



Analyzing the implementation of collaborative governance to accelerate the stunting reduction program in South Tangerang City

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: October 03, 2025

Revised: Januari 14, 2026

Available online: January 30, 2026

KEYWORDS

Collaborative Governance; Stunting Reduction; Multi-stakeholder; Institutional Design; Local Government

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of collaborative governance and identify key factors influencing its effectiveness in accelerating the stunting reduction program in South Tangerang City. Using a post-positivist approach, this research combines theoretical perspectives on collaborative governance with empirical field observations. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observation involving government agencies, health institutions, and related stakeholders engaged in stunting prevention initiatives. The findings indicate that South Tangerang City has initiated collaborative efforts across sectors; however, the collaboration has not yet operated optimally due to weak institutional design, unclear coordination mechanisms, and limited facilitative leadership. These shortcomings hinder stakeholder engagement, shared decision-making, and sustained commitment in program implementation. The study concludes that strengthening institutional arrangements, enhancing facilitative leadership, and improving stakeholder integration are essential to optimizing collaborative governance in stunting reduction programs. By addressing these critical factors, local governments can improve policy coherence, program effectiveness, and collective action in tackling stunting. This research contributes to the development of collaborative governance practices and provides a conceptual and practical reference for municipal administrations seeking to accelerate stunting reduction through effective multi-stakeholder collaboration.

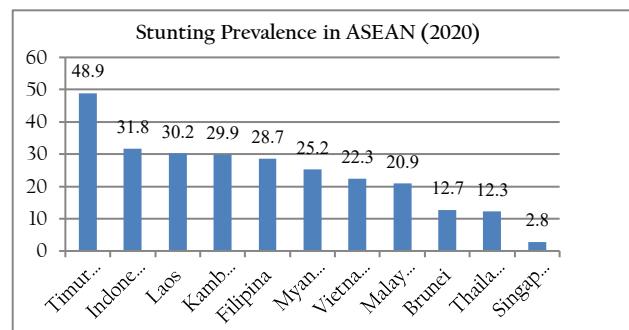
INTRODUCTION

Health is an important factor in maintaining the sustainability of the world, as the future of the world lies with the next generation (Curren & Metzger, 2017). The quality of this generation depends on the nutritional intake received by our children. Insufficient protein intake in children leads to impaired growth and development, including wasting and stunting (Endrinikopoulos et al., 2023; Fikri et al., 2024;

Khalyubi et al., 2021). Indonesia has the second highest stunting rate after Timor Leste, a condition that is alarming for the sustainability of the next generation in Indonesia (Figure 1). Therefore, Indonesia issued Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2020-2024 to comply with the SDGs standards set by the WHO. This is further supplemented by Presidential Regulation No. 111 of 2022 concerning the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal Achievement. The issue becomes complex because addressing stunting requires involvement from multiple sectors since success lies within the community (Aguayo & Menon, 2016; Bhutta et al., 2020; Dewey, 2016).

President Joko Widodo also emphasized that tackling stunting must involve multiple sectors, because the responsibility does not solely rest on the government's shoulders (Pambudi, 2025; Setyawati, 2021). In 2020-2021, South Tangerang City was the only district/city in Banten Province to achieve the fastest decline in stunting in Indonesia. This research indicates that the South Tangerang City government has collaborated on the accelerated stunting reduction program. South Tangerang City successfully reduced the prevalence of stunting by 10.9% in one year, the fastest among other districts/cities in Banten Province. In 2020, South Tangerang City had a stunting prevalence rate of 19.9%, which decreased to 9% in 2021 (Sugiharto & Riany, 2024).

Figure 1. Stunting prevalence ASEAN in 2020



The objective of this study is to examine the methods and procedures used in collaboration, as well as to determine the aspects that can either facilitate or impede its success. The research inquiries might be examined by employing the framework of collaborative governance. The selection of this theory was based on this model, which is distinguished by government-led cooperation and the provision of facilities such as FGDs at many levels and in numerous forms. The topics of conversations at all levels fluctuate based on the specific requirements and challenges faced by each region. The process of establishing collaborative governance involves five distinct stages: face-to-face interaction, trust-building, commitment, common understanding, and intermediate outcomes. South Tangerang City excels in various aspects, including direct communication, dedication to the process, and intermediate results. However, it is not yet optimal during the initial phases of establishing trust and developing a mutual understanding. In addition to analyzing the cooperation process, this research also investigates three aspects that have an impact on the

collaboration process: initial conditions, institutional design, and facilitative leadership (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The author asserts that facilitative leadership is the most influential aspect in the collaborative process. This is based on the findings (Ansell & Gash, 2008), who argue that facilitative leadership involves the skill of steering, allowing leaders to coordinate the interests of various players. Steering also includes the responsibility of leaders to convene all stakeholders, rather than merely engaging in superficial face-to-face interactions. Leaders that prioritize the reduction of stunting and adhere to the mission of RPJMN will utilize their authority to endorse the national program. This element has the potential to impact the design of institutions. If it fails to include all parties involved, laws can be implemented to address the roles of less engaged parties. The government plays a dominant and initiating role among the five parties involved in facilitating face-to-face discussion processes at various levels in South Tangerang City. The community functions as an extension through specialized groups in each district and sub-district, with health centers serving as the forefront for the government's initiatives to enhance nutrition and health in their particular (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Donahue et al., 2011; Nabatchi & Emerson, 2021; Osborne, 2015).

METHOD

This research uses a post-positivist method to explore the collaborative governance carried out by the City of South Tangerang in implementing the stunting reduction acceleration program (Ishtiaq, 2019). The data collection techniques include literature studies, document studies, and interviews with relevant stakeholders. These stakeholders include the community, government, private sector, academics, and private entities who were present and involved in stunting deliberations and continued in various activities scheduled by the City of South Tangerang. Data were collected through official publications, reports, legal documents, and interviews. The five processes of collaborative governance and the determining factors of the collaborative are used to analyze the quality of governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

This research aims to determine an ideal model of collaborative governance for the City of South Tangerang. Given that the characteristics of problems in each region vary, an appropriate approach is needed to address the issues faced in the stunting reduction acceleration program. The research questions consist of two, namely: (1) How is collaborative governance implemented in the stunting reduction acceleration program in South Tangerang City.s; (2) What factors influence the implementation of collaborative governance in the stunting reduction acceleration program in South Tangerang City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

South Tangerang, one of the cities in Banten province, prioritizes the intervention of stunting as its prevalence is higher than other cities at 19.9% in 2021 (Ilham & Amelia, 2024; Simatupang et al., 2025; Soetono et al., 2024; Sururi et al., 2024). In order to achieve the goal of reducing the prevalence to 14% by 2024, the local government must implement targeted interventions as well as interventions that are sensitive to the needs of the population. In addition to central government initiatives, there is a concerted effort to engage with other stakeholders, including the commercial sector, non-governmental organizations, media, the public, and academia.

Various initiatives aimed at reducing stunting have been implemented, such as the Family Assistance Team (TPK) program, Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) program, Rembuk Stunting program, and collaborative efforts involving different institutional departments.

Since the implementation of regulations regarding TPPS in 2022, the incidence of stunting in South Tangerang has dropped by 10.9%. In 2022, the prevalence of stunting in South Tangerang is 9%, which is significantly fastest in dropping the prevalence number of stunting than any other city in Banten, indicating a remarkable achievement. The responsibility for each action is with the local government authorities in each regency/city, as well as the district and village-level governments in the relevant regions. However, it is essential to ensure collaboration in all efforts aimed at reducing the prevalence of stunting in South Tangerang.

This study also investigates the determinants that impact the partnership conducted by the local government of South Tangerang. The three components that influence the outcome are: (1) starting conditions; (2) institutional design; and (3) facilitative leadership. The initial conditions include three dimensions: (1) power, resource, knowledge asymmetries; (2) incentives for and constraints on participation; (3) prehistory of cooperation or conflict.

Power, resource, knowledge asymmetric

Asymmetries in resources and knowledge can lead to stakeholders being unable to contribute or being manipulated by stronger stakeholders (Lin et al., 2018). Therefore, collaborative governance requires a strong commitment to empower stakeholders who are in weaker positions (Newig et al., 2018). The weakness occurs in the community, which acts as both actors and objects in the stunting reduction acceleration program in South Tangerang. The government collaborates with cadres to provide outreach and education at certain events. These events include Posyandu (integrated health post), nutrition posts, Ngider Sehat (health outreach), iron tablet distribution in schools, outreach for prospective brides and grooms, and coordination meetings at the village level. The responsibility for empowering the community lies with DP2KBP3A, which strives to change healthy living habits and nutritious diets that can prevent stunting. Providing education and outreach related to stunting is the initial step taken by the city government of South Tangerang as a form of preventive action (Mardhiyah et al., 2021; Rokayah et al., 2025).

On the other hand, the results of this study show that there are still communities that do not have sufficient knowledge about stunting. The community is still preoccupied with making a living, especially those on the brink or below the poverty line. As the mayor of South Tangerang stated, improving the community's economy becomes an integral part of reducing stunting rates (Nushratu, 2023). Besides the community, the private sector has resources but lacks sufficient power and knowledge asymmetries. This is because, in the collaboration process explained in each dimension, the private sector does not have clear access and rules on how they can participate. If the city government of South Tangerang had clear mechanisms, the private sector could take an active role without fear of future problems due to the lack of clear rules (Mulyana, 2025).

Academics have strong knowledge asymmetries and resources but do not have enough power. This can be seen from the role of academics during stunting deliberations, where they

are present only as an audience when the city government of South Tangerang explains the data and strategies to reduce stunting. Again, the city government of South Tangerang should set rules for academics if they want to play an active role in reducing stunting rates in the city. Academics can conduct studies related to stunting and also engage in community service to help in the process of shared understanding.

Lastly, the media lacks strong resources and knowledge asymmetries but possesses strong power because we now live in a digital information age. The media only publish news they believe will increase their article or news ratings. On the other hand, their power is strong because they can influence the perceived performance of the city government of South Tangerang. Interestingly, both the current heads of South Tangerang will run again in the regional elections in November 2024. The media certainly have an interest, as the more news they get about the implementation of programs will benefit or harm one of the candidates, thereby increasing the ratings of the media outlet.

Incentive for and Constraints on Participation

Stakeholders are supplied with incentives because collaborative governance must ensure that the stakeholders participating receive benefits (Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021). In order to promote the involvement of other stakeholders, the government, as the primary entity, should have the capacity to incentivize or obligate their participation in the program. The incentives provided by the municipal government of South Tangerang are exclusively for cadres and healthcare personnel who are affiliated with the TPK. The incentives total Rp. 200,000 per month and are allocated from the DP2KBP3A budget (Saiful, 2024). These incentives are a manifestation of South Tangerang's gratitude for the community and healthcare staff. The involvement of cadres and healthcare personnel in the program aimed at accelerating the elimination of stunting provides supplementary resources for the local administration of South Tangerang (Irfan, 2023).

Nevertheless, the researcher has thoroughly examined all legislation ranging from the provincial level to the village and community health center levels. Provincial community empowerment incentives or cash are allocated to each region based on its capabilities. Subsequently, the researcher examined the regulations pertaining to the TPK, but no specific payment amount was identified. The text explicitly mentions that the funding is allocated from the DP2KBP3A budget. This comment contradicts the assertions made by all sources who asserted that the technical standards for community empowerment funding in the BKKBN regulations are comprehensive and unambiguous. Moreover, the comprehension of incentives is restricted solely to monetary rewards. The South Tangerang municipal administration has the ability to offer additional incentives, such as partnering with the private sector, to make it easier for families with stunted children to access services.

Once again, the collaborative method fails to effectively accommodate the involvement of additional participants. The Health Office offers incentives of Rp. 1,350,000 every three months for a duration of one year. The researcher highlights the importance of the government, as the primary collaborator, being capable of incentivizing the involvement of other actors by exerting influence on them. In this context, compelling refers to the act of establishing regulations that specify the responsibilities of other individuals or entities, as well as the corresponding

rights they are entitled to upon their involvement. The municipal government of South Tangerang has the authority to take this action since, during the discussion on stunting, all participants had signed as a symbol of their collective commitment to reduce the occurrence of stunting in South Tangerang.

Prehistory of Cooperation or Conflict

The study of prehistoric times elucidates how prior instances of collaboration or conflict would influence the process of collaborative governance. Prior to making a collective commitment to collaborative governance, it is imperative to address and resolve any existing history of conflict (Getha-Taylor et al., 2019). The tensions in the stunting reduction acceleration initiative in South Tangerang arise from the involvement of numerous parties. Examining the in-person conversation held during the stunting deliberation, all departments and agencies involved in TPPS put forth concerns and interests from the local community. At the local level, the village head, along with cadres, community health facilities, and private sector healthcare professionals in TPK, organize small-scale workshops.

The conversations center around issues that arise in their respective domains. In general, cadres express dissatisfaction with the community's comprehension of the significance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, proper diet, and effective parenting. The establishment of TPK occurred in 2021 through the village head's decision, which involved healthcare workers from the community health center, community members (cadres), and healthcare workers from the private sector. Prior to the formation of TPK and TPPS, researchers inquired about the partnership in the stunting reduction acceleration program in South Tangerang. Prior to the president's instruction for collaboration, the handling of stunting was primarily limited to cross-agency cooperation.

Thus, before 2021, South Tangerang did not have any record of collaboration. Nevertheless, several individuals within the community persisted in their resistance, even after the implementation of TPPS and TPK. This resistance arose when a child was classified as stunted; the child's parents refused to acknowledge the diagnosis due to the child's apparent state of good health and plumpness. Stunting, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), refers to the hindered growth and development of children caused by insufficient intake of proteins derived from both plants and animals (Endrinikopoulos et al., 2023; Mulyani et al., 2025). Furthermore, there were tensions among departments and agencies due to their perception of stunting as solely a health issue, hence assigning the burden to the health department. Nevertheless, the controversy has been resolved as the central government, under the authority of Bappenas, has published the Sustainable Development Goals, which encompass targeted and delicate nutritional interventions.

Institutional Design

The basic rules for collaboration are crucial and very important because they form the procedures within the collaborative process. BKKBN Regulation No. 14/2023 on technical guidelines for the use of operational assistance funds for the family planning program for the fiscal year 2024 serves as the initial guide for the provision of BOKB funds, which are operational assistance for the implementation of population control and family planning affairs, as well as the reduction of stunting in provincial and city/district governments receiving non-physical DAK in the family planning sub-sector. This

regulation is a derivative of Presidential Regulation No. 72/2021 on the acceleration of stunting reduction, making BKKBN the chief executor. It is expected to impact the need for coordination and program convergence in the field (Pardosi & Bratakusumah, 2025).

In BKKBN Regulation No. 12/2021 on the national action plan for accelerating the reduction of stunting rates in Indonesia for the years 2021-2024, Chapter I Article 1 Paragraph 16 states that collaboration with stakeholders is necessary. The stakeholders referred to include individuals, communities, academics, professional organizations, businesses, the media, civil society organizations, universities, community leaders, religious leaders, and development partners for the acceleration of stunting reduction. However, there are no detailed mechanisms for how this collaboration should be carried out. Chapter V Article 16 mentions that funding for the implementation of stunting reduction acceleration comes from the state budget, regional budget, and/or other legal sources according to the applicable regulations. Generally, central government regulations provide a broad framework without detailed specifics (Widyawati et al., 2024).

Looking at the regulations issued by the South Tangerang city government through Mayor Regulation No. 10/2023 on accelerating stunting reduction, Chapter I Paragraph 6 states that every effort encompassing specific and sensitive interventions should be carried out in a convergent, holistic, integrative, and quality manner through multisectoral cooperation at the central, regional, and village levels. However, the findings of this research show that there is no regulation governing the roles and responsibilities of this multisectoral cooperation.

In fact, the research indicates that there is no collaboration between the South Tangerang city government and academics, the private sector, and the media. This is due to the lack of regulations compelling these actors to actively participate in the stunting reduction acceleration program in South Tangerang. Additionally, there is no clear articulation of TPK financing. The strategic plan of DP3AP2KB only shows a budget for community empowerment amounting to Rp. 1,626,831,700, with a realization of 73.35% in 2021.

The program operates without sufficiently detailed regulations, which can create gaps that reduce trust among other actors, as explained in previous dimensions. Besides clarifying and detailing existing regulations, the South Tangerang city government must also issue regulations for the mechanism of the collaborative process created. This would serve as a guide for agencies to engage in multisectoral cooperation as mandated by the presidential regulation and the mayor's regulation.

Facilitative Leadership

In the implementation of collaboration, intense conflicts involving several or all stakeholders are often encountered, along with significant levels of distrust among them. However, there is usually a strong desire among stakeholders to participate (Owoaje et al., 2020). Therefore, leadership that can orchestrate the interests of stakeholders to act as mediators in carrying out collaboration is needed. When trust and respect are established, collaboration is more likely to succeed (Amsler, 2016). The research findings in this dimension prove that the leadership of the Vice Mayor of South Tangerang City is good. To eliminate the subjectivity of government informants, the researcher also interviewed non-state actors. All cadre members stated that the leader had addressed their concerns at the sub-district level, such

as the gradual construction of nutrition posts and the increased incentives in 2022. In 2021, the incentive was Rp. 200,000 per month provided by the DP2KBP3A, but in 2022 it increased because the Health Office also provided incentives for the TPK. However, the motivation provided by the leader was considered insufficient to accommodate all the problems faced by the people in South Tangerang City. This is because 5 out of 9 cadre members interviewed stated that the leader never visited or motivated their areas.

Besides the incentives provided, the leader should be able to provide motivational encouragement, at least to the TPK. Because the TPK is an extension of the leader who is closest to the people and directly interacts with them. Four out of nine cadre members said that the leader had visited their areas during entrepreneurship seminars. The community was confused because the event was not about stunting but about entrepreneurship. As already explained in the previous dimension, the focus of the South Tangerang City government is on increasing the economic capacity of the community to improve their purchasing power. According to the researcher, this dimension is important and crucial because the leader can use their power as the government to do whatever it takes to urge all actors to participate in collaborative governance.

CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis on collaborative governance in the accelerated stunting reduction program in South Tangerang City generally fulfill the concept developed by Ansell and Gash with various strengths and weaknesses. This creates a gap between theory and practice in the field, which is a problem in South Tangerang City. Some findings that can be drawn as conclusions are:

The collaborative governance process conducted by South Tangerang City has been implemented in accordance with the basic rules from the central government. However, several issues are still found, including the focus of face-to-face dialogue being one-way, a lack of shared understanding with non-state actors, insufficient building of trust with other actors (private sector, academia, and media), the absence of interdependence among actors in commitment to the process, and intermediate outcomes still focusing on stunting prevalence rather than sustainable collaborative governance.

The collaborative governance process created is influenced by several factors. Institutional design is crucial, as there is a lack of clear and detailed regulations to govern the mechanisms of the created collaboration (collaboration flow, incentives, and long-term sustainability). Additionally, starting conditions where power, resources, and knowledge are controlled by one actor, the state, can manipulate the entire collaborative governance process. Ultimately, facilitative leadership should be the solution to imperfections in the mechanism. However, leaders do not sufficiently provide encouragement for the creation of integrated and holistic collaboration.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to all the entities that have contributed to this research, including the tutors and the participants of the accelerated stunting reduction program in South Tangerang City, which has provided both the primary and secondary data.

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