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## STUNTING BUDGET MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS IN SOUTH HALMAHERA REGENCY



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### Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of stunting budget management in the South Halmahera Regency. A qualitative approach was employed through structured interviews with leaders of BAPPELITBANGDA, the Health Office, and three program beneficiaries. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of financial management is strongly influenced by the quality of budget planning, discipline in implementation, and transparent and accountable supervision and reporting. The budget planning process was assessed as adequate, marked by cross-sector involvement to ensure the implementation of both sensitive and specific interventions. Although the stunting budget has increased over the past three years, in 2023 only 9 out of 23 priority activities were effectively realized. The study also identifies several inhibiting factors, including limited regional budget capacity and high dependence on central government funding, suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination, and underutilization of real-time data by relevant local government agencies. Additionally, high poverty levels pose a significant challenge to efforts in accelerating stunting reduction. These findings highlight the need to strengthen budget management capacity, improve inter-sectoral coordination, and optimize the use of information technology to support data-driven decision making.

**Keywords:** Stunting, Budget Management, Public Health Policy, South Halmahera

## INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a condition of growth failure in children that causes the child's height to be far below the average for the child's age. According to UNICEF, stunting is the percentage of children aged 0 to 59 months, with a height below minus two (moderate and severe stunting) and minus three (Chronic Stunting), measured from the child growth standards issued by WHO (Dewi & Nindya, 2017), stunting often occurs during the early growth period of children, especially before 2 years, and has long-term impacts on children's health and development. The results of the study found that women who were stunted as children tend to have stunted offspring as well, creating a cycle of intergenerational poverty and reduced human resources (Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014).

Since 2018, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has committed to jointly resolving the problem of stunting by establishing the National Strategy for the Acceleration of Stunting Prevention (STRANAS Stunting). Stranas stunting uses a convergence approach to optimize government efforts to reduce the prevalence of stunting. The convergence approach is to optimize specific and sensitive interventions at the central and regional levels by involving cross-sectors from various government institutions and non-government institutions (private, community, and community) to target priority groups of 1,000 HPK households and other families at risk of stunting in priority locations.

One of the government's efforts to overcome the problem of stunting is through budget intervention. The budget allocation for handling stunting has been distributed through several channels, namely: (i) the APBN which is cross-K/L, includes specific and sensitive interventions, based on the factors causing stunting; and (ii) Transfers to Regions and Village Funds (TKDD) have 3 (three) funds allocated for stunting prevention, namely: Physical DAK, Non-Physical DAK, APBD and Village Funds. Although all of these budgets have different characteristics and objectives, these budgets are converged to help each other in the stunting prevention program.

Budget management in efforts to handle stunting is the main focus for the North Maluku Region, because the prevalence of Stunting in the North Maluku region is still yellow, which places North Maluku in 10th place for regions with stunting rates that are still categorized as the highest compared to other provinces. Based on data from the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI) issued by the Ministry of Health, the Prevalence of Stunting Rates in North Maluku in 2023 was 23.7%, meaning it is still above the national average of 21.5%. The high Stunting rate is feared to affect the development of children at productive ages. North Maluku is the main focus for handling Stunting every year. Based on the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey, North Maluku still has 10 districts and cities in the red category because they are still above the national and provincial targets of 14% in 2024.

Based on this phenomenon, this study is intended to analyze the effectiveness of stunting budget management in North Maluku, especially South Halmahera Regency, which is one of the districts/cities with the highest stunting rates in North Maluku.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Budget Management

A budget is a systematically prepared plan that includes all activities in an organization expressed in monetary units and is valid for a certain period of time in the future (Alimuddin, 2021). The budget is the government's main tool for implementing all its

obligations, promises, and policies into concrete and integrated plans in terms of what actions will be taken, what results will be achieved, at what cost, and who will pay for the costs (Tamasoleng, 2015). The budget plays an important role in the organization and is one of the ways used by the organization to evaluate the performance of its actors (managers) and to distribute authority and responsibility among functions in the organization so that they act to produce something for the organization (Muljo et al., 2014). The budget is used as a tool to support the implementation of programs and activities in accordance with what has been determined by the organization itself and will be a benchmark in assessing the achievement of its performance. Budget preparation is an important stage because the budget must be oriented towards organizational performance so that the planning that has been prepared can be achieved (Sudharma et al., 2022).

### **Regional Financial Management**

Regional finances are all rights and obligations that can be valued in money, as well as everything in the form of money or goods that can be used as regional assets as long as they are not yet owned/controlled by the state or higher regions and other parties in accordance with applicable laws/regulations (Rosnidah et al., 2022). According to Government Regulation No. 12 of 2019, Article 1 paragraph (2) concerning Regional Financial Management, regional financial management is all activities that include planning, budgeting, implementation, administration, reporting, accountability, and supervision of regional finances. The entire management process must be integrated, related, and carried out as well as possible in order to realize good regional financial management (Maulina et al., 2021). Financial management is an important thing that the government must consider because the success of development in a region cannot be separated from the aspect of regional financial management, which is managed with good management (Yassir et al., 2022). Regional financial management must be managed in an orderly manner, in accordance with laws and regulations, effectively, efficiently, economically, transparently, and responsibly while paying attention to the principles of justice, propriety, and benefits for the community (Slamet & Irmadiani, 2022).

### **Effectiveness of Regional Financial Management**

Effectiveness is the relationship between the results achieved and the expected goals or targets. In other words, effectiveness is the relationship between the expected results and the actual results achieved. The greater the contribution of the results to the expectations or goals or targets of an activity, the more effective the organization is, so effectiveness focuses on the outcomes or results that occur (Devinci et al., 2022). Effectiveness can also be understood as the level of achievement of program results with the set targets, or in other words, effectiveness is a comparison between outcomes and outputs (Fathiyah, 2020). The effectiveness of regional financial management is a series of activities carried out by the regional government through planning, implementation, administration, accountability, reporting, and supervision of regional finances in accordance with the time limits that have been set based on the budget that has been provided in order to achieve the goals and targets that have been set in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (Santika et al., 2021). The effectiveness of regional financial management is the completion of activities on time and within the available budget limits, which also means achieving the planned goals and targets. Based on the description, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of regional financial management occurs if: 1) completion of activities is on time, 2) completion of

activities is within the predetermined budget limits, and 3) the goals and targets that have been set are achieved (Syahdi & Bijaang, 2018).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative field research approach with a descriptive character, meaning that the data collected are in the form of words and not numbers. This study was conducted at the Health Office of South Halmahera Regency, BAPPELITBANGDA of South Halmahera Regency, and beneficiaries in Marabose Village, Bacan District, South Halmahera Regency. The informants in this study were the leaders of the Health Office and BAPPELITBANGDA of South Halmahera Regency, who were directly involved in managing the Stunting budget and three beneficiaries of the implementation of the stunting program. In this study, the data collection technique used was a structured interview to deepen the study of the management of the Stunting budget in South Halmahera and to find out what the community received as beneficiaries from the implementation of the stunting prevention program. The data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model data analysis technique (1992, in Sugiyono, 2014:246), which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Effectiveness of Stunting Budget Management**

The effectiveness of regional financial management is a series of activities carried out by the regional government through planning, implementation, administration, accountability, reporting, and supervision of regional finances in accordance with the time limit that has been set based on the budget that has been provided in order to achieve the goals and targets that have been set in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of regional financial management is greatly influenced by the quality of budget planning, discipline in budget implementation, and the ability to carry out supervision and reporting in a transparent and accountable manner. When all these processes are carried out properly, regional financial management can encourage the achievement of development goals, including in accelerating the resolution of problems such as stunting.

Specifically, this study revealed that the budget planning process has been carried out well by involving various stages and coordination between sectors to ensure sensitive interventions and specific interventions in accordance with the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Home Affairs No. 400.5/8476/SJ Concerning the Results of Mapping Programs, Activities and Sub-Activities that Support the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction in Regions based on Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021. The budget planning in South Halmahera Regency was carried out in several stages, such as conducting a stunting situation analysis, determining priority loci based on the highest stunting prevalence rate and intervention target groups, preparing program and activity plans that refer to the National Strategy for Accelerating Stunting Prevention, preparing a Work and Budget Plan (RKA) according to the needs of the stunting reduction acceleration program, discussion in the District-level Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang), program implementation by OPD and village governments with support from the private sector and community organizations if necessary, and monitoring and evaluation carried out through the Stunting Monitoring and

Evaluation System which is integrated with the Regional Development Information System (SIPD).

Furthermore, in the context of managing a stunting program, effectiveness is not only seen from how much budget is allocated, but also from how far the output and outcome of the program contribute to reducing stunting rates which are the main targets. This relationship is reflected in field findings in South Halmahera Regency, where there has been an increase in the budget for stunting control over the past three years, but in reality in 2023 only 9 of the 23 priority activities can be realized optimally. This shows that not all budgets can be translated into real outputs that support the achievement of goals. In other words, the effectiveness of the program has not been fully achieved because there is a gap between the activity targets and the actual results achieved in the field.

However, although not all activities were implemented well, several interventions that were successfully implemented showed positive impacts, both in improving the nutritional status of infants and toddlers, this is in line with the results of interviews with beneficiaries showing improvements in the nutrition of stunted children with assistance from village midwives to conduct regular monitoring of the growth and development of stunted children so that the child can get out of the stunting category, and educate the community about the importance of good nutritional intake for children as well as in building cross-sector involvement and community participation. This shows that effectiveness is not only measured by the quantity of programs running, but also by their quality and impact on targets.

#### **Program Evaluation**

The results of interviews and field observations at BAPPELITBANGDA and the Health Office of South Halmahera Regency showed that there were still shortcomings in the evaluation process of the stunting control program in South Halmahera. Program evaluations are often carried out sectorally without good integration between related agencies (Health Office, Social Service, Bappedalitbangda, etc.). In addition, the use of real-time system data that is able to monitor the development of stunting periodically at the village or sub-district level is also a major shortcoming in the evaluation process and the use of real-time data has not been maximized. Another shortcoming is the limited budget for program evaluation.

Most of the budget is more focused on program implementation than on evaluating its impact. In addition, evaluation programs are often only carried out if there is funding from the central government or donor agencies, not as part of a sustainable regional policy. Furthermore, the lack of community participation in the evaluation process is also a major challenge at this stage. Program evaluations are often carried out by the government without directly involving local communities and beneficiaries. In addition, the participation of Posyandu cadres and health workers in the monitoring program results is still underutilized in the evaluation process.

#### **Inhibiting Factors**

Stunting control in South Halmahera Regency faces various structural, administrative, and social obstacles. One of the main factors is budget constraints and dependence on central funds, which limit regional flexibility in developing programs. In addition, suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination between BAPPELITBANGDA, the Health Office, the Social Office, and other OPDs directly related to convergence interventions often causes programs to run sectorally and overlap. In addition, the use of real-time data for cross-sector OPDs has not been optimal as basic data for interventions. The low capacity of health

services at Puskesmas and Posyandu is a serious obstacle, especially due to limited health workers, lack of facilities, and low community participation in child growth and development monitoring services.

In addition, poverty is also an indicator of the cause of stunting. In poor families, purchasing power to meet the need for nutritious food is very limited. As a result, the intake of protein, vitamins, and minerals needed for optimal child growth is not met. In addition, poverty also limits family access to health services such as pregnancy checks, immunizations, monitoring of child growth and development, and early treatment of diseases that can worsen nutritional status. Low quality of sanitation and clean water in the residential environment. An unhealthy environment increases the risk of recurrent infections, such as diarrhea and respiratory infections, which interfere with the absorption of nutrients in the child's body and worsen nutritional problems. In addition, the level of education of parents, especially mothers, which is generally lower in poor groups, results in minimal knowledge about proper feeding practices for infants and children.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings that have been explained, there has been an increase in the budget for stunting control over the past three years, but in reality, only 9 of the 23 priority activities can be realized optimally in 2023. This shows that not all budgets can be translated into real outputs that support the achievement of goals. In other words, the effectiveness of the program has not been fully achieved because there is a gap between the activity targets and the actual results achieved in the field. The stunting rate in South Halmahera Regency from 2018 to 2023 is still above the national and provincial averages. In addition, the large budget allocation has not had a significant impact on reducing stunting in South Halmahera Regency. In addition, the factors that hinder the effectiveness of stunting control budget management include programs that are designed to be ineffective and integrated, there are still many programs that are still coordinative, the lack of quantity and quality of program organizers, and low community participation.

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