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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACCELERATED STUNTING REDUCTION PROGRAM THROUGH CONVERGENCE ACTION IN NORTH LAMPUNG REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the stunting reduction acceleration program through convergence actions and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence its success in North Lampung Regency. The findings of this research are expected to provide recommendations for improving the program's implementation. Supporting factors can be maintained and strengthened, while inhibiting factors need to be addressed with appropriate solutions so that the program can be carried out with better quality and sustainability. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews with 15 informants as well as document reviews from relevant institutions. The measurement of effectiveness was conducted using three approaches: input effectiveness, process effectiveness (covering planning, implementation, and evaluation), and output effectiveness. Based on these approaches, the study concludes that the acceleration program for stunting reduction through convergence actions in North Lampung Regency in 2023 has not yet achieved effective outcomes. This is due to limited understanding among program implementers regarding convergence-based stunting reduction strategies, as well as insufficient optimization of funding sources, particularly from the private sector.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Stunting, Convergence Action to Accelerate Stunting Reduction, Evaluation of Stunting Reduction Program

Introduction

Indonesian children under five represent the nation's future generation who will play a crucial role in the coming decades, particularly when the country enters its centennial of independence (Sufri et al., 2024). They are not only considered as heirs but also as potential future leaders who will shape the direction of national development (Sevilla et al., 2024). However, a significant proportion of children still face chronic nutritional problems, particularly stunting. This condition hampers physical growth, delays cognitive development, and reduces the quality of human resources in the long term.

Recognizing its serious implications, the Indonesian government has placed stunting reduction as a national priority program (Kridawati, Citrawati, et al., 2024). The acceleration of stunting reduction is carried out through a convergence approach that involves multiple sectors, both at the national and local levels, to ensure that interventions are implemented in an integrated and coordinated manner (Suharto et al., 2022). This was reaffirmed during the National Working Meeting of BKKBN on January 25, 2023, where the President emphasized that improving human resource quality is the key to competing globally. Accordingly, the 2020–2024 National

Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) sets a target of reducing stunting prevalence among children under two years of age to 14%.

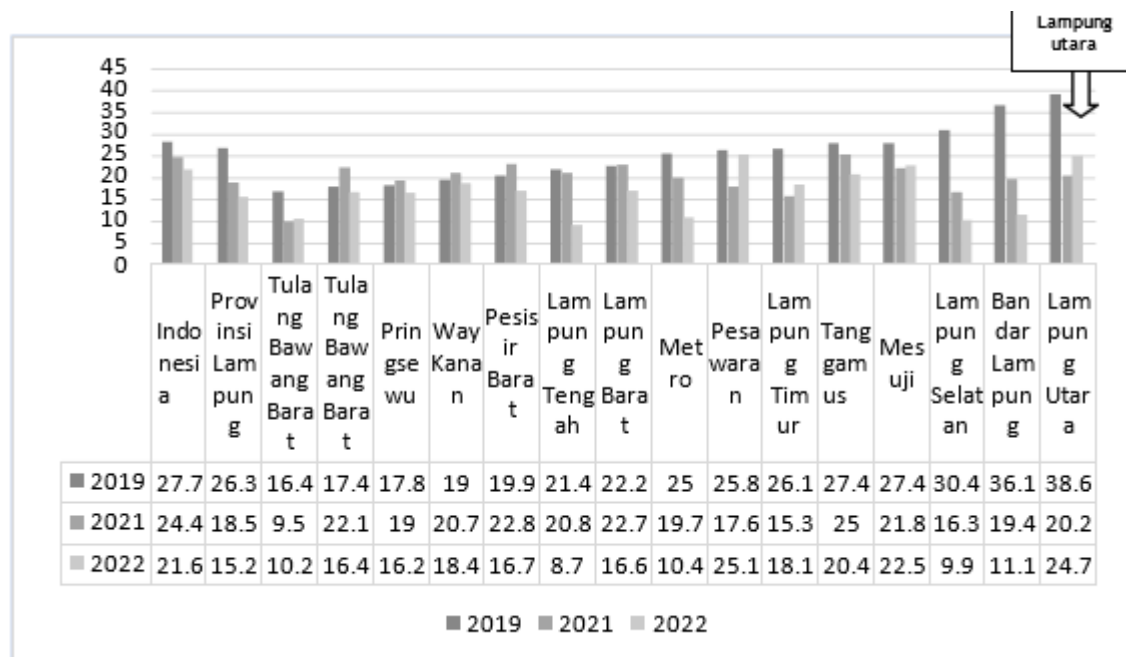


Figure 1. Prevalence of short stature (stunting) in SSGI districts/cities in Indonesia and Lampung Province in 2019, 2021, and 2022

Data from the *Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI)* in 2022 indicate that the national stunting prevalence remains at 21.6%, meaning that nearly one in four children under five are affected. This figure categorizes Indonesia at a moderate level according to World Health Organization (WHO) standards. In Lampung Province, the prevalence was recorded at 15.2%, lower than the national average. However, North Lampung Regency reported 24.7% in the same year, significantly higher than both provincial and national levels. This reflects a regional gap that requires urgent and targeted intervention.

Stunting poses both short- and long-term consequences. In the short term, it increases infant and child mortality rates as well as susceptibility to infectious diseases. In the long term, it impairs learning capacity, delays motor development, heightens the risk of chronic illnesses in adulthood, and perpetuates the *intergenerational cycle of stunting*. The first 1,000 days of life are considered a critical period for ensuring optimal child growth and development. Nutritional deficiencies or inadequate care during this period substantially increase the risk of stunting.

Since 2020, North Lampung Regency has implemented eight convergence actions to address stunting, including situational analysis, program planning, stunting consultations, human development cadre training, data management systems, monitoring and publication, and performance evaluation. Nevertheless, the prevalence of stunting in this region has shown fluctuating trends and even increased again in 2022, indicating that the program has not yet achieved optimal effectiveness.

The persistence of high stunting rates in North Lampung calls for an academic assessment of the effectiveness of convergence actions. Such an evaluation is essential to measure the extent to which the program has been implemented in line with its objectives, to identify supporting factors that should be maintained, and to address inhibiting factors that must be resolved. Therefore, this study aims to provide strategic recommendations for the local government to enhance the quality of stunting reduction programs, making them more effective, efficient, and sustainable.

Literature Review

a. *Effectiveness*

Effectiveness is generally understood as the extent to which an activity, program, or organization achieves its intended goals and objectives. Susetio et al., (2025) defines effectiveness as the ability of an organization to produce outputs in accordance with predetermined expectations. Izah et al., (2024) emphasizes that effectiveness involves the deliberate and optimal use of resources, facilities, and infrastructure to produce goods and services. Hamka & Ibrahim (2025), propose three main approaches to measure effectiveness. The resource approach (input) focuses on the ability of an organization to acquire and mobilize both tangible and intangible resources needed to support its operations. The process approach evaluates the efficiency of internal processes such as planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as the extent to which organizational activities are well-coordinated (Barusman et al., 2020). Finally, the goal approach (output) measures the degree to which predetermined objectives have been achieved and whether these goals are realistic and beneficial. Effectiveness can also be analyzed from multiple perspectives. Rahmawati & Harahap (2022), effectiveness reflects how well an organization adapts to its environment and responds to changing demands. Kridawati, Sunita, et al., (2024) highlights that organizational effectiveness must be dynamic, meaning it should not only measure past achievements but also assess future adaptability. In the public administration context, effectiveness is closely linked to public policy outcomes, where success is measured not only by the completion of programs but also by their impact on society. In the field of development programs, effectiveness is often evaluated by examining the sustainability of outcomes, the participation of stakeholders, and the alignment between resources and needs. In this study, the concept of effectiveness is applied to measure the success of the stunting reduction acceleration program through convergence actions in North Lampung Regency. The assessment considers input aspects (such as human resources, funding, and facilities), process aspects (including planning, coordination, implementation, and evaluation), and output aspects (program outcomes and impact). Thus, effectiveness in this context is not only about achieving short-term goals but also about ensuring long-term sustainability, improving the quality of program delivery, and strengthening institutional capacity in addressing stunting.

b. *Stunting*

Stunting is a condition of impaired growth and development experienced by children due to chronic malnutrition, recurrent infections, and poor parenting practices, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life. The Indonesian Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 defines stunting as growth failure marked by a child's height-for-age being below the standard set by the Ministry of Health. According to Sufri et al., (2024) stunting is a cyclical phenomenon—children who are stunted are more likely to give birth to children who also experience stunting, especially when maternal nutrition during pregnancy is inadequate. Stunting not only affects physical growth but also hampers cognitive development, motor skills, and productivity later in life. Sevilla et al., (2024) emphasized that stunting is measured by comparing a child's length or height with internationally recognized growth standards, where a child is considered stunted if their measurement falls below two standard deviations of the WHO Child Growth Standards median. The causes of stunting are categorized into three groups by UNICEF: basic causes, which include poverty, economic inequality, and weak social systems; underlying causes, such as inadequate household food security, insufficient maternal and child care, and lack of health services; and immediate causes, which involve inadequate dietary intake and infectious diseases. Addressing stunting therefore requires multisectoral collaboration that integrates health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, and community empowerment interventions (Suharto et al., 2022)

c. *Convergence Actions*

Convergence in the context of stunting reduction refers to an integrated, coordinated, and collaborative approach that engages multiple sectors and stakeholders to ensure that nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions reach target households. Regulated under Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021, convergence actions consist of eight steps, namely situation analysis, activity planning, stunting deliberation (*rembuk stunting*), review of village regulations, coaching of Human Development Cadres (KPM), strengthening of data management systems, measurement and publication of stunting data, and annual performance review. These actions are designed to guarantee that stunting reduction efforts are based on accurate data, well-coordinated planning, community participation, and sustainable policy support (Zahtamal et al., 2024). The success of convergence actions largely depends on effective intersectoral collaboration, the competence of human resources, sufficient

financial support, and consistent program evaluation (Kusuma & Kurnia, 2025). When properly implemented, convergence actions serve as the foundation for sustainable stunting reduction at both national and local levels (Nahak & Nitsae, 2024).

d. Conceptual Framework

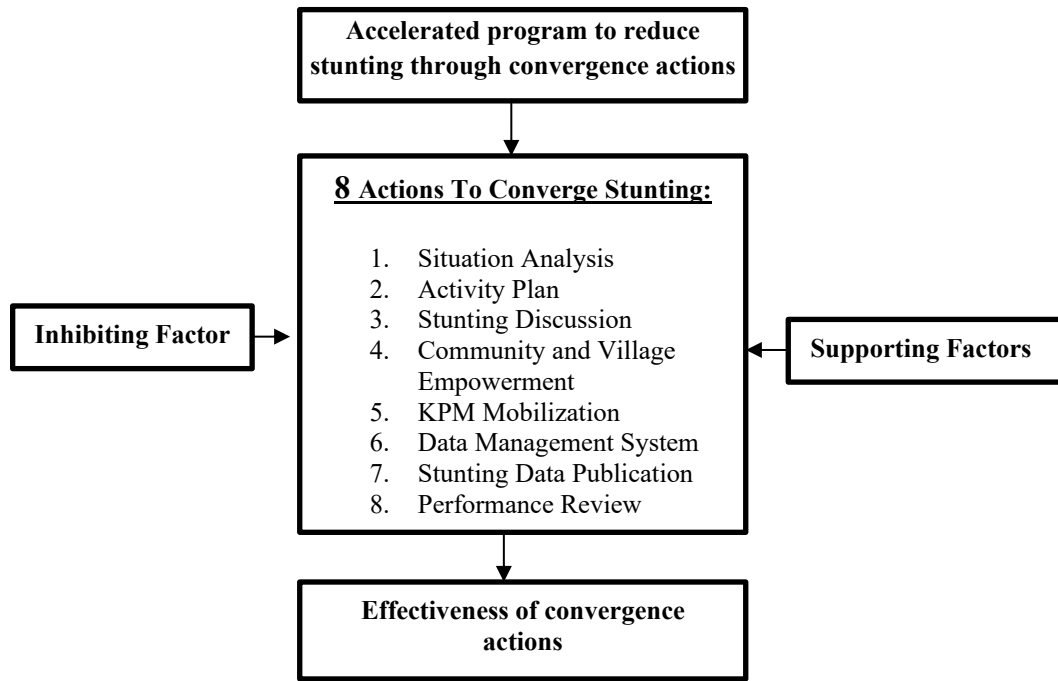


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study applied a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the effectiveness of the stunting reduction acceleration program through convergence actions in North Lampung Regency (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The research site was chosen purposively due to the high prevalence of stunting and the active implementation of convergence programs in the area. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, involving 15 participants consisting of policymakers from local government agencies, health officers, human development cadres, and service recipients such as pregnant women, parents, and families with stunted children. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews using open-ended questions, participatory observation of program implementation, and document analysis of official reports and policy documents from relevant agencies. The researcher served as the main instrument, supported by interview guides, recording devices, and field notes. Data analysis was conducted inductively through the stages of reduction, categorization, presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns and insights relevant to the research objectives. Program effectiveness was assessed using three dimensions: input effectiveness (availability of resources), process effectiveness (planning, implementation, and evaluation), and output effectiveness (achievement of program outcomes). To ensure validity and reliability, data triangulation was employed by cross-checking information from interviews, observations, and documents, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Result and Discussion

a. Resource Efficiency

The discussion on the effectiveness of the stunting reduction program is carried out through an evaluation of each stage, from planning to implementation, including an analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors. The main focus of resource planning lies in the quality of human resources (HR) and budget allocation. The HR involved consists of government officials within the regional apparatus organizations (OPD) that are part of the coordination team, as well as field implementers such as human development cadres (KPM) and village midwives. Interview findings reveal that most OPD officials do not yet fully understand stunting. They generally recognize stunting as a nutritional problem in children but fail to specify that it is a condition where a child's height falls below the standard for their age. Knowledge about the stages of convergence actions is also limited. Out of 12 informants, 10 admitted they were unfamiliar with the stages, while one only knew that the convergence program consists of eight stages. One informant stated:

"I do not yet know in detail what needs to be carried out in the convergence actions for stunting as a whole. Regarding program planning, we only include it according to the programs prepared by each technical division in charge." (IK, 55 years old).

In contrast, field implementers showed better understanding. Health cadres, who work alongside midwives in the early detection of child growth, and KPM, who are selected through village deliberations, were able to explain clearly the meaning, causes, and prevention of stunting. One cadre explained:

"Stunting is a condition where a child's growth is hampered, making them shorter or much shorter than the ideal height for their age. Prevention must start early, and we usually begin by monitoring married couples of reproductive age. If a midwife learns of a pregnant woman who has not visited the health post, she will usually go directly to the woman's house to check her condition." (FR, 36 years old).

These findings indicate that health cadres and KPM have adequate knowledge due to their direct interaction with the community, while OPD officials still require capacity building regarding the substance of stunting and the stages of convergence actions. This highlights the importance of continuous training for government officials and stronger collaboration with field implementers to enhance the overall effectiveness of stunting reduction programs.

Funding sources are a crucial component in supporting the implementation of convergence actions to reduce stunting. In 2023, North Lampung Regency allocated a total budget of IDR 22,003,509,500. This allocation consisted of IDR 8,730,051,232 from the Regional Budget (APBD), IDR 11,974,601,267 from the State Budget (APBN), and IDR 1,258,673,386 from the Village Budget (APBDes). These funds were directed to finance various programs and activities aimed at accelerating the reduction of stunting prevalence.

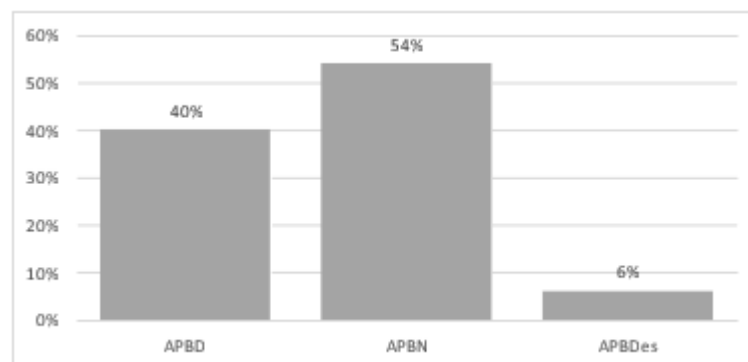


Figure 3. Comparison of Stunting Budgets in North Lampung

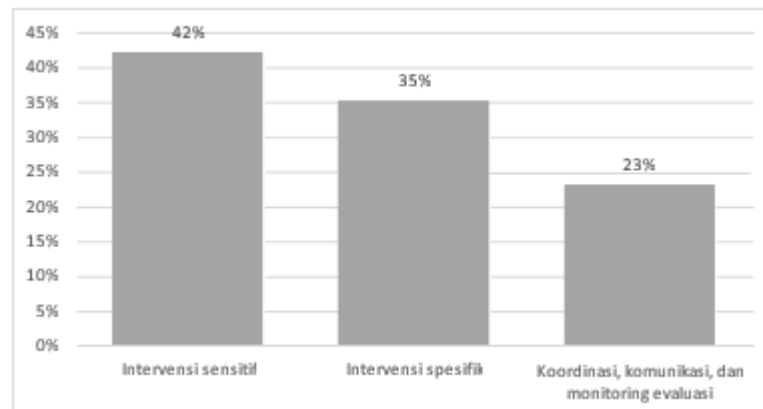


Figure 4. Comparison of intervention types

The budget distribution was arranged proportionally between sensitive and specific interventions. Sensitive interventions cover strategic sectors such as education, health, and basic infrastructure that broadly influence community welfare. Meanwhile, specific interventions are focused on addressing chronic malnutrition and the direct causes of stunting, such as improving maternal and child health services, providing adequate nutrition, and ensuring access to clean water. The proportion of funding between these interventions was determined based on the urgency and scale of problems in each area.

Beyond budget allocation, program success also relies heavily on effective inter-agency coordination, cross-sector communication, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Coordination is essential to ensure that programs run synergistically, while communication guarantees that all stakeholders are well-informed about objectives, progress, and challenges. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out regularly to assess the effectiveness of interventions, identify obstacles, and provide feedback for improvements, so that program implementation can be more optimal and sustainable.

b. Process Effectiveness

Integration Action 1, namely the situational analysis of the stunting reduction program, is a process aimed at identifying the prevalence of stunting at the district/city level, the availability of programs, and the existing service management practices. The scope of this analysis includes mapping the prevalence of stunting, assessing the availability of specific and sensitive nutrition intervention programs, determining service targets for the 1,000 HPK (First 1,000 Days of Life) households, identifying challenges in accessing services, and evaluating inter-institutional coordination to strengthen the integration of interventions. Prior to planning, it is essential to understand the nature and extent of the problems through a situational analysis. The results are expected to provide an overview of stunting distribution, program availability, and service management practices, which then serve as the foundation for formulating convergence action programs and activities. Based on the 2022 February growth monitoring data recorded in EPPGBM (Community-Based Nutrition Recording and Reporting System), there were 15,238 families at risk of stunting across 247 villages and urban wards in North Lampung Regency, with a total of 37,133 under-five children, of which 168 were categorized as severely stunted and 1,021 as stunted. The main focus of North Lampung Regency is to improve service coverage as a key indicator in implementing both specific and sensitive nutrition interventions, guided by 29 primary indicators in accordance with the technical guidelines of convergence actions.

Stunting service coverage reflects the extent to which communities have access to prevention, treatment, and care services, including nutrition counseling for pregnant women, routine health checks for children, nutrition education, as well as access to supplements and intervention programs. Adequate coverage ensures that all at-risk groups receive equal services, thereby reducing stunting prevalence and improving child welfare. Data show that the lowest coverage is related to unwanted pregnancies, which fall under the responsibility of the Population

Control and Family Planning Office. The low achievement is partly due to differences in data sources, as the records were taken from the Food Security Office, while data on at-risk families utilizing household yards for additional nutrition are not available. Situational analysis combining stunting prevalence and service coverage at the village level was used to identify locus villages. As a result, 14 villages/urban wards across six sub-districts were designated as stunting loci with low service coverage.

c. Discussion

General Overview

The stunting reduction acceleration program through convergence actions in North Lampung Regency still encounters several challenges. The findings indicate that the program's effectiveness has not yet been fully achieved due to shortcomings in planning, implementation, and evaluation. These obstacles are mainly caused by limited understanding of convergence among officials, budget constraints, and the suboptimal use of existing resources. The effectiveness of the program was assessed using three approaches: input effectiveness, process effectiveness, and goal (output) effectiveness. These three dimensions are crucial in evaluating the success of stunting reduction efforts.

Input Effectiveness

In terms of human resources, many local government officials have not fully understood the concept of stunting and the mechanisms of convergence. This limitation affects the quality of both planning and implementation. Human Development Cadres (KPM) are also insufficient in number, creating an unequal distribution of workload. Regarding funding, most resources come from national and regional budgets, while contributions from the private sector or alternative funding remain underutilized. As a result, several programs cannot be carried out evenly across all target areas.

Process Effectiveness

At the planning stage, situation analysis has been conducted, yet the preparation of activity plans is not entirely based on comprehensive data. Some agencies struggle to interpret data, leading to delays in planning. Although stunting forums have demonstrated commitment, financial limitations persist as the main barrier. During implementation, regulations concerning stunting have been issued, but they are not fully updated to reflect current conditions. Training for KPM has been conducted, yet the limited number of cadres hinders broad coverage. Data management systems are already supported by digital applications, but incomplete data still hampers monitoring. In the evaluation stage, data measurement and publication are in place, but the rising prevalence of stunting in several villages shows that evaluations have not resulted in effective follow-up actions. Annual performance reviews also reveal discrepancies between planned targets and actual outcomes.

Goal Effectiveness

The increase in stunting prevalence to 24.7% in North Lampung Regency illustrates that program objectives have not been achieved. This upward trend suggests that interventions have not addressed the root causes related to nutrition, health, and socio-economic conditions.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting factors include the availability of diverse data, the commitment of local government, regulatory frameworks, the use of applications for data management, and the existence of allocated budgets, though still limited. The presence of KPM also provides a significant advantage despite their small numbers. Conversely, inhibiting factors consist of limited human resource capacity, difficulties in data management, inadequate funding, outdated regulations, insufficient cadre availability, and weak inter-agency coordination. The rising prevalence of stunting further emphasizes the urgency of comprehensive improvements.

Synthesis of Discussion

Overall, the implementation of convergence actions in North Lampung Regency in 2023 can be considered ineffective. Challenges in input, process, and output dimensions highlight the need for comprehensive improvements. Enhancing human resource capacity, adopting more accurate data for planning, strengthening

cross-sectoral coordination, and optimizing alternative funding sources should be prioritized to ensure sustainable stunting reduction targets can be achieved.

Conclusions and Suggestions

a. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that:

1. Using the three approaches to measure effectiveness, the findings indicate that the implementation of the convergence-based stunting reduction acceleration program in 2023 was not yet effective. From the input perspective, the main issues were that human resources involved had not fully understood the steps required to accelerate stunting reduction, and financial support had not been optimized, particularly contributions from the private sector. From the process perspective, planning, implementation, and evaluation stages were not carried out effectively. These shortcomings affected the achievement of the goals, as reflected in the increase in stunting prevalence in the region.
2. The supporting factors of program effectiveness include: in Action 1, the availability of diverse data; in Action 2, the understanding of implementing agencies regarding indicators and programs; in Action 3, the strong commitment of local leaders and stakeholders; in Action 4, clear legal certainty; in Action 5, sufficient budget allocation; in Action 6, the use of applications for data recording; in Action 7, technological advancements; and in Action 8, additional budget support. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are: in Action 1, difficulties in obtaining data and misinterpretation of data by agencies; in Action 2, the large volume of data that slowed processing; in Action 3, budget constraints; in Action 4, outdated local regulations on stunting; in Action 5, the limited number of community development cadres (KPM); in Action 6, the unavailability of some data; in Action 7, the rising stunting prevalence and insufficient human resources for data publication; and in Action 8, discrepancies between program realization and planning.

b. Suggestions

This study presents several implications as follows:

1. Efforts are needed to improve the quality of the program, particularly through enhancements in planning, implementation, and evaluation. A situational analysis should be conducted earlier, prior to the preparation of the regional government's work plan, and disseminated thoroughly to all stakeholders so it can serve as a common guideline for both planning and implementation. This step is expected to contribute positively to reducing the prevalence of stunting.
2. The Government of North Lampung Regency is advised to strengthen human resource capacity through training programs and awareness campaigns on stunting. Such initiatives are expected to broaden stakeholders' understanding of their respective roles, functions, and responsibilities in addressing the issue.

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