Budget Politics in the Implementation of Social Assistance Programs
(Case Study of Stunting Programs in Depok City)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the case study of the Stunting Program. The case study aims to find out how the role of the Depok City Provincial Government in preparing budget allocations in budgeting for social assistance for stunting programs in Depok City and how the implementation of the stunting social assistance program in Depok City itself sees that there are still several problems in the implementation process. By reviewing the case study, it is hoped that later it can provide solutions and improvements in the implementation of social assistance in the stunting program in Depok City. The prevalence of stunting in Depok City fluctuates from year to year. In achieving a reduction in stunting rates in toddlers, especially through regional financial policies and the APBD, the Depok City government must consider the regional financial situation and set development priorities. The research method used in this study is qualitative with a case study strategy that is analyzed descriptively and the number of respondents is 2 informants. The result of this study is that there is still a lack of data optimization in the synchronization of beneficiary data and a lack of public awareness of the importance of stunting reduction programs. Therefore, the recommendation of this study is the need for the role and cooperation of all parties involved, both internal and external, as well as increasing socialization media to provide confirmation about the importance of preventing stunting. This research provides a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in implementing the stunting program in Depok City

Keywords: Stunting Program, Budget, Depok City

INTRODUCTION

Stunting is one of the essential nutritional health problems in children, especially in poor and developing countries (Beal et al., 2018; Haque et al., 2022; Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014; Syaekhu et al., 2023; Yani et al., 2023). This is due to insufficient or long-lasting lack of nutrition, because of which the child grows shorter than normal children of his age. In early childhood, malnutrition will inhibit physical development with the risk of pain, mental inhibition, and death (WHO, 2015). At the local level, one of the regions that is still struggling to overcome the stunting problem is West Java Province. In 2022, stunting in West Java reached 99,070. Depok City is one of the areas in West Java that shows that there are still stunting cases. In 2022, the stunting rate in Depok City reached 3,141 (BPS Jawa Barat, 2023).

It is said in the 2022 Depok City Government Agency Performance Report, the Depok City Health Office has several main problems, both external and internal. One of the main problems faced is the existence of stunting toddlers in Depok City. This is because stunting is a national priority program, which if not immediately overcome optimally and seriously, will have a wide impact on human development, especially competitiveness in the future (BPS Jawa Barat, 2023).

To reduce the number of stunting children under five, especially through regional financial policies and the APBD, the Depok city government must pay attention to regional financial conditions and the scale of development priorities. The program to reduce stunting in Depok City gets a budget from the realization of a separate budget to be able to run the program. Based on the Depok City Revised Budget for Fiscal Year 2022, it is known that the Total Expenditure Budget of the Depok City Health Office is Rp. 800,471,623,684,- while for the realization of
expenditure of Rp. 678,988,482,972, - (84.82%) the Health Office Budget that supports the achievement of the stunting percentage indicator is Rp. 5,300,654,440,- absorbed by Rp. 4,959,270,573.00, - (93.56%), so that there is a remaining budget of Rp. 341,383,867, - (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan dan Penelitian Pengembangan Daerah Kota Depok, 2022).

Based on data from the 2022 Depok City Government Financial Statements, there are several problems that need to be strengthened in dealing with stunting, such as the role of policy actors by involving cross-programs and cross-sectors, providing budget support to support programs, optimizing reporting between local governments and the central government. These problems show that stunting prevention requires stronger collaboration between various policy stakeholders and sectors, adequate budget support, and bureaucratic improvements. Thus, the process in budget politics is a very important part of efforts to overcome stunting. According to Hyde (1978), budget politics functions as a determining tool in formulating various policies that are implemented in the budget preparation process. Budget politics must focus on the appropriate allocation of resources to combat stunting. The participation and coordination of actors and the community in the entire development process from planning to evaluation is an important element in overcoming the stunting problem. Human development seeks to improve the health level and nutritional condition of the community through empowerment and attention to health (Syaekhu et al., 2022). This development approach requires support from various sectors, including financial aspects, equitable provision of health services, improvement of maternal and child health and nutrition status, more effective disease control, improvement of access and quality of basic health services, and meeting the needs of health workers (Dieleman et al., 2017; M. Wang et al., 2020; Y. Wang et al., 2022).

METHODS

The research uses a qualitative approach with a focus on in-depth analysis of the relationship between budget politics and the implementation of the Stunting Program in Depok City. This approach allows researchers to understand the dynamics of budget politics and other factors that influence program implementation in more depth. The research focuses on the relationship between budget allocations and the implementation of the Stunting Program, providing specific insights into how budget policies influence the effectiveness of public health programs. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with informants who had a clear understanding of the research object, namely the Depok City BAPPEDA and the Depok City Health Service. This approach ensures that the data obtained is of good quality and depth. Apart from primary data, the research also uses secondary data consisting of documents related to the budget and implementation of the social assistance stunting program in Depok City, as well as other sources such as research reports, articles, and journals. relevant to the research theme. This approach enriches the analysis by supporting findings from primary data with additional information from various sources. The data analysis techniques used through the Miles et, al model data analysis technique (Suprianto, 2024) are by data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Budget Allocation for the 2024 Stunting Program in Depok City

A budget is a plan that has been structured in the form of numbers and presented in monetary units which includes activities in an organization within a period of one year (Fuad et al., 2020). Through clear and detailed budgeting, we can ensure that each aspect of the stunting program, especially in 2024, gets the necessary resources. This can include facilities and infrastructure, operational costs, and necessary resources. Good budgeting is budgeting that includes a contingency plan to be able to overcome possible obstacles or even unexpected changes in the
situation during the implementation of the program. In addition, it can also monitor the extent to which the stunting program in 2024 can run with the planning process. In other words, budgeting is an important element to be able to measure program performance and development. If the achievements carried out succeed in achieving their goals, such as in achieving targets, improving the quality of service, and satisfying the actors involved, it can be said that the budget is effective and efficient.

Thus, budgeting in the stunting program can be a measure of how the program can run according to its goals. Depok City, as one of the regions that has priority programs related to stunting. In 2024, the Depok city government allocates a budget of IDR 192,646,514,680.00 for the budget allocation for handling stunting in the 2024 APBD draft, which is focused on several components of the calculation and involves the Health Office, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, the Food Security Office, the Population and Civil Registration Office, the Public Works/Cipta Karya Office, the Social Service, the Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Office and the Communication and Information Service.

Based on the strategic and planned budget allocation data above, it is hoped that the Stunting program in Depok City 2024 can run well to achieve its main goal, which is to significantly reduce the stunting prevalence rate. In the implementation process, continuous supervision and evaluation are needed to be able to ensure that every budget allocation given can have a positive impact on people in need.

**Budget Politics in the Implementation of the Stunting Program in Depok City**

The implementation of financial governance has been regulated in of Law Number 17 of 2003 Concerning State Finance Article 3. The law explains that budget politics is part of the implementation of financial governance, which is carried out systematically, based on legislation, effective, efficient, transparent and responsible by realizing the principles of justice and decency. Through the legislation, there are six processes in state or regional financial management, including: (1) the planning process, (2) the language of budgeting, (3) budget ratification, (4) implementation, (5) supervision, (6) and evaluation. The following is the author's analysis related to the implementation of financial governance in the stunting program in Depok City based on the results of interviews with Depok City BAPPEDA informants:

1. **Budget Planning**

Budget planning is the process of preparing a financial plan including income and financing, which is allocated to activities that have been made in accordance with the functions and goals to be achieved (Khusaini 2019:4). The Regional Development Planning and Research Agency (Bappeda) has an important role because it is fully responsible for a series of processes in planning and evaluating stunting programs in Depok City which are carried out in a transparent, accountable, and aligned manner with sufficient commitment, mature data and analysis also involve various related parties.

Before entering the budget planning process, analyzing situational data is the initial stage that must be done. The analysis that includes this data is collected by the Health Office regarding specific and sensitive intervention services. This analysis aims to find areas with low coverage. The data analyzed also aims to show the various obstacles faced, and the suggestions made to solve the problem. After the activity plan is prepared, the next process is to include it in the development planning. Determining the ceiling or budget needs is the main focus in the current year. This budget can constantly change according to the APBD, and this planning process requires constant supervision. In the budgeting process for stunting prevention, there is an activity called Rembuk Stunting. This activity starts from the city level to the whole. Thus, through this community-involving activity, the stunting program planning process shows the importance of multisectoral collaboration and reflects that the success achieved cannot be separated from the collaboration funds from various sectors.
2. **Budget Discussion**

In the discussion and preparation process, the Depok City government involved internal actors from various regional apparatus and the Stunting Handling Acceleration Team (TPPS). In addition to these internal actors, external actors are also involved in the discussion of this budget. The Depok City Government involves the community, zakat, alms, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) institutions through companies that actively participate in this stunting prevention program. The involvement of these actors plays a role in supporting funding, resources and programs.

The power dynamics between stakeholders involved in the stunting control program are generally collaborative. Each program in each sub-activity has been regulated in the latest Permendagri 050 regarding the results of verification, validation and inventory of classification, codification and nomenclature of regional development and financial planning. In 2024, the budget allocation for stunting in Depok City is IDR 211,113,937,950.00 for the budget allocation for handling stunting in the 2024 APBD draft. This is seen based on the 29 indicators of essential services if the focus is directed to the indicators with the lowest coverage. Based on the 2024 RPJM data, there has been an increase in data on stunted children in Depok City when compared to the previous year. This is seen based on the coverage of toddlers weighed in posyandu has increased, with a percentage of 85%. This increase then reveals other aspects based on the audit of stunting cases.

3. **Budget Validation**

After going through a comprehensive planning and budgeting process, the next step is budget approval. Budget approval is the third stage to ensure that all plans that have been made can be implemented effectively. Through this process, it brings great hope to be able to reduce the prevalence of stunting and improve the quality of life of children in Depok. This stage discusses the General Budget Policy and Temporary Budget Ceiling Priorities (KUA-PPAS). KUA-PPAS is a frame of reference in the preparation of the APB and also involves the legislative and executive bodies, where the budget plan is adjusted to the priorities of city development and the availability of funds.

In Depok City itself, the budget allocation for the stunting program comes from various sources, through the APBD. For example, from the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) from the central government. In addition, there are also fiscal incentives from the Ministry of Finance that are allocated. The Depok City Government is trying to increase the allocation of funds for stunting programs in order to reach more children and provide more effective interventions. The budget ratification, which has involved coordination from the legislature and the executive, reflects that every step that will be taken is in line with the city's development priorities. Of course, collaborative efforts like this, assisted by significant fund allocation, show the willingness of the Depok City Government to improve the health and welfare of children in Depok City, as well as achieve the Zero New Stunting target in the future.

4. **Budget Implementation**

Budget implementation is an aspect that is considered important. This is because it can be ascertained whether the budget that has been planned and approved is really allocated and used in accordance with the goals and priorities that have been set. Stunting prevention in Depok City is carried out through various activities that are not in the form of cash stones because some of the non-cash assistance provided can be in the form of food such as the consumption of fish, eggs and meat that have been provided by the Food Security, Agriculture and Fisheries Service (DKPPP) for families affected by stunting. Then, through the program of utilizing the Sustainable Food Yard (P2R) or sustainable food house which aims to help residents obtain sufficient nutritional coverage. Assistance through the Social Service in the
form of food such as rice and eggs and food in the form of chicken for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and babies provided by P3. This effort is carried out to ensure that the affected families can meet their nutritional needs properly. In its efforts, of course, it is inseparable from the coordination between various agencies or work units which is carried out regularly and continuously to ensure that the implementation of the stunting program is carried out evenly. Thus, effective budget implementation is the key to the success of the stunting control program in Depok City can run according to the plan and achieve the targets that have been set.

5. Budget Supervision

In an effort to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the stunting program, monitoring and evaluation are carried out. Evaluation of the implementation of the stunting program in Depok City was carried out through the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS). This evaluation is carried out based on the activities that have been carried out with indicators based on the results of the data that has been recapped. This is done to see the progress that occurs compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, an evaluation of the budget realization is also carried out to be able to ensure that the allocation of funds is in accordance with the implementation of the program. Through this evaluation, it is hoped that it can find out the potential that must be improved in improving performance.

Regarding budget transparency, the Depok city government also implements a mechanism that can be managed by the wider community. The same is true for the Depok City Government village fund which has used the type 4 self-management method. This self-management encompasses sanitation activities which are also the scope of sensitive services of stunting. This method includes community by community for community which means that the community not only implements but also manages and is responsible for and supervises this activity. This budget transparency information can be seen through the BANGDA application which contains related to the stunting program, budgeting reports that have been carried out every 2 times a year from the provincial level to the central level.

6. Budget Evaluation

The evaluation of stunting control in Depok City is based on achievement indicators that have been achieved through three stages, first an evaluation is carried out on the prevalence of stunting to find out the decline that occurs from time to time, then seen from service coverage data, and through an evaluation carried out based on the consideration of specific data audits through the distribution of social assistance in various regions. By considering these aspects, the evaluation can provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of stunting control to be able to help make progress and make further improvements or adjustments.

The results of this evaluation itself then become the basis for formulating more effective and efficient recommendations for the following year. Through the analysis of prevalence data, edits, and specific data related to stunting distribution at various levels, it is possible to identify areas that require greater attention. The recommendations given can be in the form of strategies, resource allocation, and improvement of programs that have proven successful in reducing stunting rates. Thus, evaluation is an important instrument in the planning process until the implementation of a sustainable program and responsive to the needs of the community.

Through a comprehensive planning, budgeting, implementation, and supervision process, as well as support from various sources, Depok City is committed to dealing with stunting problems effectively and efficiently. This collaborative effort shows the willingness of the Depok City Government to improve the health and welfare of children and achieve the Zero New Stunting target.
Implementation of Stunting in Depok City

The regulation written in Depok Mayor Regulation Number 99 of 2022 is the basis for the Depok City government's efforts to deal with stunting. According to Cashore (2014), a policy is an action that has a goal and a way to achieve it. This shows the government's commitment to achieving the program's goals by using regulations as a tool to measure success and failure. Through these regulations, the convergence of interventions in dealing with stunting in Depok City is clearly realized, ensuring that each stakeholder has specific functions and tasks.

Policy implementation is used as a process that is based on administrative actions (Grindle, 2017; Akib, 2010; Aslinda & Ibrahim, 2014; Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014; Zainal et al., 2019). The implementation of regulations regarding the provision of social assistance in stunting control is manifested in various specific intervention activities. Starting from the provision of facilities and infrastructure related to health services to socialization regarding the provision of infant and child food to cadres and the community. The Depok City Health Office plays a key role in this specific intervention, focusing on direct action to address the nutritional and health problems that cause stunting. This intervention has a role of 30%, while 70% is through sensitive interventions outside of health.

However, in its implementation, there are several problems faced. One of them is related to procurement rules in the distribution of social assistance. Fears of procurement procedural errors often hinder the delivery of assistance in urgent situations, although they are important for the emergency context. To overcome this, the Depok City Health Office uses philanthropy to collect the needed assistance without being bound by strict procurement rules.

On the other hand, efforts to socialize non-health activities also face a major obstacle, namely the lack of community participation. Even though socialization media and educational programs have been prepared, there are still many people who do not actively participate for various reasons. To overcome this, the Depok City government collaborates with urban villages and health centers, as well as involving community leaders in an effort to increase community participation.

Program evaluation is key in ensuring the effectiveness of the interventions carried out (Arhas et al., 2022; Nasrullah et al., 2020; Niswaty et al., 2020). Evaluations are carried out regularly every week to monitor developments and receive input from the community. This allows for continuous adjustments and improvements in the program. In the context of distributing social assistance, dynamics in distribution, such as the lack of food portions in the Supplemental feeding program, are a concern. The Depok City Health Office conducts socialization regarding the food menu provided and ensures the quality of nutrition in accordance with standards. The use of the e-PPBGM system as a reference for setting targets for aid recipients also ensures transparency and accuracy in distribution.

In securing political support and funding, the Depok City Health Office prioritizes budget allocation in accordance with the regional medium-term development plan and nationally, focusing on stunting social assistance programs. Through these measures, funding and political support can be directed towards the program in the long term.

Cooperation with stakeholders and good communication are key in overcoming obstacles and challenges that arise. Through productive discussions and open coordination, the resources needed to support stunting reduction can be secured and allocated effectively.

In the overall implementation of the stunting social assistance program in Depok City, transparency, active community participation, regular evaluation, and coordination between institutions are key factors in achieving the program's goals. By improving and overcoming the obstacles that arise, the Depok City government is making great efforts to overcome the problem of stunting and improve the welfare of its people.
Challenges and Obstacles

The stunting reduction program in Depok City faces a variety of complex and diverse challenges despite the budget and resources that have been allocated. One of the main challenges is the need for reinforcement in data synchronization. The Regional Development Planning and Research Agency (BAPPEDA), which is responsible for the planning, budgeting, and implementation of stunting programs, has experienced serious obstacles in the implementation of this program. These obstacles include audit problems and low incentives for cadres, which have an impact on their performance in making optimal contributions to the stunting program. In addition, data verification in the field, especially data collection at the health center level, takes a long time.

The Depok City Health Office also faces obstacles with target data on aid recipients that are often not updated. In specific interventions in the health sector, such as the provision of quality food assistance, they cannot act independently because they are bound by bureaucratic procedures that must be in accordance with the initial planning. The data is not up to date, causing last year's recipients to only get assistance the following year, even though priorities have changed. The Health Office hopes for budget support from the non-government sector to overcome this problem.

Ideally, stunting data should include other beneficiaries who also need attention related to stunting. This dynamic shows the importance of cooperation and clear communication between various parties to ensure that social assistance is distributed appropriately and efficiently to beneficiaries. To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to strengthen the government bureaucratic system, especially in optimizing recording and reporting. This includes the application of the latest information technology, training for field officers to improve the accuracy of data input, and improved coordination between related agencies. With a more effective and efficient bureaucratic system, stunting reduction programs can run more smoothly and social assistance can be distributed on target to people in need.

CONCLUSION

Reducing the prevalence of stunting in Depok City has indeed been achieved, but it is important to understand how the dynamics of the planning and implementation process work. The Role of the Regional Government and Budget Allocation, the Depok City Regional Government plays a very important role in determining the budget for the stunting program. They conduct needs analysis, plan activities, and ensure budgets are used appropriately. This is important so that all aspects of the program get the necessary resources and run effectively. The implementation of the budget includes various assistance activities, such as the provision of additional food and social assistance. Coordination between agencies and cooperation with universities helps educate the public. Supervision is carried out through various institutions to ensure transparency. Overall, the Depok City Government seeks to overcome stunting through comprehensive planning, budgeting, implementation, and supervision. Support from various parties is very important to achieve the target and improve the welfare of children in Depok. Periodic evaluations and collaborations between agencies as well as active community participation are the keys to the success of this program.

REFERENCES


