

Proactive Participation: Assessing Village Community Involvement in Stunting Prevention Program (Case Study: Tonasa Village)

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Abstract

Participation is an effort that must continue to be encouraged, in addition to focusing on the democratic right to be involved in the public policy process, it also focuses on the effectiveness of policy delivery. Participation can be contextualized in various problems that occur in society, one of which is the issue of stunting. A problem that attacks toddlers and certainly has an impact on future generations in Indonesia. Therefore, this research focuses on the participation efforts made in the planning and implementation process of the Stunting Program in Tonasa Village, Takalar Regency, which is expected to contribute knowledge related to this issue. This location was chosen because it is one of the villages that has a high percentage of stunting prevalence. This research uses a Qualitative approach with a case study model. First, the participant selection indicator in the planning stage is at the professional stakeholder level, while the implementation stage shows that the level of participation is at the open recruitment targeted level. Second, the communication and decision indicator in the program planning stage shows that the level of participation is at the level of express preferences, then in the program implementation stage shows that the level of participation is at the level of listen as spectator. Third, the authority and power indicator in the program planning stage shows that the level of community participation is at the advice and consult level, while the implementation stage shows that the level of participation is at the co-governance level.

Keywords:

participation; community involvement; stunting

Introduction

Reforms in Administrative Science lead to a shift in the Paradigm of Public Administration, which influences the governance of service delivery and Public Policy. Both Reinventing Governance and Westminster-style reforms emphasize community participation to be increasingly encouraged in a policy (Kettl, 2005). As a result, the community is expected to participate and be actively involved in all stages starting from policy formulation to the evaluation stage.

The concept of Governance according to Chhotray & Stoker (2009) is defined as, about the rules of collective decision-making in settings where there are a plurality of actors or organizations and where no formal control system can dictate the terms of relationship between

these actors and organizations. In the statement, they focus on four important parts, namely: rules, collective, decision-making, and no formal control system can dictate. The "Collective" part is closely related to Community Participation, because Chhotray and Stoker (2009) interpret Collective as joint decision-making starting from a common understanding and agreement on issues and solutions as well as shared responsibility for implementation and monitoring.

Governance must be based on the principles of good governance, one of the principles that must be implemented is community participation in government administration and development. The community participation in question is a condition where the government needs to work together with the private sector, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and the community in implementing programs based on public services and policies (Alwi, 2022). Not only in terms of planning, community involvement includes participation in the development and implementation of public services, utilization of development results and services, as well as monitoring and evaluating performance.

This paper focuses on Participation, which is considered an effort to encourage a group of people to work together and contribute as a team. Aim to improve public services and increase their use, scholars suggest developing public services (Brüggemeier, 2010; Linders, Liao, & Wang, 2018; Pawlowski & Scholta, 2023; Scholta, Mertens, Kowalkiewicz, & Becker, 2019), where public organizations approach their clients, the people, rather than the other way around (Linders et al., 2018). Proactive participation in public policy and services is not new (Brinckmann, Grimmer, Lenk, & Rave, 1974) although the percentage would be greater if public organizations utilized the development of digital technology as a tool.

In Indonesia, increased participation is possible with the autonomous authority of village governments to manage their own government, but still connected to other government units. Also on the issue of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is a global and national commitment implemented in the framework of Development to maintain the improvement of economic welfare, sustainability of social life, environmental quality, and ensure justice and the implementation of governance in improving the quality of life of one generation to the next generation. As a program that has been regulated based on Presidential Regulation Number 59 of 2017 concerning Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs, village development is directed at Village SDGs which are a form of total development by focusing on 17 sustainable development goals in the village.

The bureaucratic conditions in Indonesia are still very rule-based so that Presidential Regulation number 72 of 2021 concerning the acceleration of stunting reduction becomes a pillar containing activities to accelerate stunting reduction. These pillars include increasing the

commitment and vision of leadership in ministries/agencies, Provincial, Regency or city governments, to Village Governments in increasing seriousness related to stunting issues. This seriousness is in the form of intensive communication on behaviour change and increasing Specific and Sensitive Interventions to improve food security and nutrition at the individual, family and community levels.

In terms of conditions, stunting is a condition when toddlers have below average height due to nutritional intake that is not in accordance with the needs. Stunting is believed to have the potential to slow down brain development, with long-term impacts in the form of mental retardation, low learning ability, and the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. In Indonesia, the stunting prevalence rate in 2023 decreased by 21.6% from the previous year (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2023). Although it is decreasing, the rate is still above the percentage targeted by the World Health Organization (WHO) which is 14%. So this is certainly a target that should be of concern to the central, provincial and Regency / city governments in Indonesia.

The South Sulawesi Provincial Government's efforts to reduce the stunting rate show less than optimal results because the achievement is in accordance with the target set in 2021, namely 24.59%. One of the Regency s/cities that shows similar performance within the scope of South Sulawesi Province is Takalar Regency (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2022). This assessment is not unreasonable because Takalar Regency is in the top 10 of 21 Regency s/cities in South Sulawesi Province that have the highest stunting rates. In the release of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021, it shows that Takalar Regency is in third position in the prevalence of stunting toddlers with 34.7%, first position in the prevalence of wasting toddlers with 10.7%, and first position in the prevalence of underweight toddlers with 27.4%. Based on the results of the Indonesian Nutrition Status Study (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2021).

Takalar Regency has 9 sub-Regency, one of which is Sanrobone Sub-Regency which is then used as the location of this research. This is because the percentage of Integrated Service Post (read: Posyandu) data shows that Sanrobone Sub-Regency in 2022 is the village with the most stunting problems. So it requires support in the form of community participation in various processes and efforts to reduce the number of stunting. This is in line with the opinion of Sintiawati et. al, (2021) that Community Participation can be in the form of coming to participate in various routine and scheduled activities at the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu).

Based on several empirical and theoretical problems above, the research focuses on Proactive Participation: Assessing Village Community Involvement in Stunting Prevention

Program (Case Study: Tonasa Village). The author wants to know about community participation in responding to the problem of stunting in the village and the form of efforts in solving it.

The Theoretical Background of Participation

Community Participation

According to Gaventa & Valderrama (1999), participation has changed from a traditional micro understanding to a macro understanding, while Rydin and Pennington (2000) outline two different approaches to public participation: one that focuses on the democratic right to engage in public policy processes, and one that focuses on the effectiveness of policy delivery. Furthermore, Fung (2006) argues that decision-making in general institutional design is often the result of the interaction of various "arenas", such as institutional planning, stakeholder negotiations, boardroom and public hearings. The interaction of arenas includes the existence of areas of public office that operate in isolation from the public. This is an important consideration because it means that there are arenas that operate without any public input or participation at all. Due to the institutional design that requires "Governance Choices", where the government interacts or does not interact with various elements including the public. Furthermore, Fung (2006) poses three important questions: who participates? How do they communicate and make decisions? What is the relationship between their conclusions and opinions and the implementation or resulting public policy? These three questions led Fung (2006) to introduce his theory of "Participatory Design: Democracy Cube". The core of this theory is to measure three important dimensions to understand the potential and limits of a participatory design, namely participation selection, communication and decision, and authority and power.

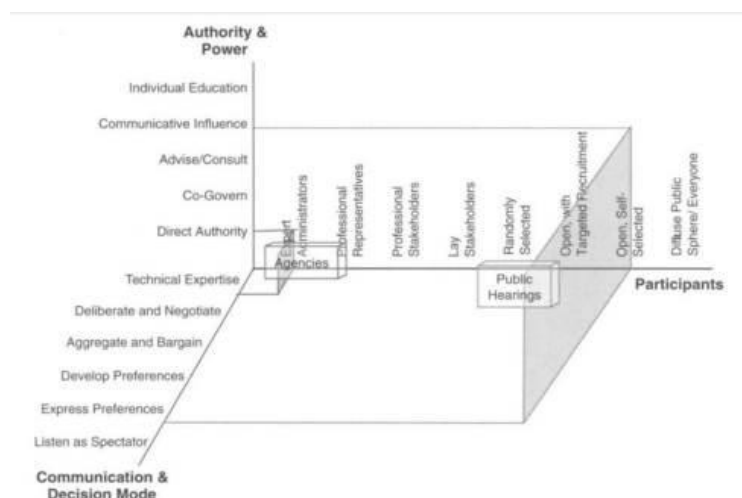


Figure 1. Design Participatory: Democracy Cube

Source: Fung (2006, p. 71)

a. Participant selection

The reason for increasing public participation in every field is that officials or representatives of the people may have limitations, such as lack of knowledge, competence, common goals, and resources. To overcome these shortcomings, in public participation it is important to determine who is participating. Moreover, do they appropriately represent the relevant population or the general public? Are any important interests or perspectives excluded? Do they have the information and competence to make sound judgments and decisions? Are those who participate responsive and accountable to those who do not?

Fung's (2006) participant selection is structured and described using a scale from more inclusive to more exclusive, and then categorized into three parts: public, mini-public, and state.

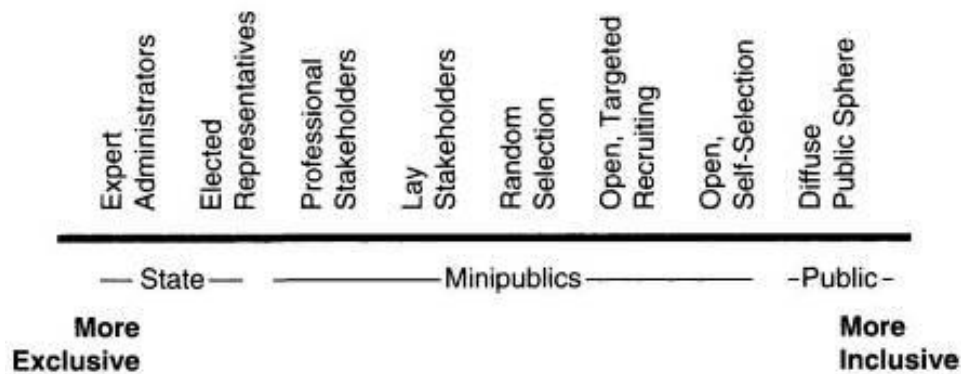


Figure 2. Participant Selection Methods

Source: Fung (2006, p. 68)

Public is the most inclusive or unrestricted category using mechanisms of participation that are fully diffuse public sphere, such as mass media, secondary associations, and other informal discussion spaces.

Mini-publics are an intermediate category that deliberately bring citizens together in separate bodies to discuss or decide on matters of public concern.

Meanwhile, the State is the most limited or exclusive category, where the selection of participants is limited to individuals who occupy positions in the state.

b. Communication and decision

The second important dimension of institutional design determines how participants interact in a venue for public discussion or decision. Fung describes this dimension on a scale

of intensity, ranging from least intense to most intense, where intensity indicates the level of investment, knowledge, and commitment required of participation.

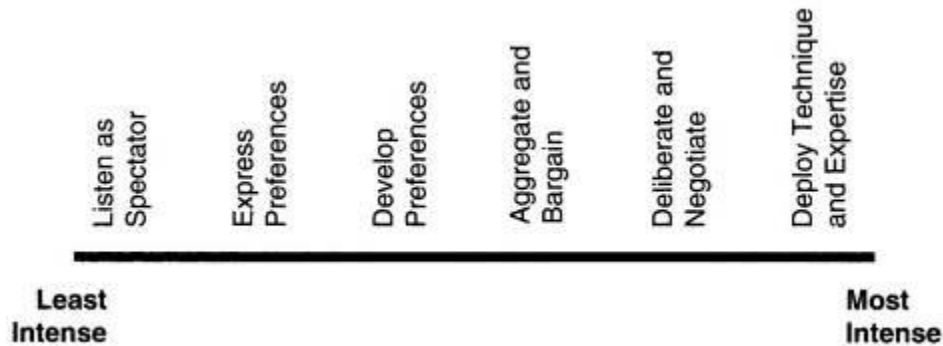


Figure 3. Modes of Communication and Decision

Source: Fung (2006, p. 69)

c. Authority and power

The third important dimension for understanding public participation is authority and influence. This relates to the impact of public participation (the relationship between participants' involvement or opinions and the resulting policy). Fung further describes a scale of authority to determine the extent to which a space for participation is used, ranging from the strongest authority to the weakest.

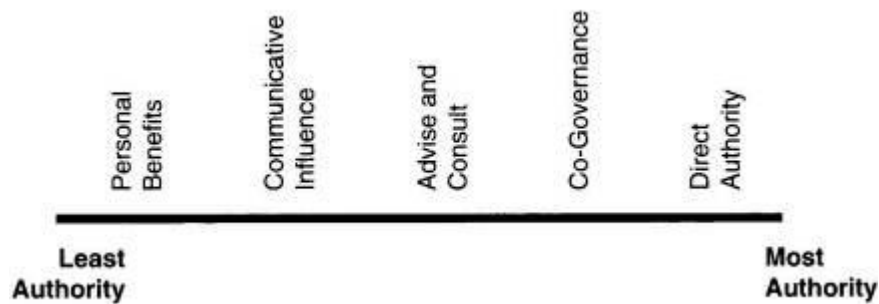


Figure 4. Extent of Authority and Power

Source: Fung (2006:70)

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study model. This research was conducted in Tonasa Village, Sanrobone Sub Regency, Takalar Regency, with the consideration that the percentage of Community Health Centers (Read: Puskesmas) data showing that Sanrobone Sub Regency in 2022 is the village with the most stunting problems.

Primary data was sourced from purposively traced Key Informants, consisting of local stakeholders such as communities/community leaders, village governments, sub-Regency governments, and regional apparatus organizations, which were developed based on the snowball method. Secondary data were in the form of documents that could be obtained from relevant stakeholders. Data were collected through interviews, limited observation, and documentation review.

Data analysis refers to Creswell (2018) which provides detailed stages divided into: Processing and preparing data for analysis; Reading the whole data; Analyzing in more detail by coding data; Applying the coding process to describe settings, people, categories, and themes; Redetermining how descriptions and themes will be presented; and Interpreting or interpreting data.

Results and Discussion

Participation in Stunting Reduction Efforts

1. Community Participation in Stunting Reduction Planning in Tonasa Village

Community participation is an important element in planning and implementing a program. Participation is the key to the success of a program that has been made. Research on community participation in stunting reduction in Tonasa Village refers to Fung's theory (2006) The theory of community participation put forward refers to 3 indicators that become a reference in seeing the extent of community participation in planning, First, participant selection Second, communication and decision. Third, authority and power.

A. Participant Selection

Planning a program within the village government requires community participation, because community involvement has a crucial role in various forms of program planning and village government activities, one of which is stunting reduction. In this study, interviews with several informants were conducted as a reference in determining the level of community participation in the participant selection indicator.

One of them is an interview with the secretary of Tonasa Village who basically said that the planning of the program was carried out in a village meeting attended by several community leaders, village cadres, hamlet heads, and village officials. In the planning process, several problems are discussed, followed by the preparation of programs that will be made in the future. This is not in line with the results of an interview with informant J, who represents the community. He argued that program planning through the village

deliberation did not involve the community as a whole but only involved one element of the community, namely community leaders.

This finding is certainly not in accordance with the regulation of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2020 concerning General Guidelines for Village Development and Village Community Empowerment, which explains that the elements of the community involved in village deliberations are as follows:

- a. Traditional leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, educational leaders, arts and cultural leaders, and regional representation
- b. Farmer organizations or groups and/or farm workers
- c. Organizations or groups of fishermen and/or fishermen workers
- d. Organization or group of artisans
- e. Women's organizations or groups, children's forums, child observers and protectors
- f. Representatives of poor community groups;
- g. Groups with special needs or disabilities;
- h. Health cadres;
- i. Environmental activists and observers;
- j. Youth or student groups; and/or
- k. Social organizations and/or other community institutions according to the village situation.

Based on this regulation, it can be seen that not all elements of the community are involved in the planning of village meetings in the village, including Tonasa Village. The parties involved are interested elements in the health sector such as health cadres, other elements of the community will be involved in general deliberations and fields related to the interests of their respective community elements. The level of community participation is at the professional stakeholder, this is because the elements of the community who participate in the village deliberation for planning are health cadres, cleaning cadres and security cadres. They are professional stakeholders who are also part of the general community but are paid to carry out certain responsibilities. It is hoped that these findings will serve as a reference in the community participation process. Those who are not represented should consult and give their views to those who are represented in the screening of aspirations.

B. Communication and Decision

In planning to reduce stunting, deliberations are needed to create a program plan, of course in this deliberation there will be communication and decision-making. Based on the statement of the Head of BPD related to communication in the village deliberation, the planning to reduce stunting was carried out in the village deliberation and determined in the Development Planning Meeting (read: Musrenbang). Community representatives who participated in the village deliberation were given the opportunity to provide input. Regarding stunting reduction, health cadres, village midwives will provide more input because they know better.

The Head of Tonasa Village explained that the village deliberation was held to discuss the problems in the village, especially for stunting issues. At the village meeting, community representatives are given the opportunity to provide suggestions which will then be used as a reference for determining village work programs.

The findings provide information that the level of participation in the village deliberation is at the level of express preferences. Deliberation participants are given the opportunity to provide input and suggestions to the village government. The suggestions given by community representatives, health cadres, and village midwives then become preferences for the village government in determining programs and policies.

C. Authority and Power

In planning to reduce stunting in the village, the government will hold village meetings in the context of program planning and program preparation. Based on the results of interviews with the Head of BPD related to the authority given in the formulation of work programs to be implemented depends on the village government. The Tonasa Village Government only receives input and suggestions from the deliberation participants, and then will be reviewed according to their needs.

The same thing was also found by the researcher, through the statement above by the Tonasa Village Secretary that the preparation of programs carried out in the village deliberation, community representatives cannot make decisions for programs to be implemented but only in the form of suggestions. These two findings show that the level of community participation is at the advice and consult level, which can be seen from the attitudes and interviews given from village government officials who said that the village government still received input and suggestions from the deliberation participants and the authority remained with the village government.

2. Community Participation in the Implementation of Tonasa Village Stunting Reduction Program
The implementation of work programs certainly requires community participation and support to be able to achieve the goals that the government wants to achieve in the village. Especially for the stunting problem that occurs, this is a priority that must be achieved because it is related to public health.

A. Participant Selection

The research indicators aim to determine the level of participation in program implementation, especially in terms of who is more involved in program implementation. Based on the research objectives, based on information from the Tonasa village midwife, the implementation of the stunting reduction work program will certainly be followed by the village community. As for some work programs, namely the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) is carried out every month, but those who participate in the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities are certainly only mothers who have children under five and live in Tonasa Village. Another activity is the distribution of additional food for toddlers aimed at preventing stunting.

In line with the above, researchers found a similar statement through one of the people of Lebbae Hamlet (one of the hamlets in Tonasa Village), that people like him who have toddlers who are indicated to be stunted will always participate in the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities. This is done so that their children can be healthy, in the the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) usually get additional food for toddlers from the village. In addition, the Tonasa village government has also made a decree on the acceleration of stunting reduction, this letter contains the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) in Tonasa village. The Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) consists of various elements, such as: Family Assistance Team (TPK), Human Development Cadres (KPM) and Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) mothers who have attended training in the Regency. Based on the results of these findings, it shows that program implementation, especially the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities, is at the open, targeted, recruiting level of community participation.

B. Communication and Decision

In the implementation of the work program, it can be seen that there will be a communication process between work program implementers and work program participants. In this indicator, researchers want to see how the communication process between implementers and work program participants. Based on interviews with health cadres, researchers found that the implementation of work programs, especially the

Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities, usually officers provide information to the community regarding forms of stunting prevention including food for children affected by stunting.

In implementing work programs, especially the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu), health cadres are active in providing information to the community regarding stunting and how to prevent it. This is in line with confirmation by the community, that the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) is a space for the community to listen to directions from health cadres, so that the community knows how to prevent stunting.

At this level of communication, the directions given to the community are not well absorbed. This finding is supported by an interview with one of the Tonasa Village community members who stated that the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities every month, there is provision of additional food but the essence of stunting has not been well understood. The community only seems to listen to directions and information from health cadres without any reciprocity, causing directions and information not to be well absorbed. This can be an obstacle for the Tonasa Village Government in reducing stunting rates.

Based on the results of interviews with the two informants above, researchers can conclude that the level of community participation is at the listen as spectator level. This is seen based on the explanation of health cadres with the community which shows that in the implementation of the program the community listens to the explanation of health cadres.

C. Authority and Power

In this indicator, researchers want to see how the level of participation in terms of authority in all elements of the community involved in the implementation of work programs related to reducing stunting rates in Tonasa Village. In this section, researchers found that the stunting prevention training program and the provision of supplementary food by the village government collaborated with BKKBN, as well as the Sanrobone sub- Regency health center. The form of cooperation with BKKBN is in terms of providing additional food, while the Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) of Sanrobone Sub- Regency is in the aspect of stunting prevention training.

Furthermore, the findings based on interviews that the level of participation in authority and power in the implementation of work programs is at the co-governance level. This can be seen based on the position of the village government, which collaborates with other parties in the implementation of the stunting prevention training program and the distribution of additional food for mothers and toddlers. In addition, Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities every month are attended by nutritionists and employees from

the Community Health Centers (Puskesmas). Thus, it can be seen that the parties working with the Tonasa Village Government in the implementation of the stunting reduction program are BKKBN and Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) of Sanrobone Sub-Regency. This cooperation gives positive results in reducing stunting in Tonasa Village.

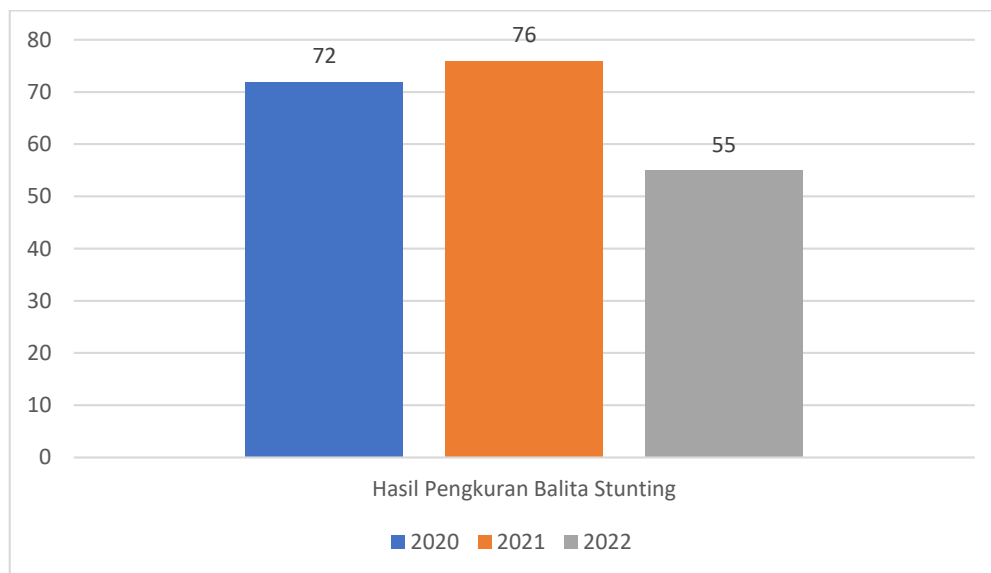


Figure 5. Results of Stunting Reduction Program 2020-2022

Source: Researcher processed results

Based on the data above, it shows that the stunting rate in 2020 and 2021 has increased. The finding in this study is that the increase was due to the moment Tonasa Village was led by the Acting Task Force (PLT). This condition continues which has an impact on the stunting program not running for several months. The 2020-2021 stunting program at the Integrated Service Post (Posyandu), which is ideally carried out every month, is not optimal because the acting village head always changes and has implications for health cadres as well.

This shows that irregular government officials cause the implementation of existing stunting programs to not be implemented optimally in Tonasa village in 2020-2021. This is what causes the stunting rate in 2020-2021 to be higher than the stunting rate in 2022. Different things are in 2022 where the stunting rate shows the results of stunting prevention training and Integrated Service Post (Posyandu) activities in 2022 show positive results. The number of stunting toddlers has decreased to 55.

Conclusion

Community participation in reducing stunting in Tonasa village includes several indicators of the quality of community participation, namely participant selection, communication and decision, and authority and power. From the analysis of the quality of community participation in reducing stunting in Tonasa village, the following conclusions can be obtained:

First, in the participant selection indicator at the planning stage of the stunting reduction program, general public participation is not much involved, those involved in the planning stage are community representatives such as health cadres who have responsibilities in the health sector in Tonasa village, this shows that community participation is at the level of professional stakeholders. Then at the implementation stage, the general public is more involved, especially for parents who have toddlers, this shows that the level of participation is at the level of open recruitment targeted.

Second, in the communication and decision indicator at the planning stage of the stunting reduction program, at this stage community representatives are present to provide their suggestions in the village deliberation, this shows that the level of participation is at the level of express preferences. Then at the stage of implementing the work program, the community is given more direction regarding the handling of stunting reduction, this shows that the level of participation is at the listen as spectator level.

Third, in the authority and power indicator at the program planning stage, at this stage only the village government is able to decide what policies or programs will be raised in solving problems in Tonasa village, especially in stunting problems, this shows that the level of community participation is at the advice and consult level. Then in the implementation stage, it shows that the village government partners with other parties in the implementation of stunting reduction in Tonasa village, this shows that the level of participation is at the co-governance level.

Suggestion

Based on the research results and conclusions above, there are several suggestions that can be an alternative to increase community participation in stunting reduction, namely:

1. Involving a more representative and active community in the implementation of village meetings. This is so that the planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes can run more optimally so that the impact is more significant.

2. Improve the quality of communication and information that is more interactive between the central, Regency and village governments so as to facilitate the delivery of information about programs to overcome stunting in Tonasa Village, Takalar Regency.
3. Strengthen the synergy between related organizations responsible for reducing stunting at the Regency and village levels.

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