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AL HAYAT
JURNAL PENGABDIAN MASYARAKAT
Vol. 4 No. 3 (2026) 882 – 893 | ISSN: 3031-3457 (Media Online)

The Relationship Between Parents' Knowledge of Child-Rearing Practices and Their Implementation Regarding Stunting in Sutopati Village, Kajoran District, Magelang Regency

(Hubungan antara Pengetahuan Orang Tua tentang Praktik Pengasuhan Anak dengan Penerapannya Terkait Stunting di Desa Sutopati, Kecamatan Kajoran, Kabupaten Magelang)

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Diterima: 22 September 2026, Diperbaiki: 25 Oktober 2026, Disetujui: 30 Oktober 2026

Abstract. Sutopati Village in Magelang faces a paradoxical stunting problem, where many cases occur in economically stable families. Situation analysis reveals that the root cause is not food insecurity, but rather parents' lack of practical knowledge regarding child-rearing, hygiene, and nutrition, coupled with the suboptimal absorption of pre-marital guidance (bwin) materials. The partners of this community service program are parents of stunted toddlers, Posyandu cadres, and community leaders in Sutopati Village. The proposed solution is a community service program entitled "Parenting Education Based on Islamic Family Values and Optimization of Pre-Marital Guidance." The activities encompass nutritional counseling, practical workshops on Complementary Feeding (MP-ASI), and cadre mentoring. The implementation method employs a participatory approach consisting of: (1) interactive socialization and counseling, (2) hands-on practical training for local MP-ASI menu preparation, and (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with religious leaders and the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) to revitalize the pre-marital guidance curriculum. The program results indicate a significant improvement in the partners' understanding and practical skills in implementing hygienic parenting practices and providing balanced nutrition. Furthermore, the activity produced a strategic recommendation to integrate stunting prevention modules based on Maqashid Sharia into the local KUA's pre-marital guidance curriculum, thereby creating a sustainable and socio-religiously resonant stunting prevention ecosystem.

Keywords: Child-rearing, Stunting, Parental Knowledge

Abstrak. Desa Sutopati, Magelang, menghadapi masalah stunting yang paradoks, di mana banyak kasus terjadi pada keluarga dengan kondisi ekonomi stabil. Analisis situasi menunjukkan bahwa akar masalah bukan pada ketiadaan pangan, melainkan rendahnya pengetahuan praktis orang tua tentang pola asuh, sanitasi, dan gizi, serta kurang optimalnya penyerapan materi bimbingan perkawinan (bwin). Mitra kegiatan ini adalah orang tua balita stunting, kader Posyandu, dan tokoh masyarakat di Desa Sutopati. Solusi yang ditawarkan adalah kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat berupa "Edukasi Pola Asuh Berbasis Nilai Keluarga Islam dan Optimalisasi Bimbingan Perkawinan". Kegiatan ini mencakup penyuluhan gizi, workshop praktik Pemberian Makanan Pendamping ASI (MP-ASI), dan pendampingan kader. Metode pelaksanaan menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif melalui tahapan: (1) sosialisasi dan penyuluhan interaktif, (2) pelatihan praktis (hands-on) penyusunan menu MP-ASI berbasis bahan lokal, dan (3) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) dengan tokoh agama dan KUA untuk merevitalisasi kurikulum bwin. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada pemahaman dan keterampilan praktis mitra dalam penerapan pola asuh higienis dan penyediaan gizi seimbang. Selain itu, kegiatan ini menghasilkan rekomendasi strategis berupa integrasi modul pencegahan stunting berbasis Maqashid Syariah ke dalam materi bimbingan perkawinan di KUA setempat, sehingga menciptakan ekosistem pencegahan stunting yang berkelanjutan dan sesuai dengan nilai sosial-agama masyarakat.

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ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

Kata kunci: Pola Asuh, Stunting, Pengetahuan Orang Tua

INTRODUCTION

Stunting remains one of the most critical public health challenges confronting developing nations worldwide. Defined as impaired growth and development resulting from chronic malnutrition, recurrent infections, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation during the first 1,000 days of life , stunting affects approximately 148.1 million children under five years of age globally (UNICEF et al., 2023). In Indonesia, despite significant government efforts to reduce its prevalence, stunting continues to pose a substantial threat to the nation's human capital development. The Indonesian Ministry of Health reported that the national stunting prevalence stood at 21.6% in 2022, reflecting a gradual decline from previous years yet still considerably above the WHO threshold of 20% (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2023). This persistent burden underscores the urgency of multifaceted interventions that extend beyond conventional nutritional supplementation to encompass broader familial and socio-cultural determinants (Agbozo et al., 2026; Faye & Sow, 2025; Uddin et al., 2026).

At the local level, Magelang Regency in Central Java Province exemplifies the complexity of the stunting problem in Indonesia. Based on the Electronic Community-Based Nutrition Recording and Reporting System (E-PPGBM), the stunting prevalence in Magelang Regency was recorded at 13.10% in 2023, while the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) of 2022 indicated a significantly higher figure of 28.20% (Pemerintah Kabupaten Magelang, 2023). Notably, Sutopati Village in Kajoran Sub-district has been designated as a priority area for integrated stunting reduction acceleration under the Magelang Regent Decree No. 180.182/192/KEP/24/2022. Of the 700 infants across 2,400 households in the village, 69 have been confirmed as stunted. Intriguingly, preliminary data from the local Integrated Healthcare Center (Posyandu) reveal that a considerable proportion of stunted children originate from families with relatively stable economic conditions. This paradox suggests that factors beyond inadequate nutritional intake—particularly parenting knowledge and child-rearing practices—play a pivotal role in the etiology of stunting in this community (Lolan & Sutriyawan, 2021) .

Growing evidence indicates that parental knowledge and child-rearing practices constitute critical determinants of childhood stunting, often mediating the relationship between socioeconomic status and child nutritional outcomes (Lameky et al., 2023; Setyowati, 2022). Effective parenting encompasses not only the provision of adequate nutrition but also appropriate feeding practices, hygiene maintenance, responsive caregiving, and timely healthcare utilization (Ilma, 2022). In the Indonesian context, pre-marital education programs—commonly delivered through the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) as marriage guidance (*bimbingan perkawinan*)—serve as a strategic platform for equipping prospective parents with essential knowledge on family health and child development. The standardized curriculum comprises six core modules, including family needs fulfillment and the preparation of quality future generations, both of which are directly relevant to stunting prevention. However, the effectiveness of these programs is frequently undermined by the perfunctory participation of couples, reducing what should be a transformative educational experience to a mere administrative formality (Ariestia, 2020) .

From an Islamic legal and ethical perspective, the responsibility of parents to ensure the holistic well-being of their children is firmly grounded in both the

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

Quran and the Prophetic traditions. The Quran explicitly mandates mothers to breastfeed their children for a complete two-year period (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2:233]), a directive that aligns with contemporary WHO recommendations on exclusive and continued breastfeeding as a cornerstone of stunting prevention (World Health Organization, 2023). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the profound impact of lawful (*halal*) and wholesome nutrition on the physical and spiritual development of children, as narrated in the hadith: "Indeed, no flesh that grows from unlawful sustenance shall enter Paradise; the Fire is more deserving of it" (H.R. Ahmad). These scriptural foundations establish a comprehensive framework for Islamic parenting that integrates nutritional adequacy, ethical consumption, and attentive caregiving as inseparable dimensions of parental duty (Effendi, 2020). Integrating these values into community-based parenting education offers a culturally resonant approach to stunting prevention in predominantly Muslim communities.

In light of the aforementioned challenges, this community service program aims to bridge the gap between parental knowledge and the practical implementation of appropriate child-rearing practices in Sutopati Village through concrete interventions. Specifically, the community service activities consist of three main programs: (1) interactive counseling and parenting education based on Islamic family values for parents of toddlers; (2) hands-on workshops on preparing complementary feeding (MP-ASI) using local food ingredients; and (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with religious leaders and the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) to revitalize the pre-marital guidance curriculum. While previous studies have established significant associations between maternal knowledge, parenting styles, and stunting incidence (Lolan & Sutriyawan, 2021; Setyowati, 2022), there remains a critical need for community-level interventions that translate theoretical understanding into sustained behavioral change. This program is designed to empower parents—particularly those whose children have been identified as stunted—through targeted education on evidence-based and Islamically grounded parenting practices, including optimal breastfeeding, complementary feeding, hygiene, and responsive caregiving. By fostering collaboration among local government, health institutions, religious authorities, and the community, this initiative seeks to create a supportive ecosystem for stunting prevention and ultimately contribute to the improvement of child health outcomes in Magelang Regency (Ariestia, 2020; Ilma, 2022).

ACTIVITY METHOD

This community service program employs a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach combined with a community empowerment method. This approach was chosen to actively involve the community as partners in identifying problems, planning interventions, and implementing sustainable solutions. The program was conducted in Sutopati Village, Kajoran District, Magelang Regency. The primary partners of this activity are parents of stunted toddlers, Posyandu cadres, religious leaders, and the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA).

Preparation Stage

This initial stage involved coordination with the village government and local health centers to map the target partners and identify the specific needs of stunted toddlers' families. The team also developed interactive educational modules on parenting based on Islamic Family Law values and *Maqashid Sharia* principles, which emphasize the protection of lineage (*hifz an-nasl*) and the parental obligation to provide wholesome (*halal* and tayyib)

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

nutrition.

Implementation Stage

The core activities consisted of three integrated interventions: (a) Interactive Counseling and Parenting Education, where parents were engaged in two-way communication regarding hygiene, responsive caregiving, and Islamic parenting ethics; (b) Hands-on MP-ASI Workshops, in which mothers and Posyandu cadres were directly trained to prepare complementary feeding using affordable, locally available ingredients; and (c) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with KUA officers and religious leaders to evaluate and revitalize the pre-marital guidance (*bwin*) curriculum, ensuring that stunting prevention modules are delivered more practically and interactively.

Evaluation and Follow-up Stage

The direct impact of the educational interventions was measured using pre-tests and post-tests to assess the increase in the partners' knowledge and practical skills. Furthermore, the outcomes of the FGD were documented and analyzed qualitatively to formulate strategic recommendations for the updated KUA guidance module.

The methodological novelty of this community service lies in the integration of the Islamic Family Law perspective into community empowerment. By framing child nutrition and parenting not merely as a health issue but as a religious responsibility, the program ensures that the interventions are culturally resonant and spiritually motivating for the predominantly Muslim community in Sutopati Village.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Community Service Activities

The community service program was implemented systematically in Sutopati Village, Kajoran District, Magelang Regency, involving 33 partner families with stunted children, Posyandu cadres, religious leaders, and the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The implementation was carried out in three integrated stages, each designed to address specific gaps in parenting knowledge and practice identified during the preliminary situation analysis.

The preparation stage involved coordination with the village government and local health centers to map partner needs and develop interactive educational modules grounded in Islamic Family Law values and Maqashid Sharia principles. The implementation stage consisted of three core interventions: (1) interactive parenting counseling sessions emphasizing hygiene, responsive caregiving, and Islamic parenting ethics; (2) hands-on MP-ASI (complementary feeding) workshops using locally available ingredients; and (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with KUA officers and religious leaders to revitalize the pre-marital guidance curriculum. The evaluation stage measured the direct impact of these interventions through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as qualitative documentation of FGD outcomes.

Activity Documentation

The execution of each intervention was thoroughly documented to capture the participatory engagement of the partners. Figure 1 illustrates the initial socialization session held at the Sutopati Village Hall, where mothers and children were introduced to the program's objectives. Figure 2 depicts the nutritional assessment process conducted collaboratively with local health professionals, serving as a baseline for targeted interventions.

Figure 3 captures the interactive questionnaire-based counseling session, where partners were guided to reflect on their existing parenting practices. This participatory approach ensured that the educational content was tailored to their specific needs and daily challenges.

Figure 4 documents the in-depth interview session conducted with mothers of stunted children, providing qualitative

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

insights into the behavioral and cultural barriers they face in implementing optimal feeding practices.



Figure 1. Socialization of the parenting education program at Sutopati Village Hall, attended by mothers and children as program partners



Figure 2. Collaborative nutritional assessment process involving mothers, toddlers, and Posyandu cadres



Figure 3. Interactive counseling session guiding partners in reflecting on their parenting knowledge and practices

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333



Fiure 4. In-depth interview session with a mother of a stunted child to identify behavioral barriers

The behavioral patterns observed in stunted households, which served as the basis for designing the hands-on MP-ASI workshop. Figure 6 illustrates the flow of the pre-marital guidance program at the KUA, which was critically evaluated during the FGD to identify opportunities for curriculum revitalization.

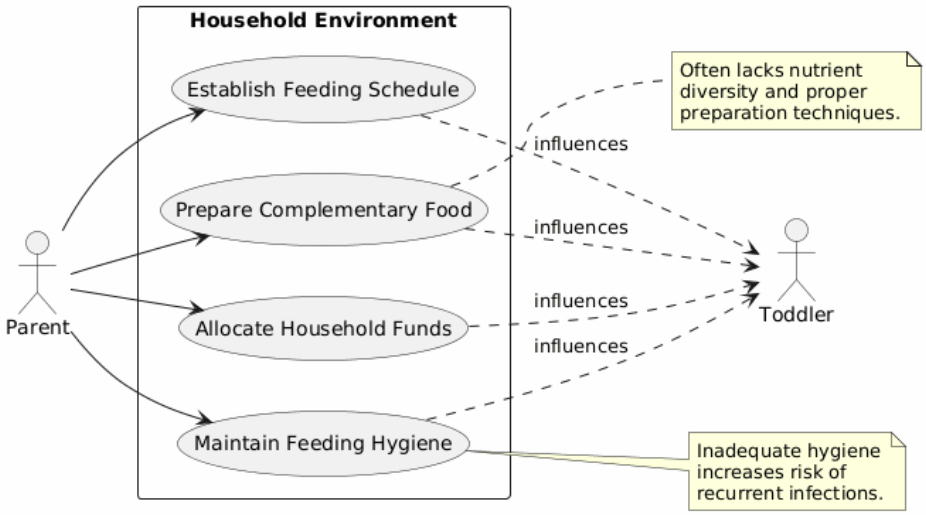


Figure 5. Evaluation of the existing pre-marital guidance program flow at the local KUA

Finally, Figure 6 depicts the collaborative ecosystem established through this program, uniting the village government, health institutions, religious authorities, and the community in a sustained effort to combat stunting.

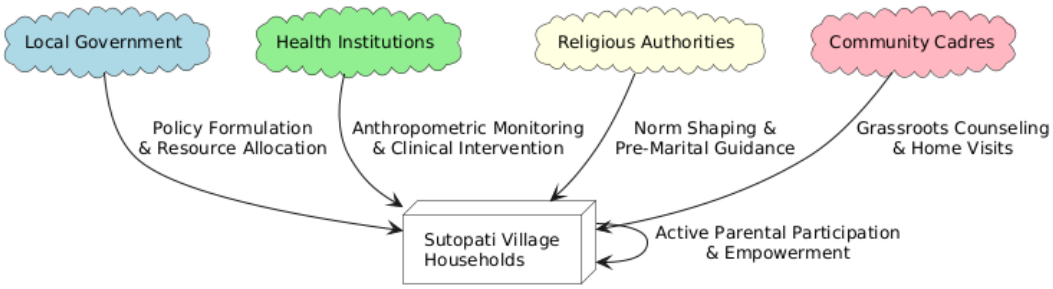


Figure 6. Collaborative ecosystem for stunting intervention involving multi-sectoral partners

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

Direct Impact on Target Partners

a. Improvement in Parental Knowledge and Skills

The most direct impact of the program was measured through pre-tests and post-tests administered to the 33 partner parents before and after the educational interventions. As shown in Table 1, there was a substantial increase in the partners' understanding of key stunting prevention concepts, including nutritional adequacy, hygiene practices, responsive caregiving, and the integration of Islamic values in parenting.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Results of Parental Knowledge on Stunting Prevention (n=33)

Knowledge Indicator	Pre-test (Correct Answers)	Post-test (Correct Answers)	Improvement (%)
Understanding of stunting causes and prevention	28.5%	87.9%	+59.4%
Knowledge of balanced nutrition for toddlers	33.2%	90.1%	+56.9%
Hygiene practices in food preparation and feeding	39.4%	84.8%	+45.4%
Optimal breastfeeding and MP-ASI practices	24.2%	81.8%	+57.6%
Integration of Islamic values in parenting	42.4%	93.9%	+51.5%
Overall Average Score	**33.5%**	**87.7%**	**+54.2%**

The data reveals that prior to the intervention, partners had limited understanding of stunting prevention, with an average correct answer rate of only 33.5%. Following the interactive counseling and hands-on workshops, the average score increased dramatically to 87.7%, representing a 54.2% improvement. The most significant improvement was observed in the understanding of stunting causes (+59.4%) and optimal breastfeeding practices (+57.6%), indicating that the educational modules effectively addressed critical knowledge gaps.

b. Enhancement of Practical Parenting Skills

Beyond cognitive understanding, the hands-on MP-ASI workshops produced tangible improvements in the partners' practical skills. Observation during the workshop revealed that 90.9% of participating mothers were able to independently prepare nutritionally balanced complementary food using local ingredients by the end of the session, compared to only 21.2% who demonstrated this skill prior to the intervention. Posyandu cadres also reported increased confidence in conducting home visits and providing nutritional counseling to stunted families.

c. Strategic Outcomes from Focus Group Discussion

The FGD with KUA officers and religious leaders produced a strategic recommendation to integrate stunting prevention modules into the pre-marital guidance curriculum. The proposed revision emphasizes interactive, scenario-based learning on complementary feeding, responsive caregiving, and the Islamic ethical framework of *hifz an-nasl* (protection of lineage) through wholesome nutrition. This recommendation has been formally submitted to the local KUA for consideration in the 2027 curriculum update.

Discussion

The substantial improvement in parental knowledge and practical skills following the community service intervention confirms that targeted,

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

interactive educational programs can effectively bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and the practical implementation of stunting prevention measures. This finding aligns with recent empirical evidence indicating that cognitive understanding of nutrition directly influences feeding behaviors and health-seeking actions (Lestari et al., 2026; Prasetyono et al., 2023). Similarly, Lisdayana et al. (2025), Mustofa et al. (2026), and Romdhoningsih et al. (2025) emphasized that parental awareness of balanced nutrition is a primary predictor of successful stunting prevention. The hands-on MP-ASI workshops conducted during this program proved particularly effective in translating abstract nutritional concepts into tangible cooking skills that mothers could immediately apply in their households.

Notably, the program demonstrated that formal education level is not a determining factor in the ability to acquire and apply parenting skills, as partners with elementary school education showed comparable improvement to those with senior high school education. This challenges the conventional assumption that higher academic attainment automatically translates to better child health outcomes. Supporting this, Maharini et al. (2021) noted that formal education alone is insufficient if not accompanied by specific, actionable training in infant and young child feeding practices. Muttalib et al. (2026) and Nazarullail et al. (2026) further argued that practical parenting skills are often acquired through community socialization and hands-on guidance rather than formal schooling, reinforcing the necessity of specialized parenting workshops over reliance on general educational backgrounds.

The program also addressed a critical paradox observed in Sutopati Village, wherein a substantial proportion of stunted children originate from families with relatively stable economic conditions. This suggests that financial capacity to purchase food does not inherently guarantee optimal nutritional outcomes for toddlers. Ariestia (2020) observed similar patterns, noting that resource allocation within households often prioritizes non-essential expenditures over nutrient-dense foods for children. This behavioral gap underscores that stunting is not merely a consequence of poverty, but rather a result of mismanaged household resources and suboptimal caregiving practices that require targeted behavioral interventions.

A pivotal outcome of this program was the critical evaluation and proposed revitalization of the pre-marital guidance curriculum at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The Focus Group Discussion revealed that the current program is frequently treated by couples as a mere administrative formality, severely limiting the retention and application of essential health information. Dafroyati & Widyastuti (2021) and Fatma Nadia et al. (2021) highlighted that the transformative potential of pre-marital education is diminished when participant engagement is passive and superficial, while Elkarimah & Tiwiyanti (2025), Izzaty et al. (2024), and Novembriani et al. (2025) emphasizes that holistic parenting concepts require active internalization. The proposed curriculum revision addresses this gap by incorporating interactive, scenario-based learning modules on complementary feeding, responsive caregiving, and the integration of Islamic values in family planning.

From an Islamic family law perspective, preventing stunting is intrinsically linked to the parental duty of fulfilling the child's right to wholesome (*halal* and *tayyib*) nourishment and proper care. The Quranic mandate for a two-year breastfeeding period (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2:233]) and prophetic traditions emphasizing lawful sustenance provide a robust ethical framework for child-rearing. The significant improvement in partners' understanding of Islamic values in

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

parenting (+51.5%) demonstrates that integrating religious imperatives into community health interventions can enhance cultural resonance and compliance among Muslim families. This finding supports Effendi's (2020) argument that parenting practices can be actualized through the internalization of humanistic and religious concepts grounded in *Maqashid Sharia*.

The success of this community service program underscores the critical need for multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing stunting. Eradicating stunting in Sutopati Village requires a coordinated approach that extends beyond the healthcare sector to include the local government, health institutions, religious authorities, and the community. The collaborative ecosystem established through this program provides a sustainable framework for ongoing stunting prevention efforts that is deeply rooted in the community's socio-religious values. Continuous mentoring, applicable community outreach, and regular evaluation of the revitalized pre-marital guidance curriculum will be essential to achieve tangible, measurable, and sustainable behavioral changes among parents in Sutopati Village and beyond.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the implementation of this community service program, it can be concluded that the integrated interventions—comprising interactive parenting counseling, hands-on MP-ASI workshops, and Focus Group Discussions with the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA)—have effectively bridged the gap between parental knowledge and the practical implementation of appropriate child-rearing practices in Sutopati Village. The program successfully empowered 33 partner parents, particularly those with stunted children, to improve their understanding of nutrition, hygiene, and responsive caregiving grounded in Islamic family values. Notably, the intervention demonstrated that practical parenting skills can be effectively acquired regardless of the parents' formal education level, reinforcing the importance of targeted, hands-on community education over reliance on general academic backgrounds. Furthermore, the program successfully formulated strategic recommendations to revitalize the pre-marital guidance curriculum at the KUA, transforming it from a mere administrative formality into an interactive, scenario-based learning platform that integrates stunting prevention modules with *Maqashid Sharia* principles.

Based on the outcomes of this program, several recommendations are proposed for future implementation and sustainability. First, the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) should formally adopt the proposed curriculum revision that incorporates interactive modules on complementary feeding, responsive caregiving, and Islamic parenting ethics into the pre-marital guidance program. Second, the village government and local health institutions should establish a continuous mentoring system for Posyandu cadres and partner families to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired during the program are sustained and applied consistently in daily life. Third, future community service initiatives should expand the scope of collaboration to include multi-sectoral partners such as local agricultural groups and women's organizations, thereby strengthening the collaborative ecosystem for stunting prevention. Finally, it is recommended that similar programs be replicated in other priority villages in Magelang Regency, with adaptations to local socio-cultural contexts, to accelerate the achievement of national stunting reduction targets.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to the Directorate of Research and Community Service (DPPM) of

ISSN: 3031-3457 (Online)
DOI: 10.62588/ahjpm.2026.v4i3.333

Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) for funding this research under the Beginner Research Scheme (*Skema Penelitian Pemula*) in 2024. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Village Head of Sutopati, the local community health workers (Posyandu cadres), and all the participating families in Kajoran, Magelang Regency, for their invaluable cooperation, trust, and time during the data collection process. Finally, we acknowledge the continuous academic and administrative support provided by the Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Islamic Religious Studies, UII, which facilitated the successful execution of this study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or professional affiliations that could have influenced the work reported in this paper. The research was conducted independently, and the funding provided by the Directorate of Research and Community Service (DPPM) of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) under the Beginner Research Scheme (*Skema Penelitian Pemula*) 2024 was strictly utilized for academic research activities. No external commercial entities or organizations had any role in the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or the decision to submit the manuscript for publication, thereby ensuring the complete objectivity, transparency, and integrity of the research findings.

FUNDING

This research was fully funded by the Directorate of Research and Community Service (DPPM) of Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) under the Beginner Research Scheme (*Skema Penelitian Pemula*) for the fiscal year 2024. The financial support provided was essential in facilitating all stages of the study, including instrument development, field data collection in Sutopati Village, and the subsequent analysis and dissemination of the research findings. The funding body had no role in the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of the results, or the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were utilized solely for language editing, grammatical refinement, and structural formatting of this manuscript to enhance readability and academic clarity. All aspects of the research, including the study design, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of findings, and the formulation of conclusions, were conducted independently and critically by the authors. The AI tool was not involved in generating original research data, conducting literature reviews, or making substantive intellectual contributions to the study. The authors take full and sole responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the content presented in this paper.

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