

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATIVE COMMUNICATION MODEL IN COMBATING STUNTING IN BANTAENG REGENCY IN 2020-2023

SRI DEWI YANTI, ANDI ALIMUDDIN UNDE¹

MIQBAL SULTAN²

MUH. AKBAR³

^{1,2,3}DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE,
HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

Abstract

Reducing stunting rates in Indonesia is a national development priority because it impacts the quality of human resources and the future economy. Stunting caused by chronic malnutrition has implications for long-term physical, cognitive, and health growth. Bantaeng Regency is one of the regions focusing on stunting reduction through the implementation of an integrative cross-sectoral communication model in accordance with the National Action Plan for the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction (RAN PASTI) 2021–2024. This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach to analyze the implementation of the integrative communication model in stunting reduction in Bantaeng Regency. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation from regional apparatus organizations (OPDs) and villages with stunting hotspots in Bantaeng, Ulu Ere, and Pajjukukang Districts. The results show that the implementation of the integrative communication model is supported by three main components: human resource capacity, inter-agency coordination, and accurate data support. Trained human resource capacity enables the delivery of empathetic and participatory health messages. Cross-sectoral coordination prevents policy fragmentation through regular forums and shared perceptions between institutions. Valid data support, both at the village and regional government agencies (OPD) levels, strengthens the targeting of evidence-based interventions. Communication media used include conventional channels (banners, leaflets) and digital channels (WhatsApp groups, Facebook), structured according to institutional level. In conclusion, the ideal integrative communication model in Bantaeng Regency combines cross-sectoral integration, community participation, and the use of accurate data and digital technology. This approach serves as an evidence-based social change strategy and local culture that supports the sustainability of the stunting management program.

Keywords: Stunting, Integrative Communication Model, Human Resource Capacity, Cross-Sectoral Coordination, Bantaeng Regency.

INTRODUCTION

Reducing stunting rates in Indonesia is a critical priority for national development, as it seriously impacts the quality of human resources and future economic development. Stunting is a condition of growth failure in children caused by chronic malnutrition, resulting in a child's height being shorter than expected for their age. This condition not only increases the risk of death in infants and toddlers but also hinders cognitive development, speech, and motor skills. Furthermore, stunting has the potential to create a recurring cycle between generations and increase the risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension as children grow into adulthood (Kurniati et al., 2022). Indonesia has one of the highest stunting rates in Southeast Asia, reaching 36.4% in 2017 (WHO, 2017). The government has set an ambitious target to reduce this figure to 14% by 2024, as outlined in the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). Addressing stunting requires a comprehensive approach involving various sectors, including health, education, social, and environmental factors, as the causes of stunting are complex and multidimensional (Komarulzaman et al., 2023; Kalinda et al., 2024).

One crucial aspect of this effort is the implementation of integrated, cross-sectoral health communication. A communication model that unites various stakeholders is expected to improve coordination and collaboration in program implementation, while also strengthening public awareness and participation in stunting prevention (Rimal & Lapinski, 2009). Several studies have shown that the success of stunting reduction programs depends heavily on effective communication strategies to sustainably change community behavior (Snyder et al., 2017). The success of development in a region is often linked to the effectiveness of local

government strategic planning, particularly in addressing national priority issues such as stunting. In Bantaeng Regency, reducing stunting rates is a key focus in human resource development, requiring a communication approach that is not only informative but also collaborative across sectors.

An integrative communication model is a strategic approach that combines various forms of communication, both vertical and horizontal, to ensure the integration of messages and actions across stakeholders. This approach encompasses inter-organizational, cross-sectoral, and interpersonal communication at the community level. In the context of stunting reduction, this model is crucial because stunting is not a standalone issue but is closely interconnected with factors such as nutrition, maternal and child health, sanitation, education, and parenting. During the 2020–2023 period, the Bantaeng Regency Government implemented a cross-sectoral approach to reducing stunting, as directed in the 2021–2024 National Action Plan for the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction (RAN PASTI), which emphasizes the importance of synergy between local governments, the private sector, community organizations, and the media in delivering consistent, evidence-based messages.

This integrative communication model also serves as a reference in the development and implementation of local government annual work plans, as it connects medium-term development goals with direct community action. With this approach, interventions no longer operate in a sectoral manner but rather as a unified, complementary and reinforcing whole. Bantaeng Regency in South Sulawesi is one of the regions that has successfully demonstrated a downward trend in stunting rates through program innovations and regulatory support that address the convergence of stunting interventions (Ministry of Health, 2023). This success is heavily influenced by the implementation of integrative communication involving various institutions, such as the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN), the Health Office, the Social Service Office, and the local government (Ministry of Health, 2018; Bantaeng Regent Regulation Number 71 of 2019). The regency is an example of a region that has successfully reduced stunting rates through program innovations and regulatory support. According to the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), the stunting rate in Bantaeng was recorded at 21%, the lowest in South Sulawesi, and has continued to decline to 20.5% in 2021 despite a slight increase due to the pandemic. This success is supported by nine public service innovations, such as the exclusive breastfeeding program, school-based surveillance, and immunization certificates. Furthermore, regulations such as Bantaeng Regent Regulation No. 71 of 2019 concerning the Convergence of Stunting Prevention Programs provide a strong legal basis for coordinated program implementation. The successful implementation of integrative communication in the stunting reduction program is supported by policies and public service innovations. A report (Ministry of Health, 2023) states that inter-agency coordination and regulations, such as Regent Regulation No. 71 of 2019, played a significant role in reducing stunting rates in this region. Programs such as exclusive breastfeeding, complete immunizations, and school-based monitoring are implemented in an integrated manner with community education activities and capacity building for health workers. However, challenges remain in program implementation, particularly budget constraints, a lack of adequate health workers, and low public understanding of the importance of nutrition and a healthy lifestyle (Fauzi & Rosdiana, 2021; Sari et al., 2020). Therefore, an in-depth study of the implementation process of this integrative communication model is necessary to formulate a more effective model and communication strategy tailored to the local characteristics of Bantaeng Regency.

Significant challenges remain at the national level. Budget allocation issues, limited health worker capacity, and limited public education on nutrition and child health are obstacles that must be overcome. Therefore, a multisectoral approach involving the government, the private sector, and the community is key to accelerating stunting reduction. Furthermore, strengthening advocacy and public campaigns is crucial to raising public awareness of the importance of stunting prevention. Therefore, given these challenges, researchers have taken on the role of health communication, the process of conveying health information and messages to increase public understanding and awareness of health issues, problems, risks, and solutions, specifically regarding stunting.

Given the importance of integrative communication in this context, this study aims to explore the implementation process of an integrative communication model in addressing stunting in Bantaeng Regency, formulate an ideal integrative communication model appropriate to the local context, and identify health communication strategies used by local governments in stunting management programs. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accelerating stunting reduction aligns with the goals of eradicating hunger, improving food security, and achieving good nutrition for all. This priority has also been adopted through Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, achieving this target requires integrated and convergent interventions between the health sector and other sectors.

The stunting reduction strategy consists of two main interventions: nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive. Nutrition-specific interventions, which include exclusive breastfeeding, immunization, and nutritional supplementation, contribute directly to 30% of stunting reduction. Meanwhile, nutrition-sensitive interventions such as providing clean water, improving health services, and alleviating poverty contribute

significantly, reaching 70% (Ministry of Health, 2018). The importance of this approach is reflected in national policies, including Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2017 concerning the Healthy Community Movement and various regional regulations that support implementation at the local level.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study that aims to analyze a phenomenon, event, social activity, attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts of people both individually and in a group scope. Qualitative research is expected to be able to provide complete answers to the research question concerning how to Implement the Integrative Communication Model in Stunting and Malnutrition Management in Bantaeng Regency. This research design is based on the case study method used in the study of stunting management in Bantaeng Regency. As a blueprint in this research design, several main problems are proposed: what questions should be asked; how relevant data; what data should be collected; and how to analyze the results. The selection of this research design is intended as an action plan to depart from a series of initial research questions that must be answered towards a series of conclusions about these questions, where it is possible to find a number of basic steps for collecting and analyzing relevant data. The object of the study is the regional apparatus in the Bantaeng Regency Government, especially the Regional Apparatus (OPD) that is directly involved since the planning and implementation of the stunting management intervention policy. Field observations and interviews were also conducted in several villages in Bantaeng Regency that are included in the stunting locus according to Riskesdas. This research will be conducted in several villages/sub-districts in Bantaeng Regency. Location selection is based on geographic, economic, and livelihood categorization. The planned research locations are Bantaeng District, Ulu Ere District, and Pajjukukang District.

Analisis Data

The next stage is data analysis. This stage is used to process the data the author has successfully collected. Data analysis is a data analysis process with several stages or steps, starting with reviewing available data from various sources, namely interviews, observations that have been determined in field notes, documents, images, and others. The first step is to conduct data reduction, which is done by abstracting. The next step is to organize it into units. These units are categorized in the next step. Categories are made while marking (coding) which finally conducts a validity check until the data interpretation stage. Qualitative data analysis in this study was conducted by referring to the interactive model of data collection or data collection with data analysis according to Huberman and Miles in Bungin (2003). This data analysis cycle is as shown in the following figure:

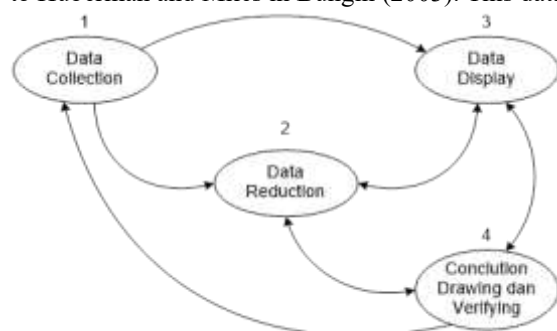


Figure 1. Components of Interactive Model Data Analysis

This figure illustrates that data analysis begins with field data collection. The results are then reduced by sorting the data into specific conceptual units, categories, or themes. The data is then presented in various formats, such as sketches, synopses, matrices, or other formats. This is crucial to facilitate drawing conclusions. This process may be repeated, depending on the number of processes and the complexity of the problem, until valid and objective data are obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Ideal Integrative Communication Model for the Implementation of the Stunting Management Program by the Bantaeng Regency Government

An integrative communication model encompasses human resource capacity, inter-agency coordination, and accurate data support. An integrative communication model is a communication approach that combines various elements, channels, actors, and resources into an integrated system to achieve common goals, particularly in the context of public policy or development programs. In in-depth interviews conducted by researchers, informants provided the following information regarding this:

"Cadres must be trained, there must be a shared perception between institutions, and support for families at risk of stunting." (BKKB Analyst, May 20, 2025)

Meanwhile, the Head of the Housing, Settlement, and Land Agency stated:

"The main elements are cross-sector coordination, the availability of valid data at the village government,

and communication on behavior change." (Head of the Housing, Settlement, and Land Agency, May 28, 2025)

"The main elements in the integrative communication model are the availability of valid data at the technical OPD for determining indicators, as well as the availability of PMT (prepared food supplements) or supplementary food for the target population." (Head of Human Development, Economy, and Infrastructure, April 1, 2025)

"We've implemented the convergence of programs for stunting prevention, nutrition, health, education, food security, and the Family Welfare Movement (PKK). We're conducting behavior change communication to make it easier for the public to understand. The message needs to be delivered by the right people, such as health workers, integrated health post (Posyandu) cadres, community leaders, and religious leaders." (Head of the Pa'bentengang Community Health Center, April 5, 2025)

Several informants emphasized the importance of data accuracy, technical sector coordination, and direct intervention support for the community. Three indicators of success are examined:

Human Resource (HR) Capacity. HR capacity refers to the technical abilities, communication skills, and knowledge of program implementers, including government agencies, health workers, extension workers, and community cadres. Qualified HR can deliver messages that are precise, empathetic, and contextual. Continuous training and capacity building are crucial for implementers to understand policy content and communicate it to the community in a participatory manner. Human resource capacity also includes local cultural sensitivity and adaptive abilities to various social situations.

Inter-Agency Coordination. Cross-sector coordination is the backbone of an integrative communication model, addressing numerous development issues, such as stunting. Effective communication between agencies (such as health offices, social services offices, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), and villages) can prevent program overlap and ensure policy synergy. This coordination includes regular meetings, a clear division of tasks, and real-time information sharing. A lack of coordination leads to fragmented information and poor policy implementation on the ground. **Accurate and Integrated Data Support.** The success of integrative communication depends heavily on the availability and reliability of data. Accurate data enables precise targeting and the development of evidence-based communication messages. The use of digital information systems, such as integrated data dashboards (e.g., the EPPGBM for stunting), facilitates program monitoring and evaluation. Meanwhile, inaccurate data can lead to miscommunication, mistargeting, and reduced intervention effectiveness. These three points are interconnected in this research. Therefore, the researchers will develop their research matrix step by step:

Table 1. Human Resource Capacity

Component of Integrative Communication Model	Source of Interview	Key Statement Points
Human Resource Capacity	Sry (BKKBAN Analyst)	Cadres must be trained, family assistance
Human Resource Capacity	Adyan (Head of PMPI Division)	Availability of supplementary feeding (requires HR for distribution and education)
Human Resource Capacity	Salahuddin (Social Affairs Office)	Collaboration between village government to facilitate activity infrastructure, health workers provide guidance to cadres who act as companions for beneficiaries
Human Resource Capacity	Mansur (Head of Processing and Marketing Division)	Public trust, support from local government, resources
Human Resource Capacity	drg. Suryafatma, M.Kes. (Head of Pa'bentengang Health Center)	Messages should be delivered by the right people such as health workers, Posyandu cadres, community leaders, and religious leaders

Source: Researcher Data Processing 2025

The figure above shows that human resource capacity is the primary foundation for implementing an integrative communication model for stunting management in Bantaeng Regency. Interviews indicate that cadre training, family support, and the availability of human resources capable of distributing and educating about interventions such as PMT are important aspects emphasized by policymakers. Furthermore, the success of integrative communication is also greatly influenced by collaboration between village governments and health workers in supporting infrastructure and mentoring cadres at the field level. Another equally important factor is growing community trust in the program, strengthened by local

government support and the availability of local resources. Therefore, human resource capacity building must include technical training, strengthening cross-level collaboration, and community empowerment as part of a comprehensive and sustainable communication strategy.

Figure 2. Inter-Agency Coordination

Component of Integrative Communication Model	Source of Interview	Key Statement Points
Inter-Agency Coordination	drg. Suryafatma, M.Kes. (Head of Pa'benteng Health Center)	Cross-sector coordination, Family Welfare Movement (PKK), religious leaders, community leaders
Inter-Agency Coordination	Armawansyah (Head of DPKPP Division)	Cross-sector coordination
Inter-Agency Coordination	Sry (BKKB Analyst)	Common understanding among institutions
Inter-Agency Coordination	Syahriani (Head of Cipta Karya Division)	Effectively coordinated message delivery among institutions led by Bappeda, with regular activity reports

Source: Researcher Data Processing 2025

Coordination between agencies plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of integrative communication, particularly in addressing complex issues such as stunting. Interviews indicate that the involvement of various parties, including the Family Welfare Movement (PKK), religious leaders, and community leaders, is part of cross-sectoral coordination, which must be managed in an integrated manner. A shared understanding between agencies is also crucial to ensure that messages are conveyed without conflict and build public trust. Therefore, an effective coordination system can be achieved through a mechanism for routine activity reporting and cross-agency message organization facilitated by key actors such as the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda). Therefore, coordination is not only about role allocation but also involves harmonizing communication strategies, message consistency, and the ongoing integration of cross-sectoral work. Furthermore, regarding the third component of the integrative communication model, namely accurate data support, the researchers formulated the following matrix for clearer understanding.

Table 3. Accurate Data Support

Component of Integrative Communication Model	Source of Interview	Key Statement Points
Accurate Data Support	Syahriani (Head of Cipta Karya Division)	Understanding community characteristics
Accurate Data Support	drg. Suryafatma, M.Kes. (Head of Pa'benteng Health Center)	Data on families at risk of stunting is used to determine recipients of nutrition interventions and assistance
Accurate Data Support	Armawansyah (Head of DPKPP Division)	Valid data in villages
Accurate Data Support	Adyan (Head of PMPI Division)	Valid data at technical government agencies (OPD)

Source: Researcher Data Processing, 2025

During Ilham Azikin's leadership, the Bantaeng Regency Government demonstrated a strong commitment to building an integrative, data-driven communication model. One of the key pillars of this approach is the availability of accurate, integrated data across sectors, at the local government, technical regional government agencies (OPD), and village levels. Valid data is not only used to map families at risk of stunting but also serves as the basis for developing communication strategies, determining intervention targets, and measuring program achievements on an ongoing basis. Through a more streamlined reporting system and the use of digital applications such as E-PPGBM, inter-agency coordination can be improved and behavior change messages can be tailored to real-world conditions. Thus, accurate data management practices in Bantaeng Regency under Ilham Azikin's leadership serve as a key example of how an evidence-based approach can strengthen the effectiveness of development communication in integrated stunting management.

Patterns of Relationships and Coordination Between Stakeholders

The pattern of relationships and coordination between stakeholders refers to the forms of interaction, communication, and cooperation mechanisms between the various parties involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs. In the context of public policy or addressing social issues such as stunting, these stakeholders include local governments, regional government agencies (OPDs), health workers, community leaders, community organizations, the private sector, the media, and the community as beneficiaries. The coordination pattern between stakeholders is acknowledged to be working well. The following information was provided by an informant:

"A reciprocal and mutually supportive relationship. Cadres assist health workers in providing services to the community, and the government provides facilities and infrastructure." (BKKB Analyst, May 20, 2025)

This statement reflects the existence of a reciprocal and mutually supportive relationship between stakeholders in the implementation of development programs, particularly in addressing stunting. Cadres, as the spearhead at the community level, play an active role in assisting health workers, particularly in disseminating information, monitoring, and providing direct assistance to target families. Similar sentiments were echoed by other informants. The following information was provided:

"The relationship between relevant agencies and the sub-district and village governments has been running well." (Head of the Housing, Residential Areas, and Land Agency, May 28, 2025)

The relationship established between technical OPDs and sub-district and village governments demonstrates a functional and mutually supportive communication mechanism. This synergy is crucial to ensuring that every policy designed at the district level can be implemented effectively at the grassroots level, while also enabling bottom-up feedback that enriches the program planning and evaluation process. Thus, this relationship pattern is one of the foundations for the success of the integrative communication approach in Bantaeng Regency. Another informant provided the following information:

"The relationship pattern between stakeholders, from the government, health workers, and the community, has been running well." (Head of Human Development, Economy, and Infrastructure, April 1, 2025)

The relationship and coordination between stakeholders in Bantaeng Regency during Ilham Azikin's leadership demonstrates a collaborative, structured, and complementary work system. The relationship between technical agencies, sub-district and village governments, health workers, and the community operates in a spirit of equal and productive partnership. This is reflected in maintained communication, a clear division of roles, and a shared understanding of priority programs such as stunting management. Cadres play an active role in supporting health workers in the field, while the local government provides facilities and infrastructure support. Cross-sector coordination is facilitated through forums and regular reporting, strengthening program integration between agencies. Therefore, this strong relationship pattern serves as a crucial foundation for implementing an effective, participatory, and sustainable integrative communication model to promote better human development in Bantaeng Regency.

Media and Communication Channels Used

In the context of Bantaeng Regency, communication is conducted through various channels, both conventional and digital. Informants stated that:

"Media includes banners, leaflets, and channels through the Forkom TPK WhatsApp Group." (BKKB Analyst, May 20, 2025)

"Social media such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook, and print media are also effective in the local context." (Head of the Housing, Residential Areas, and Land Agency, May 28, 2025)

"The most appropriate social media to use is the WhatsApp Group, which is divided into three main groups: the Regency's WhatsApp Group for the District Personnel Officers (PPS), consisting of 11 Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), the Military District Commander (Dandim), and the Police Chief; the WhatsApp Group for the District Personnel Officers (TPPS) for each sub-district; and the WhatsApp Group for the Data Operators (TPPS). This demonstrates that the digital communication structure has been structured according to institutional levels and technical functions." (Head of Human Development, Economy, and Infrastructure, April 1, 2025)

Communication for the stunting management program in Bantaeng Regency is implemented through a structured combination of conventional media and digital channels. Media selection is tailored to the needs of the target audience and the geographic and social context of the local community. Conventional communication channels include print media such as banners, signs, and leaflets. These media serve to disseminate messages visually in public spaces, especially to communities not yet fully accessible by digital technology. Print media distribution is carried out through a network of cadres and health service facilities in villages and sub-districts.

On the other hand, the use of digital channels has shown significant improvement in supporting the effectiveness of cross-sectoral communication. One of the most widely used platforms is WhatsApp Groups. According to informants, WhatsApp is used as the primary medium for rapid coordination, information sharing, and real-time reporting of activities. The WhatsApp group structure is hierarchical

according to institutional level. At the district level, there is a WhatsApp group for the Public Order Agency (PPS), with members representing 11 strategic regional government agencies (OPD) and security personnel such as the Military District Commander (Dandim) and the Police Chief. At the sub-district level, there are WhatsApp groups for each administrative area, technically facilitated by a group of data operators who help synchronize information between sectors. In addition to WhatsApp, social media such as Facebook is also used to reach the general public with educational content and health program promotions. This allows for more open interactions and encourages active participation from local communities. Further information was provided by the Head of the Public Works Division. The following information was provided:

"The media used in Public Works include posters for septic tank desludging, banners for the wastewater treatment plant (IPATD), and videos of outreach activities. Communication channels include the Bantaeng Regency KPSPAM WhatsApp group for the water treatment plant (Pokmair) group and the Bantaeng Regency KPP group for the wastewater treatment plant (IPAL) group." (Head of Public Works Division, April 3, 2025)

The use of diverse media and communication channels demonstrates that the Bantaeng Regency Government has established a flexible, responsive, and decentralized communication system, where strategic messages can be delivered quickly and effectively through the synergy of various communication platforms.

The Role of Culture and Local Wisdom

Culture and local wisdom play a crucial role in strengthening the effectiveness of communication in the stunting management program in Bantaeng Regency. Local values embedded within the community not only serve as a social backdrop but are also utilized as a strategic medium to build shared understanding and encourage active community participation.

One concrete example of culture's role is the use of regional languages in communication, particularly in health education and nutrition counseling. The use of local languages facilitates community understanding, particularly in rural areas where formal Indonesian is not yet fully familiar. This allows health messages to be conveyed more effectively and contextually.

Furthermore, traditional, religious, and community leaders are involved in various outreach and advocacy activities. Their role as respected figures can influence community attitudes and behaviors regarding health issues, including stunting prevention. The involvement of these figures helps build trust and legitimacy in government programs, thereby strengthening communication reach down to the grassroots level.

The following information was provided by the informants::

"Local culture plays a role, such as religious and community leaders, the use of regional languages, and local foods in the DASHAT Kitchen and Nutrition House." (BKKB Analyst, May 20, 2025)

The data above shows that local food is also utilized in nutrition recovery activities, such as the Healthy Kitchen to Overcome Stunting (DASHAT) and Nutrition House programs. Using locally sourced food not only educates target families about utilizing local resources but also strengthens family food security. This approach demonstrates that local wisdom in food consumption patterns is a crucial element in behavior-based communication strategies. Social practices such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and community cooperation provide additional strengths in building participatory communication. Joint activities involving the community, such as cooking supplementary food, cleaning the environment, and supporting integrated health post (Posyandu) activities, create a sense of ownership of the program and strengthen social solidarity, which serves as a foundation for sustainable interventions. By integrating local cultural elements into the stunting program communication system, the Bantaeng Regency Government has successfully developed a communication model that not only conveys information but also creates meaningful engagement that aligns with the community's social character. Another informant provided the following information:

"The role of culture and local wisdom can facilitate understanding of messages and increase community participation in maintaining a clean environment." (Head of the Housing, Residential Areas, and Land Agency, May 28, 2025)

Local culture encompasses language, symbols, customs, and values that have long been present and practiced in the community's daily lives. When communication about development or health programs, including stunting programs, is delivered through a local cultural approach, the community's level of understanding increases due to: familiar language, recognized cultural symbols, and an emotional and social approach. In implementing stunting management programs at the regional level, local culture is not merely a social backdrop but also an effective communication tool and strategy. Two key elements of local culture that play a strategic role are the use of local languages and the use of local supplementary feeding (PMT). Both contribute to building closer communication with target communities and encourage greater acceptance and participation. This aligns with the opinion of the informant below:

"Relevant local culture is the use of local languages and the use of local PMT." (Head of Human Development, Economy, and Infrastructure, April 1, 2025)

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the use of local languages and the use of local PMT (Supplementary Feeding) in the stunting management program in Bantaeng Regency demonstrates that local culture plays a strategic role in supporting the effectiveness of development communication. Local languages facilitate understanding of messages and create an emotional connection between implementers and the community, while local PMT increases community acceptance because it aligns with dietary habits and available resources in the surrounding area. These two approaches not only strengthen communication reach but also build a sense of ownership of the program, empower the local economy, and encourage the sustainability of nutrition interventions. The integration of these cultural elements makes communication in the stunting program more contextual, participatory, and capable of creating sustainable behavioral change.

Indicators of Success of the Integrative Communication Model

In terms of measuring success, the indicators revealed by informants were quite diverse, reflecting a multidimensional approach. According to one informant:

"The indicator is a change in the behavior of target families, from inappropriate to better, supporting healthy behaviors and improving nutrition." (BKKB Analyst, May 20, 2025)

The success of the integrative communication model in addressing stunting in Bantaeng Regency can be measured through indicators that reflect real changes at various levels, including individual behavior, environmental conditions, and institutional coordination. As explained by Sri Harniaty Indraswari, one key indicator is a change in the behavior of target families toward healthier lifestyles and supporting improved child nutrition. Meanwhile, one informant highlighted the physical environment. The following information was provided:

"The number of toddlers living in uninhabitable homes has decreased and public awareness of maintaining a clean environment has increased." (Head of the Housing, Residential Areas, and Land Agency, May 28, 2025)

The informant above highlighted the physical environmental dimension, with the decrease in the number of toddlers living in uninhabitable homes and increased public awareness of maintaining cleanliness as a reflection of the success of cross-sectoral interventions. Other informants looked at the coordination aspect. The following data was obtained by the researcher:

"The level of attendance of regional government agencies (OPD) during coordination meetings, AKSI meetings 1, 2, and 3, and during stunting discussions is a key indicator of the success of integrative communication." (Head of Human Development, Economy, and Infrastructure, April 1, 2025)

Regarding coordination, Adyan Aaryanto emphasized the importance of active participation by OPDs in forums such as coordination meetings, AKSI meetings, and stunting discussions as a strong indicator of strong inter-agency collaboration. Thus, the success of integrative communication cannot be measured solely on a single scale, but rather through a multidimensional approach encompassing behavior, the environment, and ongoing institutional commitment. The explanations above demonstrate that success is not solely measured by its direct impact on the community, but also by the consistency of inter-agency engagement. However, there are unique challenges, as expressed by informants. The following are the interview results:

"Lack of public awareness, hoaxes and disinformation, hate speech, language and cultural differences, technological incompetence, and unstable network connectivity." (Head of the Family Welfare Movement (TP-PKK), Kampala Village, Eremerasa District, April 5, 2025)

From all of the explanations above, it can be concluded that the success of implementing the integrative communication model in Bantaeng Regency is not solely measured by the extent to which its impact is directly felt by the community, but also by the extent to which inter-agency engagement can be maintained consistently and coordinated.

The well-established relationship between regional government agencies (OPD), sub-district governments, and villages demonstrates a strong collaborative foundation. However, effective communication on the ground still faces significant challenges. As stated by the Head of the Family Welfare Movement (TP-PKK) in Kampala Village, obstacles such as low public awareness, the prevalence of hoaxes and disinformation, hate speech, linguistic and cultural differences, limited digital literacy, and uneven network infrastructure are factors that disrupt the smooth flow of information. This situation emphasizes that the sustainability of development communication depends not only on coordinating structures but also on the ability to adapt to local social and technological conditions.

DISCUSSION

In developing an ideal integrative communication model for stunting management at the regional level, it is important to reference various recent studies that emphasize the importance of communication synergy and collaboration between stakeholders. One important finding comes from research (Muniroh et al., 2025), which underscores that the effectiveness of communication in stunting prevention is significantly

influenced by community social and cultural involvement. This study demonstrates that integrating government programs with local values can increase message acceptance and community participation in stunting prevention programs. The involvement of community leaders and the utilization of informal communication channels are key to the success of this approach.

Similarly, (Firdausi & Agustina, 2024) highlighted weaknesses in community engagement mechanisms during the recovery phase of stunted children. Their research showed that the lack of two-way communication channels between service providers and toddlers' families impacted program effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening communication systems that enable the community to provide feedback and actively participate in the improvement process is necessary. Meanwhile, (Agustinah et al., 2025) proposed a more interpersonal and psychological approach through the development of a therapeutic communication model. This model prioritizes four main aspects: the communication actors (people), the message's purpose (purpose), the context of delivery (place), and the ongoing dialogue (process). Communication built on empathy and trust is crucial for building productive relationships between health workers and the community, particularly in the village context.

On the other hand, (Sentika et al., 2024) examined the importance of interprofessional collaboration in stunting management. Through a systematic review, they emphasized that the integrated roles of medical personnel, nutrition counselors, cadres, and village officials must be supported by structured communication guidelines. Without strong coordination and an integrated information system, stunting interventions are difficult to achieve optimal results. Based on these studies, the ideal integrative communication model for stunting management should combine a local wisdom-based approach, empathetic interpersonal communication, active community participation, and coordinated cross-sectoral collaboration. This approach aligns with the spirit of inclusive development communication that is responsive to local social conditions, as required in community-based public health programs such as those in Bantaeng Regency. The ideal integrative communication model in the implementation of the stunting management program by the Bantaeng Regency Government is as follows:

Key Elements of the Integrative Communication Model

Integrative communication involves multiple actors from various sectors, such as government, health workers, community leaders, the media, and non-governmental organizations. Each actor has a strategic role in conveying information, facilitating discussions, and mobilizing action at the community level. Some elements related to this are as follows:

Human Resource Capacity

(Cangara, 2021) emphasizes the importance of communication actors in determining the success of development programs. In this context, human resource capacity is key. Interview results indicate that cadre training, the ability to convey messages empathetically, and family support are part of improving human resource quality.

Similarly, (Agustinah et al., 2025) emphasize the importance of therapeutic communication based on empathy and trust. This means that not only technical competence is needed, but also interpersonal skills to build constructive relationships.

Inter-agency Coordination

Intersectoral coordination is part of the bureaucratic communication structure, as explained by Edwards (1980). In the policy implementation model, communication between implementers and alignment of policy direction are crucial for effective program implementation. Findings from informants reinforce that good coordination, such as that carried out by the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) through cross-department meetings and message alignment, is an implementation of an adaptive communication structure.

Accurate and Integrated Data Support

The availability of valid and integrated data is a crucial foundation for evidence-based communication. According to Saputra & Husain (2024), accurate data is crucial for successfully delivering targeted messages. Findings from Bantaeng Regency indicate that data integration between villages, technical government agencies, and community health centers has helped map at-risk families and develop more efficient communication strategies. This also aligns with the communication convergence model (Kincaid, 2002), which emphasizes the importance of repeated information exchange within social networks to build shared meaning. By utilizing digital data and integrated reporting, the communication process becomes more dynamic and responsive.

The Ideal Integrative Communication Model

Referring to various theories and research findings, the ideal integrative communication model for addressing stunting in Bantaeng Regency includes: (1) Structured cross-sector communication (Edwards, 1980); (2) Community participation as active subjects (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Integration of digital and community communication channels (Carlson & Zmud, 1999); (1) Use of accurate data for message development (Kincaid, 2002); (2) Trust-based deliberative communication practices (Habermas, 1984). With this combination of elements, Bantaeng Regency has the potential to become a national reference

model for implementing development communication for community-based health programs, particularly stunting.

CONCLUSION

The ideal integrative communication model in Bantaeng Regency is one that combines a cross-sectoral approach, community participation, and respect for local values. This model utilizes communication as a tool for social change, evidence-based and culturally relevant, supported by human resource training, the use of digital information systems, and regular inter-agency coordination forums. The involvement of local communities as active actors, not simply targets, strengthens the sustainability of the program and the relevance of messages at the grassroots level.

SUGGESTION

Institutional and human resource strengthening is needed to implement health communication programs. Ongoing training for health cadres, regional government agencies (OPD) officials, and field facilitators should focus on empathetic communication skills, digital literacy, and understanding local culture so that messages are effectively received by the community. Regulations are needed to encourage cross-sector integration in health program communications, including the involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Policies supporting the use of data as a basis for communication also need to be strengthened to ensure targeted and measurable strategies. Continued innovation in the use of communication media, both digital and conventional, is recommended, by tailoring messages based on target groups. A dialogic and participatory approach should be prioritized to create equitable and sustainable communication relationships.

REFERENCES

- Agustinah, A., Andriani, A., & Muchtar, K. (2025). Stunting prevention using a therapeutic communication model: Steps and challenges. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 19(2), 117-132. <https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol19.iss2.art10>
- Bungin, B. (2003). *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Cangara, H. 2021. *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi (Edisi Revisi)*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Carlson, J. R., & Zmud, R. W. 1999. *Channel Expansion Theory and the Experiential Nature of Media Richness Perceptions*. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42(2), 153–170. <https://doi.org/10.5465/257090>
- Edwards, G. C. III. 1980. *Implementing Public Policy*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Fauzi, A., & Rosdiana, A. 2021. *Kendala pelaksanaan program penanggulangan stunting di daerah*. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia*, 16(2), 89–97.
- Firdausi, J. A., & Agustina, I. F. (2024). Unveiling Community Involvement Gaps in Toddler Stunting Recovery. *Indonesian Journal of Cultural and Community Development*, 15(2), 10-21070. <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijccd.v15i2.1042>
- Habermas, J. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kalinda, C., Qambayot, M. A., Ishimwe, S. M. C., Regnier, D., Bazimya, D., Uwizeyimana, T., ... & Bekele, A. (2024). Leveraging multisectoral approach to understand the determinants of childhood stunting in Rwanda: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Systematic Reviews*, 13(1), 16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-023-02438-4>
- Kincaid, D. L. 2002. *The Convergence Theory of Communication: Its Implications for Intercultural Communication*. Dalam W. B. Gudykunst & B. Mody (Ed.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication* (hlm. 141–161). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Komarulzaman, A., Andoyo, R., Anna, Z., Ghina, A. A., Halim, P. R., Napitupulu, H., ... & Andriani, A. (2023). Achieving zero stunting: A sustainable development goal interlinkage approach at district level. *Sustainability*, 15(11), 8890. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118890>
- Kurniati, H., Djuwita, R., & Istiqfani, M. (2022). Tinjauan Literatur: Stunting Saat Balita sebagai Salah Satu Faktor Risiko Penyakit Tidak Menular di Masa Depan. *Jurnal Epidemiologi Kesehatan Indonesia*, 6(2), 2. <https://doi.org/10.7454/epidkes.v6i2.6349>
- Melkote, S. R., & Steeves, H. L. 2015. *Communication for Development: Theory and Practice for Empowerment and Social Justice (3rd ed.)*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Muniroh, L., Yulianingsih, T., & Wahyuni, F. 2025. *Empowering stunting prevention: Integrative and collaborative initiative based on the local wisdom of Tengger tribe*. *Jurnal Layanan Masyarakat*, 9(1), 74–85.
- Rimal, R. N., & Lapinski, M. K. 2009. *Why health communication is important in public health*. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 87(4), 247–247A. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.08.000409>

-
- Saputra, I. A., & Husain, M. N. (2024). Model Komunikasi Pembangunan Untuk Penurunan Stunting Di Sulawesi Tenggara. *Newcomb: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi dan Media*, 2(1), 32-41.
 - Sari, D. P., Ningsih, S., & Maulina, N. 2020. *Evaluasi efektivitas komunikasi kesehatan dalam program pencegahan stunting di Indonesia*. Jurnal Komunikasi Kesehatan Indonesia, 3(1), 45–55.
 - Sentika, R., Widodo, A., & Maulida, S. 2024. *The importance of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) guidelines in stunting management in Indonesia: A systematic review*. Healthcare, 12(22), 2226. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12222226>
 - Snyder, L. B., Hamilton, M. A., Mitchell, E. W., Kiwanuka-Tondo, J., Fleming-Milici, F., & Proctor, D. 2017. *A meta-analysis of the effect of mediated health communication campaigns on behavior change in the United States*. *Journal of Health Communication*, 22(4), 351–366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2017.1296510>