

ZAKAT IN REDUCING STUNTING: A CASE STUDY OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN ZAKAT INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BENGKULU CITY, INDONESIA

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ABSTRAK

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Prevalensi stunting nasional di Indonesia menurun dari 21,5% pada 2023 menjadi 19,8% pada 2024 menurut Survei Status Gizi Indonesia (SSGI). Upaya lintas sektor terus dilakukan dari tingkat pusat hingga daerah. Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan mekanisme kolaborasi dan peran Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) dengan Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Perlindungan Anak, Pengendalian Penduduk, dan Keluarga Berencana (DP3AP2KB) dalam penurunan stunting di Kota Bengkulu. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap 11 informan, analisis dokumen kebijakan, perjanjian kerja sama, laporan keuangan, serta observasi partisipatif dalam program Pemberian Makanan Tambahan (PMT). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kolaborasi ini dibangun melalui Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) tahunan yang menegaskan pembagian peran. BAZNAS berfokus pada penyaluran dana zakat dan distribusi logistik gizi tambahan, sedangkan DP3AP2KB menyediakan data sasaran, melakukan pendampingan keluarga, dan melaksanakan monitoring serta evaluasi. Pola ini menutup keterbatasan masing-masing lembaga sekaligus memperlihatkan bagaimana sinergi filantropi Islam dan pemerintah daerah dapat memperkuat intervensi gizi secara berkelanjutan. Direkomendasikan agar pola berbasis pembagian peran ini dilembagakan dan direplikasi pada tingkat nasional untuk mempercepat penurunan stunting.



Keywords:

Zakat; Reducing stunting;
Collaboration; Local
Government; Baznas.

ABSTRACT

The national prevalence of stunting in Indonesia declined from 21.5% in 2023 to 19.8% in 2024, according to the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI). Multisectoral efforts have been continuously undertaken from the national to the local level. This study aims to examine the collaborative mechanism and respective roles of the National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) and the Office for Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB) in reducing stunting in Bengkulu City. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 11 informants, analysis of policy documents, cooperation agreements, and financial reports, as well as participatory observation in the *Pemberian Makanan Tambahan* (PMT). The findings reveal that this collaboration is structured through an annually renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that delineates role-sharing. BAZNAS focuses on channelling *zakat* funds and coordinating the distribution of supplementary nutrition, whereas DP3AP2KB provides beneficiary data, family assistance, and monitoring and evaluation. This pattern not only addresses institutional limitations but also illustrates how the synergy of Islamic philanthropy and local government can reinforce sustainable nutrition interventions. It is recommended that this role-sharing model be institutionalized and replicated at the national level to accelerate stunting reduction targets.

Introduction

Stunting has emerged as a global concern, prompting all nations to take measures to combat it. According to the 2024 edition of the WHO–UNICEF–World Bank Joint Monitoring Program (JME), 150.2 million children under five globally are suffering from stunting, wasting, and underweight (Worldbank, 2024). This statistic constitutes 23.2% of the total

population of children under five. In Indonesia, according to the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2020-2024, the objective for decreasing stunting by 2024 is established at 14%. Nevertheless, the national stunting rate in 2024 remains far below the objective, at 19.8% (SSGI, 2024). Nonetheless, 19.8% is deemed to have surpassed the National Development Planning Agency's estimate of 20.1%. The 7.9 percentage point decline over four years (2019: 27.7%) indicates substantial achievement in expediting nationwide stunting reduction.

The factors influencing stunting in Indonesia indicate that enhancing access to water, sanitation, hygiene, antenatal care, maternal education, and socioeconomic conditions substantially mitigates the risk of stunting (Mudadu Silva et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023; Simbolon et al., 2021; Torlesse et al., 2016). Additional factors include the impact of birth weight, maternal nutritional condition, infant and child feeding practices, and the disparity in health care between rural and urban areas (Siramaneerat et al., 2024; Siswati et al., 2022; Widyaningsih et al., 2022). Multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships are considered a critical success factor due to its determinants spanning various sectors. Goi et al. (2024) and Sofyan et al. (2024) underscore that numerous stunting interventions necessitate synergy among the health, education, community empowerment, private, and non-governmental sectors. Specific and sensitive intervention programs, when planned without appropriate collaborative governance, may exhibit low efficacy.

The *Tim Percepatan Penurunan Stunting* (TPPS) has directed regions to promote synergy among public institutions and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration. The story of decreasing stunting prevalence in Bengkulu City highlights the successful outcomes of cross-sectoral collaboration. The

Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB), leading the TPPS of Bengkulu City, has collaborated with the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of Bengkulu City to tackle funding deficiencies in program of the *Pemberian Makanan Tambahan* (PMT). The collaboration commenced in 2019 but was disrupted by the onset of Covid-19. In 2022, they reinitiated the PMT program. This partnership resulted in a reduction of stunting prevalence in Bengkulu City from 12.9% in 2022 to 6.7% in 2023 (Aribowo, 2024; Mayasari, 2024).

The method of public health collaboration between state organizations (DP3AP2KB) and Islamic charity institutions (BAZNAS Bengkulu City) is intriguing to elucidate. Prior research in Indonesia has predominantly emphasized cross-sectoral collaboration among local government, community health centers/cadres, and communities, which enhances practices and services for stunting prevention (Eka, 2022; Ipan et al., 2021; Lailiyah, 2023; Pratama et al., 2023). Nevertheless, certain studies emphasize collaborative limitations, including community opposition, inadequate communication, lack of specialized teams, minimal accountability, and local governance challenges, leading to ineffective implementation (Fahriza, 2021; Sukanti & Faidati, 2021). The study primarily concentrates on intra-governmental or government-community partnerships and programmatic interventions like supplementary feeding, without exploring the framework of collaborative funding with faith-based philanthropy (Kemenkes, 2023; Perdana, 2023).

This study seeks to elucidate the methods of collaboration and the functions of BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB in Bengkulu City. This research is significant because of the scarcity of studies that emphasize the partnership

between state policy-making institutions and Islamic charity organizations as financial contributors to the issue of stunting. The significant reduction in stunting prevalence makes Bengkulu City a pertinent case study, especially for examining the dynamics of cooperation.

Method

This study examines a singular case: the DP3AP2KB's collaboration with the Bengkulu City BAZNAS to resolve the funding challenge for the PMT. Yin (2011) elucidates that the single-case study methodology enables social researchers to investigate social dynamics, institutional frameworks, and the interaction processes among the included actors in a contextual and naturalistic fashion. The research period included two months: December 2023 to April 2024.

Data was gathered through participant observation methodologies, comprehensive interviews, and documentation from pertinent program stakeholders, including program managers at BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB, implementing partners, and field companion cadres. The informants were selected purposefully due to their direct participation in the execution of the supplementary feeding program (PMT) for the stunting target group in Bengkulu City. This study included a total of 11 informants. Observation techniques were employed to examine the distribution of help and the interactions among actors in the field, while semi-structured interviews were carried out to gather comprehensive contextual information.

The documentation comprises a compilation of MoUs, program reports, and stunting statistics to facilitate study. The data underwent analysis via the phases of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, employing technique and source triangulation to validate the findings. In the

results section, we structured sub-chapters corresponding to each study topic; inside each sub-chapter. Empirical findings are initially presented, followed by an interpretation via a structured narrative data presentation. Conclusions were subsequently derived from observations deemed really intriguing and containing novel information.

Results

Stunting is not only the responsibility of the government, but rather a shared problem that must be addressed collaboratively by various stakeholders. The involvement of religious institutions such as the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) adds a philanthropic dimension to public health interventions, strengthening support for vulnerable groups by mobilizing zakat to improve nutrition. The preliminary findings of this study broadly reflect this concept, wherein a combination of public resources and socio-religious funding can expand the reach and effectiveness of services aimed at reducing stunting.

To delve deeper into these findings, we will provide a detailed account of the collaborative framework between BAZNAS and the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB), as well as the specific contributions of each actor in efforts to reduce stunting. The subsection entitled “Collaboration between BAZNAS of Bengkulu City and DP3AP2KB” will explain the collaboration mechanism that has been established, including how coordination is carried out and how resources are synergized in the field. Subsequently, the subsection “Roles in Reducing Stunting” will analyze the roles and responsibilities of each actor — from BAZNAS’s role in funding and community empowerment to DP3AP2KB’s role in policy interventions and health services. By

understanding this division of roles, readers should see how multi-actor collaboration is concretely realized in public policy practice to accelerate the reduction of the stunting rate.

Collaboration between BAZNAS Bengkulu City and DP3AP2KB

This section explains how the collaboration between BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB was formed. Data sources were obtained from documentation and confirmed through in-depth interviews. The partnership between the BAZNAS) and DP3AP2KB in combating stunting exemplifies a strategic and complementary synergy. Annual Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) establish this partnership arrangement by outlining the tasks and obligations of each party. BAZNAS serves as the provider and distributor of *zakat*, *infaq*, *sadaqah* and *waqf*, whilst DP3AP2KB is responsible for collecting target data, providing family help, and overseeing programs. The systematic distribution of responsibilities ensures enhanced efficiency, focus, and ethical and administrative accountability in the supplementary feeding program (PMT).

The DP3AP2KB identifies at-risk populations, particularly pregnant women susceptible to chronic energy shortage and children under five exhibiting signs of stunting. This data underpins BAZNAS's distribution of aid in the form of nutritious supplementary foods, including soy milk, green bean porridge, eggs, rice, and other food items chosen for their pertinent nutritional value. This method illustrates a reciprocal relationship: local governments supply institutional capacity through data and a network of *posyandu* cadres, whereas Islamic charity entities offer financial and logistical assistance. This connection transcends the constraints of individual institutions, facilitating more sustainable nutritional treatments.

This collaborative system exemplifies a flexible approach in program

execution. BAZNAS does not directly distribute help to the community; instead, it engages implementing partners as intermediaries responsible for processing, packaging, and distributing additional food to Posyandu (community health posts). Partner engagement is deemed crucial due to the extensive geographical expanse of Bengkulu City and the constrained internal resources of BAZNAS. The distribution of supplementary nutritional logistics can be executed more consistently, monitored, and punctually in collaboration with partners. This approach verifies that collaboration functions not only among governmental institutions and *zakat* agencies but also facilitates local economic empowerment through the engagement of small business stakeholders who have developed alongside BAZNAS. The distribution system is both technological and reinforces the socio-economic framework of society.

The annual MoU functions as a mechanism to guarantee the sustainability of collaboration. The MoU, while lacking the legal authority of a formal contract, functions as a moral and administrative framework that promotes ongoing collaboration between the parties involved. The one-year validity period facilitates regular assessments and revisions to agreements, ensuring the program remains adaptable to prevailing situations. The term signifies a dynamic collaboration that is adaptable rather than inflexible, responding to changing requirements. This relationship is both adaptable and focused on achieving concrete outcomes for the community.

The participation of cadres and Tim Pendamping Keluarga (TPK) further reinforces the collaborative pattern. Their presence guarantees that supplementary nutrition aid extends beyond the distribution phase, incorporating family education and support. Through this method, benefit families acquire an understanding of the significance of balanced diet, child-

rearing practices, and hygienic and healthful living behaviors. This approach is both therapeutic and preventive, since it addresses behavioral modifications that facilitate sustained nutritional enhancement.

Monitoring and assessment constitute a fundamental component of this collaborative paradigm. BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB performed a collaborative evaluation to determine the efficacy of the program regarding logistical distribution and the enhancement of children's nutritional status. The assessment is carried out through stunting case audits and coordination meetings with distribution partners. The evaluation outcomes subsequently inform enhancements to the cooperation mechanism in the following year. This structure enables the program to operate administratively while being informed by empirical research that demonstrates tangible improvements in public health conditions.

The partnership mechanism between BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB exemplifies the notion of convergence in public policy from an analytical standpoint. Local governments possess a formal obligation to combat stunting, yet have financial constraints for direct nutritional treatments. Conversely, BAZNAS, as an Islamic humanitarian organization, possesses adaptable and socially focused financial resources. The partnership between the two shows how cross-sectoral cooperation can overcome structural constraints. This indicates that stunting prevention is not solely the state's obligation, but also a component of the community's social responsibility, facilitated through the institution of *zakat*.

This pattern indicates that Islamic philanthropy can serve as a strategic ally for local governments in public health initiatives from a sustainability standpoint. The strategy of *zakat* and *infaq* funding enhances immediate interventions while fostering communal knowledge regarding the significance

of sharing for collective health. The daily infaq model and charity boxes enable community involvement in program financing, cultivating a sense of collective ownership in stunting reduction initiatives. This participative model serves as a significant social capital for enhancing program sustainability.

The relationship between BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB exemplifies the convergence of local government capabilities and the efficacy of Islamic philanthropy in combating chronic malnutrition. The efficacy of this collaboration is assessed not solely by the volume of help dispensed, but also by the presence of institutional frameworks that guarantee connectedness, transparency, and ongoing evaluation. This relationship exemplifies an innovative partnership approach that can be emulated in other sectors, where local governments and philanthropic organizations collaborate to attain sustainable health development objectives. The collaboration between BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB mitigates technical and budgetary constraints and fosters social synergy that enhances nutrition interventions in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Roles in Reducing Stunting

This section explains the roles of BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB in reducing stunting in Bengkulu City. Data sources were obtained from in-depth interviews and participant observation. BAZNAS serves to actualize the function of the *zakat* institution by providing a tangible contribution to public health issues. Through the administration of *zakat*, *infaq*, *shodaqoh* and *waqf* BAZNAS possesses the financial resources to offer nutritious additional food aid. The monies were amassed through public contributions, including donation boxes, daily alms, and other voluntary gifts. This mode of contribution illustrates the integration of Islamic philanthropy into the health development agenda, especially in combating chronic malnutrition. The

supplementary feeding program of PMT executed by BAZNAS supplies food and guarantees that the nutritional quality adheres to established requirements. Food products including soy milk, green bean porridge, rice, eggs, and formula milk were selected for their nutritional properties that promote the growth and development of children and the health of pregnant mothers.

In addition to its financial function, BAZNAS serves as a logistical distribution entity. To guarantee the program's efficacy, BAZNAS partners with implementing organizations capable of producing and distributing supplementary meals. This technique facilitates the direct distribution of aid to Posyandu and health facilities across numerous sub-districts of Bengkulu City. The partner involvement strategy demonstrates efficiency in resource management, given that BAZNAS lacks adequate technical personnel to cover the entire region. Utilizing local partners enables the targeted delivery of nutritious food while empowering small business owners who have already benefited from help provided by BAZNAS. This trend illustrates the dual aspect of the intervention: in addition to enhancing the community's nutritional status, it also fortifies the local economic foundation.

The significance of BAZNAS is growing due to its sustainability. BAZNAS is dedicated to the ongoing distribution of aid through the stunting mitigation program under an annual MoU framework. Annually, the distribution strategy is assessed and modified to address field requirements. BAZNAS's engagement extends beyond the mere delivery of food to encompass nutrition and health education initiatives. This counseling seeks to enhance public understanding on the significance of a nutritious diet, hygienic living practices, and the upkeep of familial health. Consequently, BAZNAS's contribution extends beyond logistical support to encompass the

enhancement of educational initiatives that foster behavioral transformation within society.

Conversely, the DP3AP2KB assumes a similarly significant role. The DP3AP2KB, as a regional organization, possesses a formal mission for family empowerment, child protection, and population control. This institution acts as the primary entity in detecting instances and gathering data on target populations for stunting prevention. Through the network of Posyandu cadres and TPK, DP3AP2KB effectively identified vulnerable populations, including pregnant women suffering from chronic energy deficit, children under five at danger of stunting, and infants under two years of age who necessitate specialized care. The data was subsequently submitted to BAZNAS for further action in the provision of supplementary nutritional support.

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Besides data gathering, the DP3AP2KB also conducts family counseling activities. This support encompasses educational provision, referrals to medical institutions, and oversight of the health status of

beneficiary households. This method ensures that nutritional interventions extend beyond mere aid provision to encompass family behavior and knowledge. Familial support is crucial as stunting is influenced not only by inadequate nutritional consumption but also by parenting practices, the health environment, and accessibility to medical care. Through the engagement of DP3AP2KB, families obtain support while being directed towards adopting healthier behavioral modifications.

The monitoring and assessment function constitutes the third facet of the DP3AP2KB's duty. Monitoring is conducted regularly through coordination with cadres and TPK to ensure that the support offered effectively enhances nutritional status. Evaluation is undertaken periodically through stunting case audits, coordination meetings, and child growth monitoring at posyandu. This evaluation's results are utilized to identify barriers, assess intervention efficacy, and develop enhancement measures for the subsequent year. Consequently, the DP3AP2KB guarantees that the stunting reduction initiative possesses explicit, data-informed control mechanisms and is centered on tangible outcomes.

Upon further analysis, the functions of BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB exhibit a model of complementing convergence. BAZNAS possesses financial resources and a charitable network; nevertheless, it lacks sufficient bureaucratic mechanisms to engage with the community at the family level. In contrast, the DP3AP2KB possesses institutional, data, and human resource capabilities in the field, although is constrained in financing direct nutrition initiatives. Their relationship establishes a mutualistic symbiosis: *zakat* and *infaq* monies administered by BAZNAS may be precisely allocated through the data and network of DP3AP2KB, while local government programs can operate more efficiently with financial and logistical assistance

from *zakat* institutions.

This relationship exemplifies the integration of government and philanthropy groups within a health development framework from a public policy standpoint. The battle against stunting, traditionally viewed as a governmental obligation, is bolstered by community contributions through *zakat* organizations. This paradigm reinforces the concepts of participation, transparency, and sustainability, as the program's success relies on communal commitment rather than a single party. Moreover, community engagement through daily contributions and philanthropy fosters a significant social aspect, including the cultivation of a sense of ownership and collective accountability in mitigating stunting rates.

The functions of BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB in combating stunting in Bengkulu City represent a productive and sustainable partnership. BAZNAS facilitates *zakat* funding and the distribution of supplementary nutritional resources, whereas DP3AP2KB guarantees precise targeting through data collecting, family support, and monitoring and evaluation. This pattern indicates that the constraints of each institution can be surmounted through synergy, yielding a more extensive impact. This collaboration enhances programming efforts to mitigate stunting and establishes a robust social foundation for the sustainability of future nutritional initiatives.

Discussion

The stunting intervention in Bengkulu City is implemented not merely as an isolated effort by *zakat* institutions or health authorities, but as a collaborative synergy that leverages the distinct qualities of each participant. BAZNAS is tasked with the collection of *zakat*, *infaq*, *shodaqoh*, and *waqf* funds, as well as the distribution of supplementary nutritional logistics, whereas

DP3AP2KB oversees target data, family support, and monitoring and evaluation. This mechanism facilitates a combination of charitable financial capabilities and governmental institutional legitimacy. According to Ansell & Gash (2008), collaboration in public affairs necessitates the participation of diverse governmental and non-governmental entities in decision-making and policy execution.

Dove et al. (2025) assert that the efficacy of collaboration in public health hinges on well-defined responsibilities, accountability, and sustained commitment. The cooperation procedures established through annual MoUs and ongoing monitoring act as mitigative measures against collaboration barriers, particularly in ensuring accountability and the sustainability of agreements. The ADB (2023) report on public-private partnership asserts that mutually accepted duties and shared discretion form the foundation of effective collaboration. This principle is particularly evident in the collaborative framework between BAZNAS and the Bengkulu City DP3AP2KB.

The partnership between BAZNAS and DP3AP2KB transcends administrative collaboration, representing a recontextualization of Islamic generosity within a public program framework. BAZNAS serves as a social conduit for the community to meet religious requirements through *zakat* and *infaq* contributions, whereas DP3AP2KB facilitates the state's role in maintaining program standardization, quality assurance, and the pertinence of local regulations. This collaboration created a hybrid space between the public and religious spheres, where dietary interventions were perceived not just as a governmental obligation but also as a social imperative aligned with religious principles. This collaborative trend indicates that stunting reduction may serve as a domain for the positive interaction of socio-religious ideals

and public bureaucracy.

Moreover, the participation of *zakat* institutions in nutritional interventions exemplifies an innovation in institutional hybridity, specifically the integration of public bureaucratic principles and religious values within a unified operational framework. Research indicates that *zakat* and *infaq* play a significant role in fostering socio-economic growth and mitigating inequality (Arwani et al., 2024). This research extends the discourse to health, encompassing not only the allocation of social money but also nutritional interventions through institutional collaboration. Islamic philanthropic traditions align with the local community's principles of cooperation and can enhance social solidarity (Hidayat et al., 2025). In contrast to the criticisms regarding *zakat* distribution, which are occasionally inefficient or lack transparency, as indicated by various *zakat*, *infaq*, *shodaqoh* management studies (Masithoh et al., 2025). Your research demonstrates that structural engagement with governmental entities can enhance the efficacy and equity of distribution. The ramifications of this discovery are considerable.

This research theoretically enhances the literature on public-philanthropic collaboration through a hybrid governance model that formally incorporates religious institutions, so broadening the examination of public-nonprofit partnerships (Perobelli et al., 2024). The adaptable annual MoU framework and ongoing monitoring system can significantly enhance governance theory related to institutional flexibility within the local context and the tenets of transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Islamic philanthropic institutions can be formally integrated into local government bureaucracy through annual

Memoranda of Understanding via the procedures of *zakat*, *infaq*, *shodaqoh*, and *waqf*. This collaboration exhibits a distinctive framework, wherein BAZNAS facilitates the allocation of supplementary nutrition money and logistics, while DP3AP2KB supplies data, implements family mentorship, and guarantees the program's measurability through monitoring and evaluation. This role amalgamation establishes a novel domain that integrates religious principles and state administration to mitigate stunting. This discovery enhances the field of Islamic organizational management by demonstrating that *zakat* institutions serve not only as social tools but also as strategic collaborators in public health governance.

This research remains confined to a local context and has not investigated the potential for this trend to be repeated in other regions. Consequently, subsequent research is advised to broaden the comparative scope and evaluate the program's efficacy through quantitative metrics. This study conveys a significant message: local governments must enhance collaboration with philanthropic institutions, and BAZNAS must bolster accountability to sustain public engagement. This pattern, if further developed, could serve as a paradigm for inclusive and sustainable partnership in local public health policy.

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