sustainable, thereby supporting inclusive social development in Mesuji Regency. The current structure of rural Indonesia's communities is characterized by a complex network of inter-village collaborations, which are noted to accelerate economic development and improve well-being through the efficient use of local resources 52. Cross-sector collaboration is also reflected in the intervention programs that have been implemented. For example, the Gebermas (Movement Together for Healthy Living Communities) program and the Stunting Child Foster Parents Movement involve various agencies and communities to increase awareness of the importance of nutrition. There needs to be a high level of awareness to encourage participation in safety net programs. Therefore, governments at all levels (local, provincial, and central) must ensure adequate budget allocation for these programs to improve household economic well-being 53. These programs show that when various parties work together, they can create a greater impact than if each agency worked separately. Furthermore, countries/regions and institutions with similar research interests tend to collaborate to combine academic strengths in facing challenges and difficulties and to encourage field development 54. This synergy allows for implementing more comprehensive and integrated programs, which are very important in stunting control.

Community engagement and cultural practices, such as cooperation, are important in stunting reduction efforts. Community involvement can help inform future policies and strategies 55. Various organizations and

groups collaborate to build civic capacity through community engagement meeting forums to achieve common goals 56. In order to minimize social inequality, information and knowledge obtained from community involvement are very important for designing public policies 57. Community involvement directly impacts residents' support in tourism development, generating economic benefits 58. In general, the implementation of collaborative governance in this situation focuses on shrinking the value of stunting and strengthening the community's quality of life, creating an environment that supports child development, and creating a better quality social force.

Furthermore, research 17 emphasizes the importance of cooperation networks in creating successful collaborations. They argue that community involvement in decision-making can strengthen the legitimacy of the governance process. Community collaboration and participation obstacles can be seen in the relationship between stakeholders and the community. The inability to appreciate community values and cultural diversity can hinder the implementation of the program 59. By involving various stakeholders, including the community, in dialogue and negotiation, the results of decisions become more inclusive and reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. This aligns with the principles of good governance that emphasize transparency and participation. Good governance principles are applied to ensure the quality and effectiveness of management. These principles differ between public administration and corporate governance 60. Community involvement in decision-making also contributes to collective capacity building. Communities can share knowledge and resources when actively engaged, strengthening the collective ability to address complex problems. This aligns with the view 61 that effective collaboration requires commitment from all parties to achieve common goals.

With more effective coordination, open communication, and a clear role for each party, the challenges can be overcome, making the stunting control program more optimal and sustainable. One category that is often associated with social presence is transparent communication 62. Open communication is needed to achieve mutual understanding and acceptance between students and the faculty 63. Transparent communication among all stakeholders and support to implement ESD is needed so that it can run more comprehensively 64. Lack of clear roles can hinder well-built communication 65. Successful, effective coordination within the EE network results in investments coming into the region and offering value-added support programs for entrepreneurs 66. Cultural resistance can challenge policy implementation, where local norms and values may conflict with proposed interventions. Therefore, educating and involving the community in planning is important so they feel they own the program. Thus, effective collaborative governance can overcome this resistance through constructive dialogue and collaboration. According to Monazam Tabrizi 67, Subjects across cultures rely entirely on four relationship models – communal sharing, authority ratings, equality matching, and market pricing – to determine most types of social interactions, evaluations, and influences.

Effective stunting mitigation requires collaboration between various stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, academics, and civil society organizations. Cooperation between institutions and the community is needed to strengthen the learning process and improve the morale of students. To change the situation by sharing insights and services more effectively, it is necessary to involve stakeholders as partners 68. Through a symbolic management approach, the company takes concrete actions to influence stakeholders' perceptions 69. The urgency of cooperation between the local government and the community in tackling stunting in the Mesuji Regency cannot be ignored. Through discussion forums and regular meetings, various parties can exchange information and experiences, thereby creating a better understanding of the stunting problem. Community participation in the decision-making process is also key because the parties feel the most impact of the policies taken. The programs will be more relevant and follow local needs by involving the community. The government has been impressed by its ability to facilitate public services efficiently and cost-effectively and to create a corruption-free environment through various departmental hierarchies rather than through multi-functional bodies 70. This research also shows that the success of collaborative governance is highly dependent on the ability of agencies to adapt to cultural changes and integrate different values. This is in line with the view that effective collaboration requires a commitment from all parties to understand and appreciate the differences.

Collaborative Governance Dynamics involves various stakeholders in determining decisions and implementing public policies. This concept emphasizes the importance of intergovernmental synergy, the community and the business world in achieving common goals, especially in good local governance 44. In good local government governance, collaborative governance functions to increase transparency, accountability, and community participation. Through forums such as the Development Planning Conference (Musrenbang), stakeholders can collaborate in formulating policies more responsive to the community's needs. Finally, it is also possible to practice to preach participation-based management and community participation, although citizens



and the public in collaborative governance can vary greatly 61. In this context, mobilizing common principles is an important foundation for uniting various parties involved, part of government agencies, society, and the private sector, to combat stunting. All parties can collaborate to design and implement relevant and effective programs by building mutual understanding and commitment.

Furthermore, mutual motivation is key in encouraging active participation from all stakeholders. In tackling stunting, it is important to create awareness of the Long-term consequences of this problem on social development. By educating the community and Involving them in decision-making, it is hoped that collective motivation will emerge to contribute to efforts to overcome stunting. When all parties feel they have the same goals and understand the importance of their roles, the collaboration will be stronger and more sustainable. Next, joint action capacity is important in ensuring that the collaboration built can produce a real impact. Recognizing that policy implementation is dynamic, we have explained how ideas, interests and institutional structures affect implementation and evolve to ensure that policies remain maintained and integrated 71. In the context of stunting mitigation, this capacity includes managing resources, sharing information, and implementing agreed programs. Stunting efforts will be carried out more effectively by utilizing each stakeholder's strengths, knowledge, resources, and networks. Public discussion and decision-making processes have been marred by constant attacks on the 'elite' of knowledge and evidence-based decision-making processes 72.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study on the dynamics of collaborative governance in stunting control in Mesuji Regency show that effective cross-sectoral cooperation can have positive implications for changes in public health behavior as well as the formulation of policies that are more responsive and based on local needs. The active involvement of local governments, health workers, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations encourages the formation of synergy in developing holistic intervention programs, such as nutrition education, child growth and development monitoring, and increased access to basic health services. This collaboration also strengthens coordination and accountability mechanisms between stakeholders, contributing to the birth of more integrated and sustainable health policies. Thus, *collaborative governance* not only increases the effectiveness of stunting control programs, but also directs changes in public health behavior towards a more preventive and participatory direction. The key implications of *collaborative governance* in this context include not only the technical effectiveness of stunting control programs, but also the transformation of organizational culture and public health behaviors towards a more sustainable, community-based, and context-sensitive direction. This approach is an important foundation for the formation of more inclusive, integrative, and resilient health policies in the face of other public health challenges in the future. Several main factors, such as good coordination between agencies, sustainable and supportive policies, and community participation, support the success of this collaboration. However, there are still challenges that need to be overcome. Therefore, a more effective strategy is needed to address these obstacles, such as increasing public education, optimizing the budget, and strengthening cross-sector coordination so that stunting control in Mesuji Regency can run more optimally. This research is helpful in making a real contribution to policy improvement and program implementation at the regional level.

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