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Preventing stunting increase: "Si Penting" program by UPI's community service in Karangwangi village

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ABSTRACT

This community service highlights the severe issue of *stunting* in Indonesia, notably after the country ranked second in Southeast Asia for the prevalence of toddlers experiencing poor growth in 2018. *Stunting* has become a primary focus of the Indonesian government. The University of Education Indonesia (UPI), as one of the leading institutions in the country, took the initiative to prevent the increase in *stunting* rates through the Thematic Real Work Lecture (KKN-T) program with the theme "Si Penting" (Mahasiswa Peduli Stunting). This community service explores the active role of UPI Si Penting KKN-T students in maintaining the Zero *Stunting* condition in Karangwangi Village. By forming various work programs focused on toddlers, adolescents, and pregnant women, students successfully made positive contributions through activities such as integrated health posts, counseling, awareness campaigns, the CEKAS program, POSBINDU-PTM, the realization of TP-PKK innovations, and the Ketapang Kencana program. The innovative steps taken by TP-PKK and the Karangwangi Village officials create a breakthrough in *stunting* prevention efforts while simultaneously enhancing the village's self-reliance. Thus, the KKN-T "Si Penting" activities provide a concrete solution for the community in Karangwangi Village and inspire improving health services, especially related to *stunting*, at the local level.

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ABSTRAK

Pengabdian pada masyarakat ini menyoroti masalah *stunting* yang menjadi perhatian serius di Indonesia, terutama setelah negara ini menduduki peringkat kedua di Asia Tenggara dalam prevalensi balita yang mengalami pertumbuhan buruk pada tahun 2018. *Stunting* menjadi fokus utama Pemerintahan Indonesia, dan Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), sebagai salah satu institusi terkemuka di Indonesia, mengambil inisiatif untuk mencegah peningkatan angka *stunting* melalui program Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik (KKN-T) dengan tema "Si Penting" (Mahasiswa Peduli Stunting). Pengabdian ini dilaksanakan dalam KKN-T UPI Si Penting dalam mempertahankan kondisi Zero *Stunting* di Desa Karangwangi. Dengan membentuk berbagai program kerja yang difokuskan pada balita, remaja, dan ibu hamil, mahasiswa berhasil memberikan kontribusi positif melalui kegiatan posyandu, konseling, penyuluhan, program CEKAS, POSBINDU-PTM, realisasi inovasi TP-PKK, dan program Ketapang Kencana. Langkah inovatif TP-PKK dan aparat Desa Karangwangi menciptakan gebrakan baru dalam upaya pencegahan *stunting*, sambil meningkatkan kemandirian desa secara keseluruhan. Dengan demikian, kegiatan KKN-T "Si Penting" tidak hanya menjadi solusi konkret untuk masyarakat Desa Karangwangi tetapi juga memberikan inspirasi bagi peningkatan pelayanan kesehatan, terutama terkait *stunting*, di tingkat lokal.

Kata Kunci: keterlibatan masyarakat, pengabdian kepada masyarakat, inovasi program kesehatan, pencegahan *stunting*

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INTRODUCTION

Given that Indonesia ranked second in Southeast Asia in terms of the prevalence of stunted children in 2018 (Andika *et al.*, 2021), stunting has become a critical issue in Indonesia even to this day, making it a priority for the Indonesian government (Maliati, 2023; Pitoyo, 2022). Therefore, UPI, as one of the top universities in Indonesia, has taken steps to prevent an increase in stunting rates through the Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik or Thematic Community Service Program (KKN-T) with the theme "Si Penting" (Mahasiswa Peduli Stunting).

Through the "Si Penting" program, the UPI KKN-T group in Karangwangi Village actively implements various programs to prevent increased stunting rates in the area. The group members include Susilo Aditya Darma, Salsa Nissa Agustin, Raden Ardra Catur Fauzan, Reksa Alamsyah, Meizia Ziharani Gumilang, Ihsani Tamia, Shafira Rahmayanti Setyavi, and Tania Julyandini. In order to achieve the goal of preventing stunting. To achieve the goal of preventing stunting, the KKN-T group implements programs such as stunting awareness campaigns for pregnant women and mothers with infants, promoting Healthy Living Behaviors (Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat, or PHBS), and providing assistance in infant health check-ups at the village health post or posyandu. This program is designed to have a direct positive impact on the community of Karangwangi Village, particularly in the infant health sector.

This collaborative effort reflects the group's commitment to making a direct positive impact on the community of Karangwangi Village, especially in the infant health sector, through various educational and preventive activities. Collaboration with the local community and the implementation of innovative programs are key to mitigating stunting issues at the local level. The KKN-T "Si Penting" program implemented by the UPI KKN-T group in Karangwangi Village has had a positive impact in preventing stunting. The innovative and collaborative steps taken by this group have made a significant contribution to efforts aimed at preventing stunting at the community level. Therefore, this model can serve as inspiration for similar efforts in other regions of Indonesia to reduce stunting prevalence and improve community well-being.

Psychologically, children affected by stunting experience higher levels of psychosocial dysfunction compared to their peers, low self-esteem, and are at risk of developing family issues, particularly during adolescence (Delima *et al.*, 2023; Turrahman, 2022). Children with stunting are prone to anxiety and depression (Tyas & Setyonaluri, 2022). Cognitively, children affected by stunting experience a decline in academic performance or cognitive development (Zizi *et al.*, 2023). Based on the definition, it is clear that children affected by stunting have shorter stature compared to their peers. Children affected by stunting will struggle to excel in sports and physical activities (Annas *et al.*, 2022).

To prevent an increase in stunting rates, efforts can be made by improving mothers' knowledge about stunting prevention from the HPK (1000 Hari Pertama Kehidupan or First 1000 Days of Life) through the provision of supplementary food, vitamin A, and iron tablets. Additionally, stunting can be prevented by improving the health and nutrition of infants, adolescents, prospective brides, pregnant women, and postpartum mothers (Nurfatihah *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, according to Bella *et al.* (2020), good hygiene practices within the family environment can reduce the likelihood of infants experiencing stunting. Therefore, increasing knowledge about stunting and Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat, PHBS) through socialization needs to be implemented to prevent an increase in stunting rates.

To prevent an increase in stunting rates in Karangwangi Village, the UPI KKN group in Karangwangi Village conducted socialization for pregnant women and mothers with infants. The socialization was conducted at several posyandu and PAUD in Karangwangi Village by distributing brochures and providing direct counseling to posyandu mothers. The purpose of the socialization was to inform mothers about the

importance of proper nutrition for children, thereby preventing them from being at risk of stunting. At the Posyandu, health checks for infants and pregnant women were also conducted to monitor and ensure the health and nutritional intake of these individuals, thereby reducing the risk of stunting.

A PHBS awareness campaign was conducted for students at SDN Karang Sari with the aim of creating a cleaner and healthier environment from an early age, thereby preventing bacterial infections in children and infants that can occur in a dirty environment. In addition, PHBS socialization was conducted for students at SDN Karang Sari with the aim of creating a cleaner and healthier environment from an early age, thereby preventing bacterial infections in children and infants that can occur in unhygienic environments.

The purpose of this community service was to inform the public about innovative programs, such as stunting awareness for pregnant women and mothers with toddlers, and the promotion of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat, or PHBS). Additionally, it aimed to assist in health checks for toddlers at the posyandu. This collaborative effort reflects the group's commitment to making a direct positive impact on the community of Karangwangi Village, particularly in the area of infant health, through various educational and preventive activities aimed at reducing stunting rates in each village.

Literature Review

Household and Family Factors

Highlighting the important role of mothers as the main contributors to *stunting* in children (Sari *et al.*, 2023). Conditions such as poor nutrition during preconception, pregnancy, breastfeeding, short stature, IUGR, premature birth, and teenage pregnancy are known to have a significant impact on child growth. Therefore, maternal health care, including nutritional monitoring during these critical phases, is key to preventing stunting. The home environment is another equally important factor (Anjani, 2022). Poor care practices, inadequate sanitation and water supply, food insecurity, and other environmental factors such as parental smoking and overcrowded households all contribute to the risk of stunting. This study confirms that improving the home environment can be an effective strategy to prevent stunting.

Inadequate Complementary Food ASI or Complementary Feeding

Food quality is one of the critical sub-factors in the context of complementary feeding (Alvionita, 2023). Micronutrient deficiencies, lack of dietary diversity, and low intake of animal-sourced foods can have negative impacts on child growth, making them a key focus in stunting prevention strategies. It is essential to recognize how inadequate feeding practices that fail to meet children's nutritional needs can contribute to stunting (Perdani *et al.*, 2016). Inadequate eating patterns, such as irregular feeding or failure to consider children's nutritional needs, have direct implications for the risk of stunting. Food and beverage safety is a key concern, as contaminated food or beverages, as well as poor food hygiene, can increase the risk of disease in children (Hutasoit, 2020). Therefore, improving food safety is an integral part of stunting prevention strategies.

Inadequate Breastfeeding Practices

Inadequate breastfeeding practices are a factor that deserves attention. Delayed breastfeeding initiation, especially in the first six months of a child's life, can reduce the benefits of nutrient-rich colostrum, increase the risk of stunting, and be a major concern in health promotion. Additionally, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life is of utmost importance (Asnidawati & Ramdhan, 2021). Non-exclusive

breastfeeding and early cessation of breastfeeding can exacerbate stunting conditions, and therefore, supporting optimal breastfeeding practices is key in prevention efforts.

Infection

Research conducted by [Allo et al. \(2023\)](#) highlights that infections such as diarrhea, fever, and respiratory infections play a crucial role in the context of stunting in children, especially in poor and rural areas. In this context, these diseases can have serious impacts on children's nutrient absorption and growth, reinforcing the urgency of infection prevention measures as an integral component of efforts to prevent stunting. Therefore, understanding the complex relationship between infection and stunting is essential for designing effective and sustainable prevention strategies to support child growth and development in vulnerable communities ([Ali, 2021](#); [Rahmadhita, 2020](#)).

The literature highlights the role of community and societal factors in determining stunting levels ([Nabillah & Sumarmi, 2023](#); [Kartikawati et al., 2023](#)). Political-economic factors, health and health services, education, society and culture, agriculture and food systems, as well as water, sanitation, and the environment, are all identified as crucial elements influencing children's nutritional status. Therefore, improving access and quality in these areas is considered an integral strategy in efforts to prevent stunting at the community and societal levels.

METHODS

This community service was conducted in Karangwangi Village, located in Ciranjang Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency. The population was 5,781 people in 2023. According to the 2022 SGGI, the prevalence of stunting among children under five in Cianjur Regency decreased to 13.6%, down from the previous rate of around 37%. Currently, Karangwangi Village has achieved zero stunted children, with only six new cases identified. Stunting is a growth and development disorder in children caused by chronic malnutrition and recurrent infections, characterized by height or length below the standards set by the minister responsible for health affairs. *Stunting* in children can be identified by observing height that is less than two standard deviations (-2SD) from the growth standards set by the World Health Organization (WHO), a measurement method that serves as a global reference for understanding children's growth and nutritional health ([Putra & Sadiyyah, 2023](#)).

Stunting, a condition of growth retardation in children, can have various causes ([Beal et al., 2018](#)), including factors such as household and family conditions, inadequate complementary feeding, suboptimal breastfeeding practices, exposure to infections, and community and societal factors.

Thus, the complexity of the factors that influence stunting necessitates a holistic understanding to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies for addressing this issue. The implementation of the KKN activities with the theme "Si Penting" revealed that Karangwangi Village is a stunting-free village; however, six individuals were identified as being at risk of stunting.

Based on this condition, KKN-T UPI students played a role in efforts to maintain and prevent stunting in Karangwangi Village by conducting various activities for the local community. The following are some of the activities carried out in efforts to prevent stunting and their implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Posyandu

Posyandu activity is the primary activity undertaken by UPI KKN-T students. Collaboration with the posyandu cadres of Karangwangi Village is conducted every month. The objective of this program is to assist posyandu activities and directly observe the condition of infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Karangwangi Village. This posyandu activity has a very positive impact. Through this activity, it is possible to monitor the physical and nutritional development of children based on the results of data collection and checks.

The information obtained from this activity can be analyzed and used as a key indicator for preventing stunting in Karangwangi Village. Monitoring of children's growth, data on the number of children, and their growth conditions. The posyandu activities include several measurement activities, such as height, weight, arm circumference, and head circumference. The results of these measurements aim to identify changes from month to month, enabling the early identification of children at risk of stunting so that interventions can be implemented promptly.

The focus of these activities extends beyond infants and toddlers; the condition of pregnant women is also closely monitored. For physical check-ups, the process is the same as for children, but for pregnant women, abdominal circumference measurements are also taken, and counseling sessions with the village midwife are conducted. These measurements aim to assess the nutritional status of pregnant women, as they are at risk of chronic energy deficiency or Kekurangan Energi Kronis (KEK). Counseling sessions for midwives are also provided free of charge by the Posyandu, allowing pregnant women to consult about the growth and development of their fetuses.

Another activity at the Karangwangi Village Posyandu is the Additional Food Distribution (PMT) program. This activity is conducted regularly during Posyandu sessions with the aim of helping to meet the nutritional needs and improve the nutritional status of children and pregnant women according to their requirements.

Stunting Education

Stunting awareness activities were carried out as part of the Si Penting Community Service Program, with a primary focus on mothers. The activities took place at Al-Mubarak PAUD, among pregnant women, and at integrated health service posts, which are strategic locations for achieving the main objectives of the awareness program. In this context, the education program was designed to raise public awareness of stunting and provide parents with important information, enabling them to be more sensitive to the potential for stunting in their children. One of the causes of stunting explained was chronic malnutrition and lack of developmental stimulation in children (Putri, 2020).

In implementing the outreach activities, the KKN-T UPI students introduced an innovation in the form of comprehensive brochures. These brochures summarize all aspects related to stunting while also providing examples of Healthy Kitchen or Dapur Sehat (DASHAT) meal ideas. The purpose of these brochures is to provide practical solutions to parents, emphasizing economical meal options that are high in nutritional value. Through this approach, it is hoped that parents will pay more attention to their children's nutritional intake and enhance efforts to stimulate their development, thereby reducing the risk of stunting in their children. This innovative initiative is anticipated to have a positive impact on community efforts to prevent stunting (Fitri *et al.*, 2022).

Socialization of PHBS

Healthy and Clean Living Behavior, or Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat (PHBS), is the main focus of the UPI Si Penting Community Service Program, particularly with activities targeted at children. One of the PHBS socialization activities was conducted at SDN Karangari in the third grade, with the primary objective of educating students on healthy and clean living behaviors. The material presented covered the scope of PHBS in home, school, and community environments, enabling students to internalize and implement the concept of PHBS in their daily lives.

By bringing PHBS socialization closer to educational environments, such as SDN Karangari, it is hoped that messages about cleanliness and health will be more easily accepted and practiced by students. With awareness cultivated from an early age, it is hoped that these children will become agents of change in their surrounding communities and contribute to improving the quality of clean and healthy living on a broader scale. Through this program, KKN-T UPI Si Penting aims to create a positive impact by fostering sustainable and healthy living habits among children.

CEKAS

CEKAS (Cek Kesehatan or Health Check) initiative is a collaborative effort between the Puskesmas Karangwangi, BKKBN, TP-PKK Desa Karangwangi, and students from the UPI KKN-T. The activity was conducted at SMP IT Daarul Fikri on Wednesday, August 2, 2023. The methods used in CEKAS include weight measurement, height measurement, oral and ear hygiene checks, blood pressure measurement, and hemoglobin (HB) level checks. Additionally, teenagers found to have low hemoglobin levels were provided with Iron Supplements or Pili Tambah Darah (PTD) as a preventive measure.

This collaboration aims to provide holistic health services to teenagers at SMP IT Daarul Fikri. Through the CEKAS program, it is hoped that potential health issues can be detected early, particularly among teenagers who may not be aware of their health conditions. As a result, preventive measures and interventions can be implemented more effectively, contributing positively to health awareness and care at the local community level.

Posbindu-PTM

The Posbindu-PTM program, conducted at the RW 08 Posyandu in Karangwangi Village on Friday (August 18, 2023), is an initiative designed to monitor and understand the health conditions of the community. The activity includes a series of health checks, ranging from a medical history review to measurements of weight, height, and waist circumference, as well as blood pressure and blood sugar level tests. Additionally, Posbindu-PTM provides an opportunity for community members to consult about various aspects of their health.

The primary objective of this activity is to maintain community health while also incorporating preventive and early identification measures for non-communicable diseases. By involving residents in regular health screenings, it is hoped that risks can be identified early and appropriate services can be provided. Furthermore, the Posbindu-PTM activity plays a crucial role in raising public awareness about personal health, helping to reduce the disease burden, and supporting community-level prevention efforts.

Innovations of the TP-PKK in Karangwangi Village and Ketapang Kencana

Due to concerns about stunting, the Karangwangi Village administration has developed several innovations to address and prevent stunting, as well as improve public health services in Karangwangi Village, Ciranjang Subdistrict, Cianjur Regency. Several innovations have been developed by the Tim Penggerak PKK and Karangwangi Village officials, including:

Table 1. TP-PKK Innovation Program

No	Innovations	Objectives
1	GKS (Gerakan Kasih Sayang)	Addressing health issues not covered by the Village Budget (APBDes)
2	KKS (Koin Kasih Sayang)	Developing quality and growing independently
3	SRIKANDI (Sukarelawan Inisiator Tindakan Dini)	Providing assistance to access healthcare facilities promptly
4	SERASI (Saung Pelayanan Masyarakat Siaga)	Providing specialized midwife services to those in need
5	TBM KEMBANG URUAN (Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Kemajuan Pembangunan Generasi Melalui Buku dan Pendidik Anak)	Improving the quality of the younger generation through books, especially for children aged 0-6 years
6.	WIDURI (Wisata Edukasi Pengembangan Diri)	Introducing the surrounding environment, including its facilities

Source: Community Service, 2023

GKS (Gerakan Kasih Sayang) aims to address health issues that are not funded by the village budget (APBDes). This movement or activity is an innovative initiative driven by individuals who voluntarily raise funds from the TP-PKK and village officials. The funds collected are then distributed to community members facing health challenges.

KKS (Koin Kasih Sayang) is an innovation implemented at posyandu with the aim of improving quality and promoting independence. KKS is similar to GKS in that it raises funds, but KKS is placed at every posyandu. KKS boxes are usually filled by people visiting the posyandu, including parents, pregnant women, and posyandu supervisors who are present at the time. The funds are used to meet the needs of the posyandu itself.

SRIKANDI (Sukarelawan Inisiator Tindakan Dini) is a service that responds to sudden health issues in the Karangwangi village community. This rapid response service is carried out by volunteers who are ready to help sincerely when the community needs assistance in being transported to the nearest health facility using the village ambulance.

Village midwives provide SERASI (Saung Pelayanan Masyarakat Siaga) Services to the community according to a set schedule.

TBM KEMBANG BURUAN (Taman Bacaan Masyarakat Kemajuan Pembangunan Generasi Melalui Buku dan Pendidik Anak). This innovation is part of an effort to improve the quality of life for the younger generation through books, especially for children in their early years (0-6 years old). The library is located next to the Village Office. It is directly managed by the TP-PKK, enabling the community, especially children, to visit the library, borrow books, and read in an open area called "buruan" at the Karangwangi Village Office. The library is open every Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

WIDURI (Wisata Edukasi Pengembangan Diri) is an environmental awareness program for young children to help them become more familiar with and knowledgeable about their surroundings, particularly government facilities in their village.

Discussion

The Ketapang Kancana Innovation, also known as the Karangwangi Food Security Program, initiated by the Karangwangi Village Government, represents a significant effort to ensure adequate food availability and nutrition in the community. This program provides funding to Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKMs) or small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) with the primary objective of maintaining the food needs of the Karangwangi Village community. The UMKMs receiving this funding are expected to produce local food products within the village, sell them at prices below market rates to the village community, and create a sustainable economic cycle. The Ketapang Kancana program was initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the Karangwangi Village Government increasingly recognized the importance of food security. Additionally, this policy addresses the issue of stunting as a direct consequence of inadequate nutrition. The issue of stunting requires policies from those in power to control and mobilize relevant parties in the prevention of stunting (Achmad, 2022; Gillespie *et al.*, 2013). This program reflects a comprehensive approach that considers not only the quantity of food but also the nutritional quality provided by the UMKMs involved.

The active participation of various types of UMKMs in this program is one indicator of its success. The UMKMs involved cover various sectors, ranging from freshwater aquaculture, catfish farming, oyster mushroom cultivation, egg-laying chicken production, hybrid duck farming, and broiler chicken farming to rice farmer groups. This diversification enhances the Ketapang Kancana program by providing a range of local food products that meet nutritional standards and remain economically competitive in the local market. By implementing this program, the Karangwangi Village Government hopes to address the decline in food sector productivity and proactively anticipate the occurrence of stunting in the community. Through the empowerment of UMKMs, this program is expected to create sustainable food security and meet the nutritional needs of the community. Community food security is a crucial aspect of collective efforts to prevent and control stunting (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2022; Roesler *et al.*, 2019), and it also significantly contributes to the local economic recovery and the overall well-being of the Karangwangi Village community.

CONCLUSION

The Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) activity of UPI students, themed "Si Penting" or "Mahasiswa Peduli Stunting," directly contributed to the community in Karangwangi Village, Ciranjang Sub-district, Cianjur Regency. With the "Zero Stunting" status in Karangwangi Village, the Village Government of Karangwangi and the TP-PKK of Karangwangi Village have developed an innovative approach to health services, particularly in addressing stunting. There are many causes of stunting, one of which is malnutrition. The collaboration between UPI's KKN-T students and all parties involved in Karangwangi Village is a concrete action to prevent stunting and provide community services. Activities such as Posyandu, CEKAS, and POSBINDU-PTM are forms of concern to ensure that people of all ages can understand their health conditions.

Six innovations implemented by Karangwangi Village represent a breakthrough that will enable each village to become self-reliant, more concerned about community health, and quicker to respond to urgent needs. In addition to the six innovations, the Ketapang Kancana program was created and implemented to ensure food security and adequate nutrition in Karangwangi Village. The Ketapang Kancana program is a crucial pillar in preventing stunting by ensuring adequate food and nutritional needs are met at

economical prices. The programs and policies implemented cannot bring about immediate change, but their continued implementation will have a positive impact on overall health, particularly in preventing stunting and ensuring Karangwangi Village remains stunting-free.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article. The author confirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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