

Indonesia Government's Efforts to Eradicate Stunting Through the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstrak

Permasalahan stunting merupakan permasalahan yang dapat mengancam realisasi visi Indonesia Emas 2045. Salah satu upaya untuk mencegah stunting adalah melalui program Makan Bergizi Gratis Untuk Anak-Anak, program tersebut merupakan bentuk intervensi pencegahan stunting melalui pemberian makanan bergizi. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti mengkaji peluang dan tantangan program tersebut. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kesiapan program Makan Bergizi Gratis Untuk Anak-Anak. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan perspektif kebijakan publik khususnya menggunakan teori analisis kebijakan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan data sekunder. Penelitian ini menemukan terdapat beberapa peluang dan juga tantangan penerapan program Makan Bergizi Gratis Untuk Anak-Anak seperti adanya dukungan parlemen yang kuat, dan beberapa tantangan seperti kebutuhan anggaran dalam jumlah besar, rantai pasok pangan yang tidak resilien, dan keraguan terhadap efektivitas program. Dengan banyaknya tantangan, maka program belum siap untuk diterapkan dan memiliki risiko apabila diterapkan.

Kata Kunci: Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Untuk Anak-Anak, Stunting, Visi Indonesia 2045

Abstract

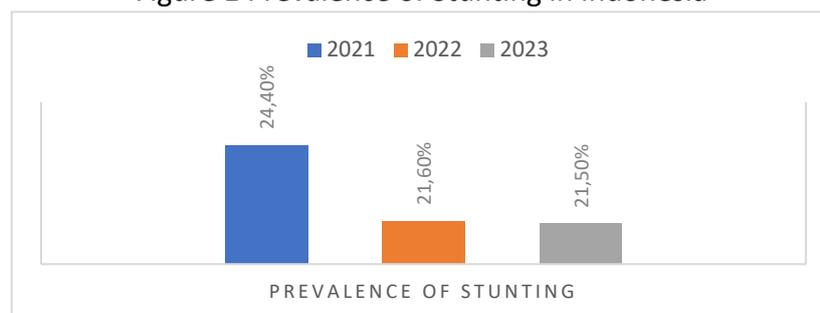
The problem of stunting is a problem that can threaten the realization of the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045. One of the efforts to prevent stunting is through the Free Nutritious Meals for Children program, the program is a form of stunting prevention intervention through the provision of nutritious food. In this study, researchers examine the opportunities and challenges of the program. The purpose of this study is to examine the readiness of the Free Nutritious Meals for Children program. This study was conducted using a public policy perspective, especially using policy analysis theory. The research method used is a qualitative method using secondary data. This study found that there are several opportunities and challenges in implementing the Free Nutritious Meals for Children program, such as strong parliamentary support, and several challenges such as the need for a large budget, an un-resilient food supply chain, and doubts about the effectiveness of the program. With so many challenges, the program is not ready to be implemented and has risks if implemented.

Keywords: Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children, Golden Indonesia Vision 2045, Stunting

INTRODUCTION

Currently, Indonesia's development is directed at realizing the ideals of national development contained in the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision. The Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision is a vision to make Indonesia a developed country in 2045, this year is exactly 100 years since the celebration of Indonesia's independence which was proclaimed in 1945. The vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 has become the focus of the government, this vision is translated into the vision of the National Long-Term Development Plan 2025-2045 as the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is United, Sovereign, Advanced, and Sustainable. However, efforts to realize the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 can be hampered by stunting in various regions in Indonesia. According to Arini et al (2020), stunting is a condition of growth failure experienced by babies under 5 years of age as a result of chronic malnutrition so that children have a short height for their age. The stunting experienced can cause individuals to not be able to grow optimally so that when they grow up, children with stunting conditions can hinder them when carrying out activities such as when working.

Figure 1 Prevalence of Stunting in Indonesia



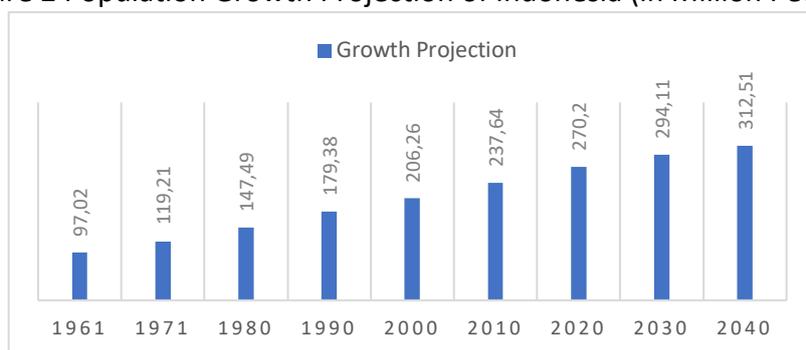
Source: Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey

Based on the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey, it shows that the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia has decreased, but the decline in the prevalence rate is still far below World Health Organization standards. The World Health Organization determines that the prevalence of stunting must be at a maximum threshold of 20% (Purbaya, 2022). The Indonesian government is taking various steps to prevent stunting. To prevent stunting, the Indonesian government has made nutritional intervention efforts both specific and sensitive through various programs implemented in various regions in Indonesia. One form of intervention effort carried out by the government to prevent stunting is through providing fortified food in the form of biscuits, which is then replaced with animal protein food made

from local food according to each region (Ulya & Rastika, 2023). Apart from that, the Indonesian government is also trying to build sanitation and provide clean water areas that are considered vulnerable, such as East Nusa Tenggara (Fajri, 2023).

Regarding the realization of Golden Indonesia vision 2045, it is important for the Indonesian government to prevent stunting, this is because stunting can affect the demographic bonus which is an important capital to realize the vision. The demographic bonus is a condition where the number of productive age population is greater than the number of non-productive age population. Indonesia is projected to get a demographic bonus that will last and peak in 2040, the demographic bonus is in the form of a large population growth rate and is dominated by the productive age population.

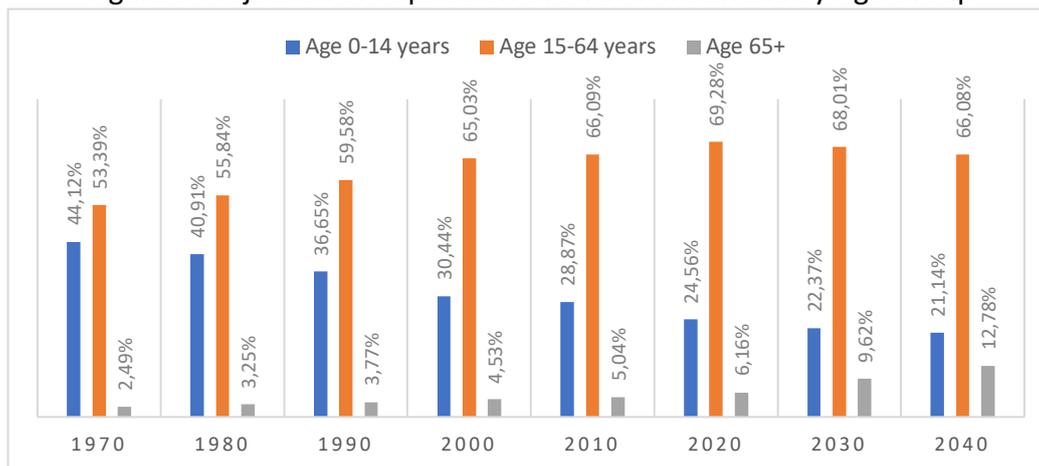
Figure 2 Population Growth Projection of Indonesia (in Million People)



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

Based on projections from the Central Statistics Agency, it is estimated that the population of Indonesia will continue to increase until 2040. In addition to increasing, the increasing population will also be dominated by productive age groups compared to non-productive ones.

Figure 3 Projection of Population Growth in Indonesia by Age Group



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

Based on the projection of the Central Statistics Agency, it is estimated that along with the increasing population of Indonesia which will peak in 2040, the population growth will be dominated by the productive age population. The existence of this demographic bonus is a blessing for Indonesia, where with the large number of productive age population, it can contribute to realizing the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. However, with stunting, the demographic bonus can turn into a demographic disaster, where even though there are many productive age population, the stunting conditions experienced by the population can cause physical and cognitive limitations which then hinder productivity, so that it can threaten the realization of the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045.

To prevent stunting, the Indonesian government has made nutritional intervention efforts both specific and sensitive through various programs implemented in various regions in Indonesia. One form of intervention effort carried out by the government to prevent stunting is through providing fortified food in the form of biscuits, which are then replaced with animal protein food made from local food according to each region (Ulya & Rastika, 2023). Apart from that, the Indonesian government is also trying to build sanitation and provide clean water areas that are considered vulnerable, such as East Nusa Tenggara (Fajri, 2023). To prevent stunting, the Indonesian government under the leadership of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming also initiated the free nutritious meal program for children. In this study, the researcher examines the free nutritious meal program for children based on a public policy perspective by analyzing the opportunities and challenges of the program. The purpose of this study is to examine the prospects of the program, whether the program is ready or not.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory used in this study is public policy analysis. There are several opinions of experts regarding public policy analysis. According to Dunn (1981) public policy analysis is an applied social science discipline that uses multi-methods to research and build an argument, in order to produce and transform information that is in accordance with policy and can be used at the political level to solve various policy problems. According to Winarno in Suharno (2013) public policy analysis is related to the investigation and description of the causes and consequences of public policy. Weimer & Vining in Hamdi (2014) explain that policy analysis is customer-oriented advice that is relevant to public decisions and is based on social values.

From several expert opinions, it can be understood that policy analysis is an effort to study a policy regarding public problems.

In this study, the theory of public policy analysis is used to analyze the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children policy. In public policy analysis according to Subianto (2012), there is an analysis process that includes (1) formulating problems; (2) forecasting future policies; (3) policy recommendations; and (4) monitoring policy results. In this study, the analysis of the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children was carried out at the stage of formulating problems, forecasting future policies, and policy recommendations, this was done because the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children was still in the pre-implementation stage and this study focused on analyzing opportunities and challenges from the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research using descriptive methods. This research was conducted by describing the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children descriptively, to then be analyzed to determine the prospects and challenges in implementing the program. This research uses qualitative data in the form of secondary data, the data is obtained through literature studies using library sources such as books, articles, and other references that are credible and relevant to the research needs. After the data and information are obtained, a triangulation process is carried out, triangulation is carried out by checking and comparing information from different sources to ensure the validity of the data used. After triangulation, data analysis is carried out, the analysis is carried out using the analytical descriptive method, where the data is presented in narrative form, to be analyzed and a research conclusion is drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

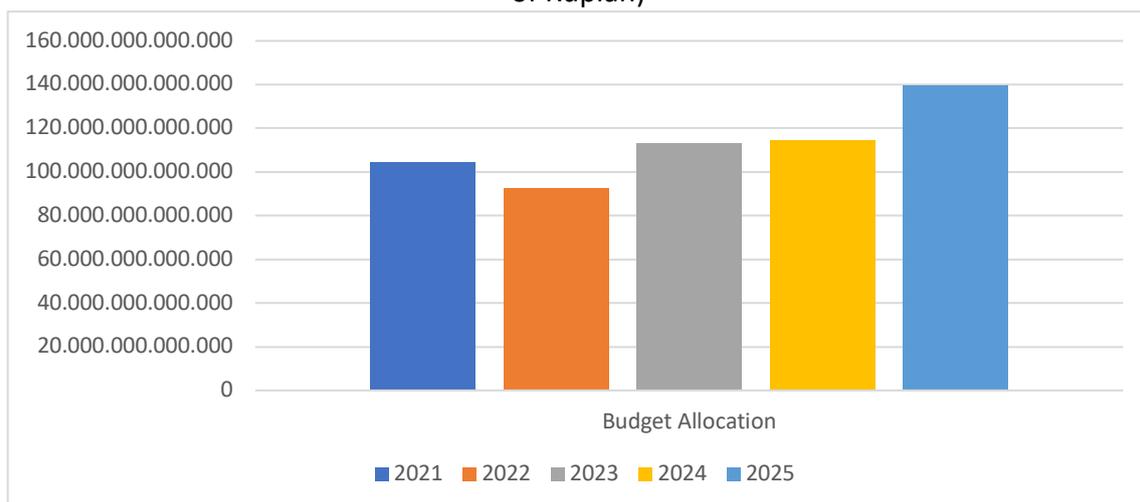
Politicization of Stunting Issue and the Agenda of the Vision of Golden Indonesia 2045

The stunting problem then became a problem that was politicized by many parties because it was linked to efforts to realize the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045. One form of politicization of the stunting issue was through the food estate program. A food estate is an integrated agricultural area built on a large scale. The aim of building a food estate is to

produce food in large quantities to meet the food needs of the community. The results of planting production from food estates can support the formation of community food security, the existence of food security can help maintain the availability of certain food commodities, and maintain the stability of prices of these commodities, making it easier for people to meet their food needs, with adequate food needs, it can support growth. optimal flowering to prevent stunting.

The idea for the food estate program in the era of President Joko Widodo was announced in the second term of Joko Widodo's leadership, in fact, based on Presidential Decree Number 108 of 2022, the Food Estate project was included in the strategic priority project, while based on the Coordinating Minister for the Economy Regulation Number 21 of 2022, the Food Estate project was included in the national strategic project (del, 2024). Apart from that, to support the food estate program, the government also allocates a budget for food estate project development in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget, the Food Estate project budget is included in the food security budget which is budgeted annually in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget:

Figure 3 Food Security Budget Allocation in the 2021-2025 State Budget (in Trillions of Rupiah)



Source: Ministry of Finance

The inclusion of the food estate project as a strategic project, and also the budget support provided by the government, shows how important the food estate program is. The Food Estate project is a project intended to support the achievement of food security in Indonesia, therefore, the project budget is included in the food security budget allocated annually. However, even though it has received a large budget, there is no data showing the

success of the Food Estate project, but there is actually a failure to plant in the Food Estate project.

One form of failure to plant in the Food Estate project is how the plants planted cannot grow due to the incompatibility of the type of plant with the type of land (Hasan, 2024). In addition to not producing the expected results, the Food Estate project can also cause environmental damage such as forest damage, which occurs due to land clearing for the Food Estate project (Hidayat, 2024). The conversion of land to be used as land for the Food Estate project also threatens the rights of indigenous peoples living around the Food Estate project area, which can then cause friction with indigenous peoples (Azzahra, 2024). With a large budget and results that are not as expected, the Food Estate project can be considered a form of politicization of food issues, especially those related to stunting, where the results of the project are not relevant to the goal of handling food problems, especially stunting. The Food Estate project can be an example for the Free Nutritious Meal Program to show how food issues are politicized, with projects requiring large funds, but the program does not produce the expected benefits.

Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children Concept

The free nutritious meal program for children is a priority program of the 8th President and Vice President-elect of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming, the program originates from Prabowo's idea regarding fulfilling children's nutrition. Before initiating the free nutritious meal program for children, Prabowo had first initiated the White Revolution program as a solution to fulfill Indonesian children's nutrition. The White Revolution was an effort to build a healthy and strong national character, by making milk a daily consumption of the Indonesian people (Toriq, 2017). The White Revolution program was initiated by Prabowo since the 2014 Presidential Candidate Election campaign, the White Revolution program became one of his visions and missions as a presidential candidate, the White Revolution program will be implemented by providing milk for underprivileged children in schools through dairy cattle and goat farming (Sari, 2017). The White Revolution program was then adapted by the Governor and Deputy Governor of Jakarta, promoted by Prabowo through the Greater Indonesia Movement Party, namely Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno as a program to meet the nutritional needs of children in Jakarta (Ramadhan, 2021). In its development, the idea of the White Revolution program initiated by Prabowo then developed

into free nutritious meals for children. This development was based on the nutritional needs of Indonesian children to prevent stunting.

The initial concept of the free nutritious meal program for children targets toddlers and pregnant women in several areas and then expanded to junior high school students and areas with high levels of stunting. The implementation of the program can also be carried out using several scenarios such as special provision for school children, pregnant women, for toddlers, and food provision is carried out using Ministry of Health data (Nugroho, 2024). For the food menu in free nutritious meal program for children, it is planned not only to provide free milk, but also eggs, fish, meat and chicken (Dirgantara & Ihsanudin, 2024). The concept of free nutritious meal program for children initiated by Prabowo Subianto was inspired by the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program implemented in India. In the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program in India, every school day, all elementary school students in state schools are given cooked food containing nutritional content in the form of 8-12 grams of protein, and no less than 300 kilocalories (Singh et al, 2014). According to Paltansingh & Bhue (2022), the idea of establishing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program in India is to eliminate malnutrition, increase the intake of nutritious food in schools, increase children's motivation to go to school, reduce absenteeism and school dropout rates, and facilitate the formation of social equity among students, without discrimination of caste, class, gender and student background.

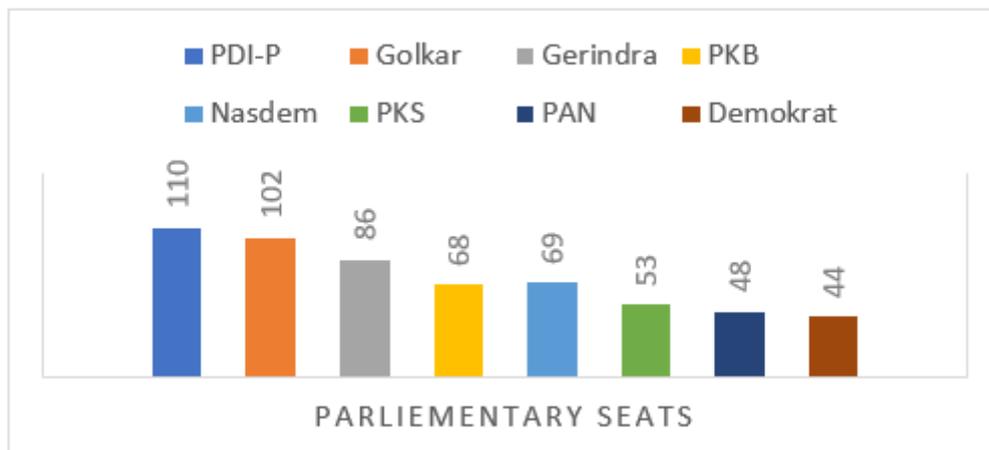
However, since the establishment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program has been supervised by The School Management Committee. The Right to Education Act, 2009 has brought major changes in India, this law has guaranteed the obligation of basic education for children, this obligation is imposed on the Indian government (Verma, 2019). The Right to Education Act also regulates the formation of the School Management Committee. Based on the provisions regulated in The Right to Education Act, the formation of a School Management Committee in every Government elementary school must consist of 75% of the students' parents or guardians (Dwivedi & Naithani, 2015). The existence of the School Management Committee allows for community participation, especially parents, in education. The existence of this committee can form a new paradigm in the relationship between teachers and the community, not based on the power of control but on the power of mutual trust (Rout & Sharma, 2018).

The School Management Committee has an important role in implementing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme program at the school level. In implementing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, cooks in schools are employed by committee members, the cooking menu is almost the same in every school, the Principal keeps records regarding food receipts and funding, daily attendance, and the number of meals prepared, the Principal is also responsible to ensure that the cook provides food in a calculated quantity according to the student's attendance and ensures that the food is cooked properly (Mishra, 2013). There are many studies that show the achievements of implementing the Midday Meal Scheme program in India, such as helping reduce hunger, encouraging increased school participation, fostering social equality, strengthening gender equality, and also many children and parents expressed satisfaction with the program, they admitted that the program help improve the health and education of their children (Sahai, 2014). The Midday Meal Scheme program in India is a pilot project for Indonesia to implement a free meal program. This pilot project is important to study the opportunities and challenges in implementing a free meal program, which can then help the Indonesian government formulate a free meal program scheme that is appropriate and in accordance with Indonesia's characteristics.

Strong Parliamentary Support

The free nutritious meal program for children initiated by Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming has the prospect of being implemented, because of solid political support. In the 2024 presidential election, the pair Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming are supported by the Advanced Indonesia Coalition (Koalisi Indonesia Maju) which consists of several parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties consisting of the The Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), Golongan Karya (Golkar), National Awakening Party (PKB), The Nasdem Party, Democratic Party, National Mandate Party (PAN), the Crescent Star Party (PBB), the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), the People's Wave Party (Gelora), the Adil Makmur People's Party (PRIMA), the Indonesian Guard for Change Party (Garuda), the Beringin Karya Party (Berkarya), and the Aceh Party. In the 2024 legislative elections, member parties of the Advanced Indonesia Coalition succeeded in obtaining a large number of parliamentary seats as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Political Parties' Achievement of Parliamentary Seats in the 2024 Legislative Election



Source: Indonesian General Election Commission

The strength of the Advanced Indonesia Coalition in parliament may continue to increase, in line with the ongoing political communication process to attract opposition parties to join the Advanced Indonesia Coalition to strengthen support for the government, while weakening the opposition. With parliament being controlled by parties supporting the government, as well as weak opposition forces, this can make it easier for the government to implement various programs, including the free nutritious meal program for children, which requires a large budget. Apart from that, parliament which has been controlled by parties supporting the government, also weakens the check and balances mechanism which is the duty of the legislature to the government as the executive. This situation weakens control between state institutions so that it has the potential to cause the executive to have too much power that even exceeds the limits and can lead to abuse of power. In a democratic country, the existence of a check and balance mechanism between state institutions such as the executive-legislative is commonplace, because this prevents domination or concentration of power in one particular state institution. However, even though it is supported by the Advanced Indonesia Coalition which dominates parliament, it does not rule out the possibility of a change, such as how the strengthening of the opposition's position can then influence the implementation of the free nutritious meal program. Even though the opposition is weak, it is important to anticipate various possible changes in the situation, including changes in the strength of the opposition which could then put pressure on the government. Political power can be an important asset in implementing the free nutritious meal program.

Large Budget Requirements

One of the biggest challenges of implementing a free nutritious meal program for children is the large budget requirement. Even though the free meal program has not been officially released, implementation of the program in the first phase is projected to require a budget of 100-200 trillion Rupiah (Ramli & Sukmana, 2024). The budget needs are very large and are not commensurate with the state budget deficit target which is too high. The Ministry of Finance together with the House of Representatives set a deficit target of more than IDR 600 trillion or in the range of 2.45%-2.82% of domestic product. Indonesia's gross budget, with a high deficit target will then narrow the government's spending space (Elena, 2024). With a high deficit target, the government must be careful in using the budget, including budget allocations for programs that require large costs such as the free nutritious meal program for children which is a priority program for the Prabowo-Gibran government. It is important to maintain the budget deficit within a predetermined limit, because it can help maintain macroeconomic stability which can then result in healthy fiscal performance. If the deficit is too large, then the deficit must be financed, one way or another, through debt.

Apart from the high budget deficit target, Indonesia is also faced with a large budget need to support the development of a new capital city, namely the Nusantara Capital City (IKN) in East Kalimantan. For the development of the Nusantara Capital City, a budget of IDR 466 trillion is required, of this amount, IDR 89.4 trillion is financed from the state revenue and expenditure budget, IDR 253.4 trillion is paid for through the mechanism of Government Cooperation with Business Entities and the private sector, as well as Business Entities State-Owned and Regional-Owned Enterprises amounting to 123.2 trillion Rupiah (Nugraheny & Meiliana, 2021). With large budget requirements, the Indonesian government must look for alternative sources of funding to meet these needs. One of the efforts made is to fine-tune certain budget items that require large budgets, such as energy subsidies, including fuel oil. Efforts to fine-tune energy subsidies are carried out to ensure that subsidies are provided appropriately and effectively to the groups targeted for subsidies (Theodora, 2024).

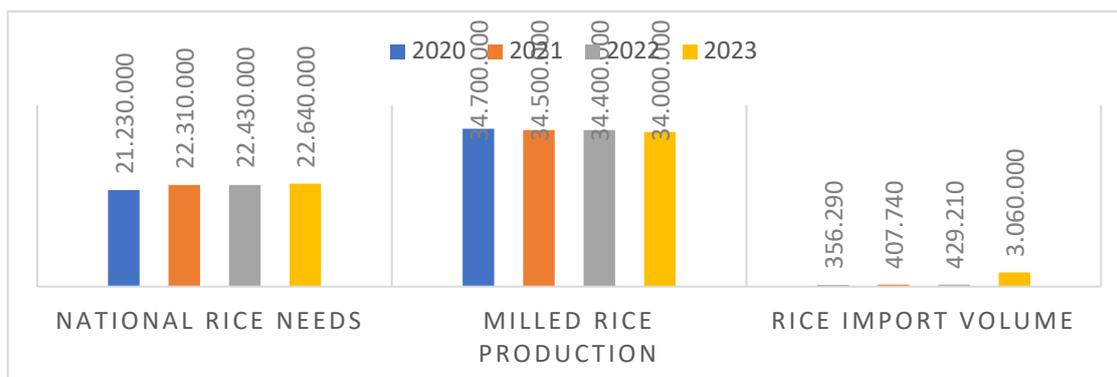
Apart from fine-tuning the provision of subsidies, efforts are being made to fund the free nutritious meal program for children by seeking to increase the ratio of taxation to Indonesia's gross domestic product (Wibowo, 2024). To support the idea of increasing the ratio of taxation to Indonesia's gross domestic product, the Prabowo-Gibran team plans to establish a State Revenue Agency (Nugroho, 2024). It is possible that, in the future, the Prabowo-Gibran government could make other efforts to meet the budget needs of free

nutritious meal program for children which requires a large budget, and even the amount of the budget requirement for the free nutritious meal program for children could increase in line with changes in the situation that may occur. happen. However, with budget allocations concentrated on one government program, this could actually threaten the realization of the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045. The realization of the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045 is not only faced with the challenge of food and nutrition problems to support optimal growth and development, but is also faced with middle income trap problem that Indonesia is currently facing. Therefore, it is important for the Indonesian government to diversify budget allocations, by not only focusing on the free nutritious meal program for children, but also budget allocations to support strategic sectors that can support the realization of the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045.

Non-Resilient Food Supply Chain

One of the challenges in implementing the free nutritious food program for children in Indonesia is the food supply chain which is not yet resilient, including the availability of raw materials, distribution difficulties, and difficulties in processing the food used in the program such as rice, milk, eggs and meat which are nutritious foods to meet nutritional needs. In terms of food availability, researchers found that there was a domestic inability to meet basic food needs at the national level even before the free nutritious meals for children program was implemented. One of the staple ingredients used in the free nutritious meals for children program in Indonesia is rice which is then processed into rice. In Indonesia, rice is an important commodity to meet people's consumption needs.

Figure 5 Comparison of Rice Needs, Rice Production, and Indonesian Rice Import Volume in 2020-2023

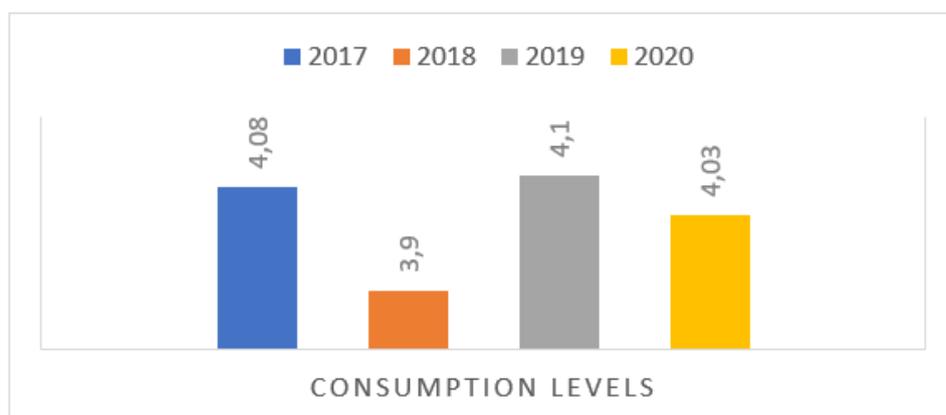


Source: Processed from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, National Food Agency, and Ministry of Agriculture

As seen in Figure 5, in Indonesia, rice production is experiencing a surplus trend to meet national rice needs, but despite this, rice imports continue. Rice imports are carried out to ensure the availability of rice to meet people's needs. The availability of rice in large quantities can help anticipate various contingencies. In Indonesia, there are several problems in the agricultural sector that can cause a decline in rice production, such as problems with land conversion, fertilizer scarcity, and climate change. Regarding the problem of land conversion, a lot of agricultural land has been converted into residential areas, this can happen because people's interest in working as farmers is decreasing, so they then sell the agricultural land they own. The conversion of agricultural land then causes a decline in rice production to meet people's consumption needs. Apart from land conversion, another problem that can disrupt rice production is the scarcity of fertilizer.

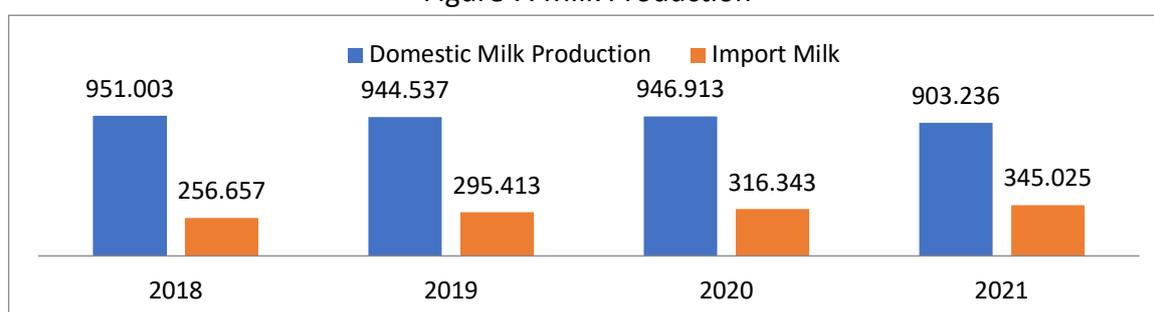
Many farmers in Indonesia are faced with a scarcity of subsidized fertilizer, this scarcity causes farmers to be forced to use non-subsidized fertilizer which has a higher price (Bernardi, 2024). The use of non-subsidized fertilizers which are more expensive than subsidized fertilizers, causes production costs to increase, with expensive production costs not being comparable to the selling price of grain, can cause farmers to experience losses, this is what then contributes to a lack of public interest in working as farmers. The problem of climate change is also one of the problems that can cause rice production to become uncertain. Farmers in various regions in Indonesia are faced with crop failure due to extreme climate change. Apart from rice, another type of food used in the free nutritious meals for Children program in Indonesia is milk. Data from Economic Co-operation and Development as seen in Figure 6, shows that the level of milk consumption in Indonesia is still low.

Figure 6 Average Milk Consumption per Capita in Indonesia (Per Kg)



National milk consumption levels in Indonesia are still low, based on Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) standards, milk consumption levels below 30 kg per capita per year fall into the low category; the middle category with a consumption level of 30-150 kg/capita/year, and the high category with a consumption level reaching more than 150 kg/capita/year (Pancawati, 2022). In the free nutritious meals for children program, milk is one of the food menus provided, this aims to increase milk consumption which can then be useful for supporting optimal growth and development. However, efforts to increase domestic milk consumption are faced with challenges, namely limited domestic milk production. The domestic dairy industry in Indonesia is faced with various problems such as limited production capacity to meet demand as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Milk Production



Source: Processed from Indonesian Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics

With the limited capacity of domestic industrial production to meet market demand, one effort that can be made is to import milk from several countries as seen in table 1.

Table 1 Country of Origin for Indonesian Milk Imports in 2021

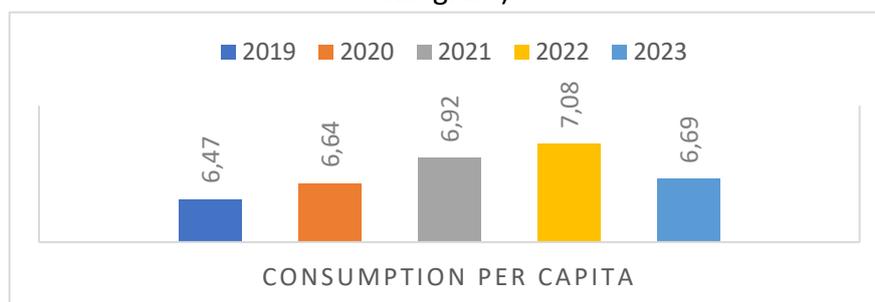
| No | Country of origin | Year 2021 | | Share Import Volume (%) |
|----|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Import Volume (Tons) | Import Value (US\$) | |
| 1 | New Zealand | 102.974 | 386.776 | 29,02 |
| 2 | United States | 74.987 | 208.661 | 21,14 |
| 3 | Malaysia | 43.323 | 43.917 | 12,21 |
| 4 | Australia | 35.613 | 117.334 | 10,04 |
| 5 | Belgium | 35.510 | 106.836 | 10,01 |
| 6 | France | 14.752 | 46.938 | 4,16 |
| 7 | Germany | 10.593 | 34.262 | 2,99 |
| 8 | Others | 37,046 | 178.683 | 10,44 |
| | Total | 354.797 | 1.124.007 | 100 |

Source: Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics

The implementation of the free nutritious meals for children program has the potential to increase milk consumption in Indonesia, however, with the domestic industry being unable to meet market demand, Indonesia has the potential to become dependent on

milk imports from various countries to meet demand. The situation where the domestic milk industry is unable to produce production and dependence on milk imports shows how the food supply chain in the milk category in Indonesia is not resilient, this situation can cause delays in milk supply, and even a spike in milk prices, which then causes the need for a budget for the free nutritious meals for children program has the potential to increase. Eggs are a type of food that is also used in the free nutritious meals for children program. In several studies such as Iannotti et al (2020), Ruswiyani et al (2021), and Mi et al (2022) show how eggs are used in the intervention stage to prevent stunting in children during the first 1000 days of life, eggs contain nutrients that can support growth and development. optimally. However, even though egg consumption can help support optimal growth and development, including preventing stunting, egg consumption in Indonesia is still relatively low, this can be seen in the data as shown in figure 8.

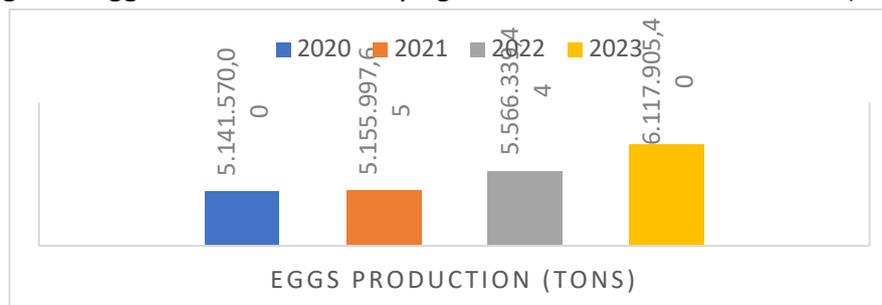
Figure 8 Consumption of Purebred Chicken Eggs per Capita of Indonesian People (Per Kilogram)



Source: National Food Agency

The problem of low consumption of chicken eggs can occur as a result of a lack of public knowledge, compared to consuming eggs which have lots of nutrients, based on research conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, Indonesian people's spending on buying cigarettes is much greater than people's spending on buying eggs (Ramadhan, 2021). The existence of the free nutritious meals for children program can help encourage increased egg consumption, by getting children used to consuming eggs every day. However, in efforts to increase egg consumption through the free nutritious meals for children program, there are various forms of problems that can threaten the supply of eggs as a food ingredient used in the program, one of these problems is the fluctuating price of eggs. As shown in figure 9, egg production from laying hens in Indonesia tends to experience an increasing trend, and in recent times there has even been a surplus.

Figure 9 Egg Production from Laying Hens in Indonesia 2020-2023 (Tons)



Source: Directorate General of Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, Indonesia Ministry of Agriculture

Even though egg production is experiencing an increasing trend, even a surplus, these eggs are not immediately absorbed by the market, fluctuating egg prices make people reluctant to buy eggs. Fluctuating egg prices are caused by farmers' difficulties in meeting production supporting factors such as corn as animal feed. With no substitute for corn as animal feed, livestock farmers are forced to buy corn to meet animal feed needs. With production costs increasing, this then has an impact on the selling price of eggs which also increases, this is what then causes egg prices to fluctuate. The fluctuating egg prices then cause losses for the community as consumers and also breeders. For the community, with fluctuating egg prices, the price of eggs often rises to become expensive, this situation causes people to be reluctant to buy eggs. Meanwhile, for breeders, the increase in egg prices does not necessarily provide a profit for them, because the profit difference is small between expensive production costs and selling prices. In addition, with high prices, people are reluctant to buy their eggs, so their eggs are not absorbed by the market. With minimal profits, this can then threaten the existence of laying hen breeders, especially those who are traditional business actors, because they have much lower capital and production facilities than modern breeders who can even produce feed independently and produce eggs in large quantities. so that it can be more resistant to changes in conditions, including fluctuating price changes. If traditional laying hen breeders go bankrupt, it will threaten egg production, especially to meet the needs of the free nutritious food program for children.

Apart from eggs, chicken is also a type of food used in the free nutritious meals for children program menu. However, broiler chicken farmers in Indonesia are also faced with problems, which can influence the fulfillment of chicken meat needs to support the free nutritious meals for children program. Just like laying chicken breeders, broiler chicken breeders also experience difficulties in fulfilling production factors which then causes the price of chicken meat commodities to fluctuate. Apart from being faced with difficulties in

getting corn for animal feed, broiler breeders are also faced with difficulties in getting day old chickens. Day Old Chicken is a chicken under 10 days old and a maximum of 14 days after hatching. Day Old Chicken is usually intended for broilers (Setiawan & Eko, 2022). To get Day Old Chicken, traditional chicken breeders or independent chicken breeders must get it from an integrator company with a limited quota.

Distribution of Day Old Chicken by integrator companies to independent chicken breeders is regulated in Ministerial Regulation no. 32/2017 concerning the Provision, Distribution and Supervision of Purebred Chickens and Consumable Eggs, in this regulation in article 19 paragraph 1a the regulation stipulates provisions that require integrator companies to be obliged to fulfill a minimum production of 50% of Day Old Chicken and Parent Stock to be allocated to independent chicken breeders (Rizky, 2024). However, these regulations are not fulfilled by integrator companies, so there is unbalanced business competition between integrator companies and independent chicken breeders (Rachmawati, 2023). With Day Old Chicken being difficult to obtain, independent chicken breeders are forced to buy Day Old Chicken at higher prices. This situation then has an impact on the selling price of broiler chickens increasing. With the price of broiler chicken commodities increasing in the market, this can then cause the budget requirements for the free nutritious meals for children program to increase. Beef is also a commodity used as food in the Free Nutritious Meals for Children program. However, high beef imports could then influence the implementation of the free nutritious meals for children program.

Table 2 Comparison of Cattle Population, Beef Production and Beef Imports in 2020-2022

| Data Type | Year | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Beef Cattle Population in Indonesia (Per Head) | 17.440.393 | 17.977.214 | 17.602.538 |
| Beef Production (Tons) | 453.418,44 | 487.802,21 | 498.923,14 |
| Import of Cattle Meat (Tons) | 167.128,6 | 211.429,6 | 225.650,1 |

Source: Processed from the Ministry of Finance (Directorate General of Customs and Excise) and the Directorate General of Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, Ministry of Agriculture

Even though Indonesia has a large population of beef cattle, as shown in table 2, beef imports are still carried out even in large quantities, this is because even though Indonesia

has a large population of beef cattle, if the cattle are slaughtered they will not necessarily be able to produce large quantities of meat, because Imports are still carried out to maintain availability (Uly & Movanita, 2021). The need for beef in Indonesia has the potential to increase along with the implementation of the free nutritious meals for children program which also makes beef a food ingredient. With the situation of increasing demand, it is important that domestic beef cattle can meet this need, so as to reduce dependence. on imports and this dependence can lead to an increase in the budget requirements for the free nutritious meals for children program.

Apart from difficulties in food availability, distribution problems can also be an obstacle to implementing the free nutritious meals for children program. If the distribution of food for the Free Nutritious Meals for Children program is carried out from outside the region, then this will be inefficient, because many regions in Indonesia, especially underdeveloped, frontier and outermost areas, have limited access to transportation, road infrastructure, and also the existence of threats from separatist groups. The difficulty in distributing food can also make it difficult to implement the free nutritious meals for Children program. Food processing difficulties are also a problem that can complicate the implementation of the free nutritious meals for children & program in Indonesia. Until now, there is no official free nutritious meal program for children scheme, but there is talk that the implementation of the free meal program will be held in schools through the use of School Operational Assistance funds. If this happens, then the implementation of the free meal program including food processing will be handed over to the school. Giving schools the responsibility to implement the free meal program will create a new problem, this is because there are several problems in the education sector in Indonesia, such as the workload of teachers being too large and the limited facilities and infrastructure owned by schools.

In Indonesia, teachers are faced with a large workload such as apart from carrying out teaching duties, they also have to do various administrative work, but even though they are given a large workload, this is not directly proportional to the income they receive, currently many teachers in Indonesia are still get a low salary. With an already excessive workload, if teachers are given additional workload to manage the free meal program, this will burden them even more, and can even cause teaching and learning activities at school to become ineffective. Apart from the large workload of teachers, another problem that can hinder teachers from managing the free nutritious meal program for children is limited facilities and

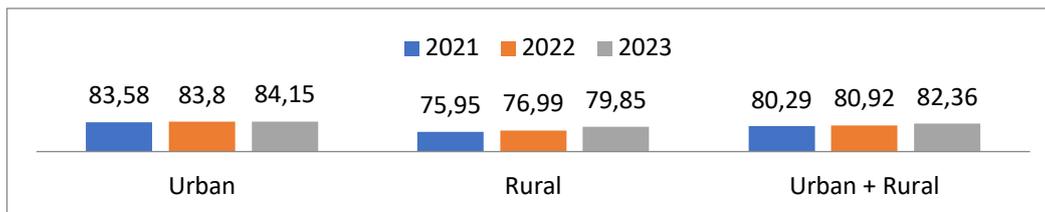
infrastructure. In Indonesia, there are still many schools that have limited facilities and infrastructure, this situation can then hinder learning activities, and later can also hinder the management of the free nutritious meal program for children program if it is assigned to teachers.

The problems of limited availability of food ingredients, difficulties in distribution, and difficulties in food processing, show that the supply chain condition of the free nutritious meal program for children is not yet resilient. Unresilient supply chain conditions can then hinder the implementation of the free meal program, this condition causes a spike in the need for program funding which then, if not met, will make the program ineffective or even unable to be implemented. Before the free nutritious meal for children program is implemented, it is important to ensure that there is not only the availability of a food supply chain to support the program, but that the supply chain must be resilient so that it can adapt to various forms of changing conditions that can occur at any time.

Doubts About the Effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meal Program for Children

The free nutritious meal for children program is intended to meet the nutritional needs of Indonesian children in order to prevent stunting, so that children can grow optimally, to then support the realization of the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045. However, with a large budget for the free nutritious meal program for children program, the Indonesian government seems to only focus on stunting prevention interventions. which is specific with a focus on providing nutrition through the intake of nutritious food to children. Specific interventions must be supported by sensitive interventions, this is supported by several studies such as research by Khalid et al (2019), Muliadi et al (2023), and Pauweni et al (2023) showing how important specific and sensitive interventions are, because of the causes of stunting. not only due to lack of nutritional intake, but also problems caused by poor sanitation conditions and difficulty in accessing clean water. In Indonesia, there are still areas, both urban and rural, that have poor sanitation conditions, this is shown in the data in figure 10.

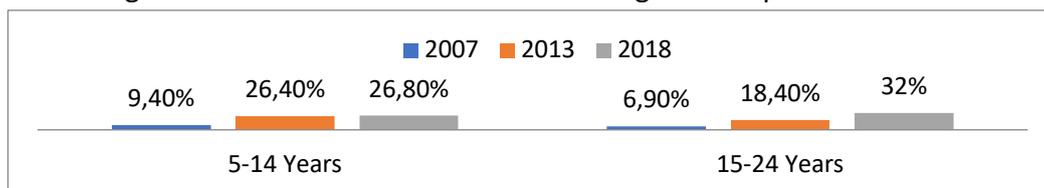
Figure 10 Percentage of Households by Province, Area Type and Decent Sanitation (Percent), 2021-2023



Source: Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics

Apart from the problem of poor sanitation, Indonesia is also faced with the problem of a clean water crisis that is occurring in several regions, one of which is the province of East Nusa Tenggara. According to Asyakra et al (2022), the results of the analysis that have been carried out show that the causes of the clean water crisis in East Nusa Tenggara Province are environmental conditions that are less supportive, limited funds, inadequate facilities, and low public awareness. Having good sanitation and the availability of clean water can help prevent stunting. A dirty and unhygienic environment can cause the spread of infectious diseases which often rob children of their body of nutrients and energy (Olo, et al., 2020; Fitriami & Galaresa, 2022). Bacteria, viruses and parasites spread through contaminated water, food that is not kept clean, and lack of adequate sanitation facilities can interfere with the absorption of nutrients in a child's body. To prevent stunting, the Indonesian government must also carry out health promotion efforts to change people's behavior, especially regarding food consumption behavior. Good food consumption behavior can help prevent stunting, this can be seen in fulfilling nutrition during the pre-conception period such as teenagers to prevent anemia which can cause stunting in the future. Anemia is a condition caused by iron deficiency. In Indonesia, anemia often occurs among teenagers as seen in figure 11.

Figure 11 Prevalence of Anemia in Teenagers Groups in Indonesia



Source: Processed from Basic Health Research of the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2007, 2013 and 2018

Preventing anemia among teenagers is important, because it can contribute to the prevention of stunting, this is because one of the causes of stunting is iron deficiency, lack of iron is also one of the causes of stunting, if a mother is still pregnant when she is pregnant.

When a teenager is anemic, she is at risk of giving birth to a stunted child. In efforts to prevent stunting, it is important not to focus on one causal factor such as intervention through fulfilling nutritional needs, this is because stunting is a condition caused by multiple factors such as anemia.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Stunting is a serious threat to the realization of the vision of Golden Indonesia Vision 2045, this is because stunting can affect the demographic bonus which is one of the important assets to realize the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045. The free nutritious meal program for Children is a program initiated to prevent stunting through interventions carried out by providing nutritious food to children. This research found that the implementation of the free nutritious meal program for Children has a high risk if implemented, this program is only supported by political power to support the success of the program. However, the need for large budgets, food supply chains that are not resilient, and interventions that are not comprehensive, make this program risky if implemented, implementation of this program could cause Indonesia to experience large losses, and be unable to prevent stunting as expected. With greater risks than opportunities, the free nutritious meal program for Children can be considered a political program, with many challenges that can affect the implementation of the program, the Indonesian government must consider these challenges so that the program can be implemented effectively.

Suggestion

Through this article, I try to provide suggestions regarding the free meal program in Indonesia which will be implemented by President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming. To prevent stunting, the Indonesian government should not focus on specific interventions through providing food to meet nutritional needs, with a large budget, the Indonesian government can distribute the budget to participate in sensitive intervention efforts through providing sanitation and clean water for the community, with elaboration Specific and sensitive interventions can support comprehensive stunting prevention. Regarding the need for a large budget and the establishment of a resilient supply chain, to provide budget efficiency and ensure that the supply chain can be resilient, meeting the need for food as a raw material can be replaced by using local food available in the local area. Using

local food can help empower local communities to cultivate this type of food, this also helps maintain the local wisdom of local communities who consume a lot of local food. Utilizing local food can also provide efficiency in food distribution between regions or even efficiency compared to food imports.

Regarding the implementation of the free nutritious meals for children program, it is important to be able to separate the authority to manage the program from the teachers at the school, even though the teachers will be involved in the future, the teachers should not be burdened with implementing the program, this is done to avoid giving them an excessive burden. to teachers, so that they can focus on organizing effective learning activities. Apart from that, in implementing the free meal program, it is important to form a committee consisting of teachers, parents and students. This committee can function as a supervisor, where each member can voice their opinion regarding the implementation of the program including menu selection, quantity, and also the quality of the food provided. In addition, with the use of a large budget, it is important to ensure accountability and transparency in budget use in the free meal program. To ensure accountability and transparency in the use of the budget, it is important to involve anti-corruption institutions and anti-government organizations. This involvement is intended to strengthen supervision and take action against various forms of violations in the use of the budget for the free nutritious meals for children program. This research is only limited to formulating problems; forecasting future policies; and policy recommendations regarding the free nutritious meals for children program, this is a gap, where this research can be the basis for further research to be able to examine the monitoring policy results of the free nutritious meals for children program.

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