



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## The Improvement of Community Empowerment in Handling Children with Malnutrition Through Participatory Rural Appraisal Method in Kupang City

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### ABSTRACT

Health Office of Kupang City commits program for handling children and family nutrition such as Family Aware Nutrition program, Breastfeeding Companion Food, Supplementary Feeding but it has not been maximal. This can be seen from the number of malnutrition cases in Kupang city in 2013 wherein 288 children or 2.27% suffering malnutrition, in 2014 the number of malnutrition cases in Kupang City decreased to 207 children or 0.33% and in 2015 the number of malnourished children were 204 children or 1.05%. The method of this research is qualitative. Informant in this research were 6 nutrition officers. Obtained information that Public Health Center of Kupang City had not tried to empower the community well in handling children malnutrition therefore needed a better effort to make community involved in overcoming the malnutritional problems of children by following the stages of empowerment namely the determination of territory, socialization, community awareness, organizing, implementing activities, and building networks. Time New Roman 10 regular, single line spacing, paragraph: justified alignment. Keywords: two to six words.

**Keywords:** Marasmus, Kwashiorkor, Family Aware Nutrition Program, Breastfeeding Companion Food

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Malnutrition is condition of a person with a lack of nutrition, or nutritional substance. Nowadays, malnutrition is still an unresolved problem. Malnutrition is much experienced by children under-five years (toddlers). The problem of malnutrition has become the world's concern because malnutrition sufferers are generally children who are none other than the next generation of the nation. According to Indonesia Health Department (2008), malnutrition is a severe problem weighting on children based on WHO standard deviation or found clinical signs of Marasmus, Kwashiorkor and Marasmus Kwashiorkor.

For 54% causes of infants and children mortality is due to malnutrition. The risk of dying from malnutrition children is 13 times greater than a normal child (WHO, 2006). Efforts to improve the nutrition of the community aims to improve the nutritional quality of individuals and communities, for instance, through improving food consumption habit, improving nutrient aware behavior, increasing access and quality of nutrition and health services which is appropriate with the progress of science and technology. Good nutrition is the foundation of health wherein nutrition affects immunity, susceptibility to disease, as well as physical and mental growth and development. Good nutrition will reduce morbidity, disability and mortality so it will improve the quality of human resources (Indonesia Health Ministry, 2015).

Various ways have been done by the government both the central government and local governments to suppress the occurrence of malnutrition in East Nusa Tenggara. Health Office of Kupang city has conducted a program for handling the nutrition of children and families such Family Aware Nutrition program, Breastfeeding Companion Food, Supplementary Feeding but it has not been maximal. This can be seen from the malnutrition cases in Kupang city. In 2013, 288 or 2.27% children suffering malnutrition, in 2014, the cases decreased for 207 or 0.33% children and in 2015, the number of malnutrition children was 204 or 1.05% (Kupang Health Office, 2015). From the total population recorded, the overall socio-economic condition is still below average when compared to other cities in Indonesia. The sector of economic growth and the welfare of its people which are still weak, enabling the problem of malnutrition becomes one of the critical social problems faced in Kupang City.

Empowerment is a series of activities to strengthen the power or empowerment of weak groups in society, including individuals with poverty problems. As a goal, empowerment refers to the circumstances or outcomes to be achieved as a social change, that is to become a public empowered, powered-society or having the power or having the knowledge and ability to fulfill their physical, economic, and social needs, confidence, able to convey aspirations, have a livelihood, participating in social activities, and carrying out the tasks of life independently. (Tjakrawardaya, 2009). In the life faced today many societal conditions that need to be improved by empowering the community itself, for instance the health and nutritional problems of society which is a very complicated problem because of various factors.

### **Purpose**

With the existence of community empowerment activities undertaken, the community is taught to be more sensitive in responding the health problems faced. To support the implementation of empowerment activities, the community itself is required to participate actively in every process that is done so that the community can at the same time learn to solve the problems being faced. This is due to community is placed as a core that not only acts as a spectator but must participate actively in every process. It is clear that the health workers, especially Nutrition Executives and Promkes act to increase the extension efforts about the importance of health and nutrition in the family, especially nutrition for children, and perform real programs or strategies that can motivate people to be aware of the problems.

### **METHODS**

The method used in this research was qualitative. This method was used to discuss the empowerment that has been done or applied so far in Public Health Center of Kupang City area. This research was conducted at Alak Health Center and Oepoi Community Health Center in Kupang City. Data collection was conducted in April-May 2017. The informants were six nutrition officers (coordinator and officer), each took 3 people. Officer informants were taken to identify the officer factor. In this stage, the officers were also given the structured interviews to identify what empowerment process that has been done before. Researcher also took additional informants to identify the empowerment that has been done before and to see the involvement of officers, community, and cross-sector in the effort of handling malnutrition case. Data taken through direct interview.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Community Empowerment in Handling Malnutrition**

Community empowerment is an effort in conducting activities to empower the community. The component of community empowerment is an activity in the empowerment of the community itself. Nutrition problems in a certain age group will affect nutritional status in the period of subsequent life cycle (intergenerational impact). The period of pregnancy is a period that determines the quality of human resources in the future, because the growth of the child is determined by the condition during the fetus in the womb. Malnutrition in productive mothers is an important and major cause of mortality on women in Asia and Africa.

The causes of death among maternal include lack of food intake, and poor nutritional quality of food. The availability of food in a region or region is very diverse. However, many productive maternal have less information on the content and composition of the local dietary nutrients. The health development program includes counseling about the importance of nutritious food intake is often done. However, it is often found that development programs implemented in an area have failed due to lack of community involvement in the planning, implementation, or evaluation process.

Soetomo (2006), in the process of development, the main focus is to build aspects of society and human aspects, so that community development can also be placed as one of the essential elements in community development concept. The essential elements are: process change, mobilization or resource utilization and capacity building of the community. Empowerment is an effort to foster motivation and open opportunities for people to gain a better life by utilizing and improving their capabilities and at the same time placing them as one of the active stakeholders. Those conditions demand mothers must have the insight, motivation and ability in order to maximize its role in maintaining and improving family health, including prevent the occurrence of malnutrition in themselves. Community-level awareness is defined as the power of society and a belief in the sustainability of their participation (Kwiatkowski, 2005). Darlington and Mulvaney (2002) in Geist (2003) assure that in many home cultures, women as dominant although in this arena women still have limited power. In fact, women have extraordinary resource assets that need to be explored so that it can play a significant role. Further Logan (1988) and Rodriguez (1994) conclude that empowerment occurs when women begin to realize to develop their capacity by making positive changes in their lives by entering the public arena. Community-level awareness is defined as the power of society and a belief in the sustainability of their participation

(Kwiatkowski, 2005). Shields (1995) in Martin, et.al.(2005) identifies three main themes in women's empowerment: 1) the connectedness of women to each other; 2) sensitive to self; and 3) have the ability to act.

Therefore, on the practical level, empowerment of women's groups must be revived to the remote areas. Woman group such as *Posyandu* or Community Clinic and *dasawisma* in the past have demonstrated effective performance in the discovery and treatment and prevention of maternal and children health issues. The revitalization of women's groups such as *posyandu* and *dasawisma* is the most likely step. Therefore, the fact that *posyandu* and *dasawisma* have been activated by volunteers should get institutional support from the government, to motivate the active service of *posyandu* and dynamics of the *dasawisma* in the region.

Based on the results of research, it showed that nutrition officers at the Kupang City Community Health Center understand about community empowerment. The question asked to the nutrition officer, it can be concluded that the community empowerment activities carried out during the time in Kupang City Community Health Center is a *posyandu* activity and no other activities or efforts conducted by nutrition officers and Public Health Center or Health department. Maternal or child health conditions handling nutritional problems in the community through *Posyandu* has not been running well and the handling in overcoming the problem of malnutrition can be handled through improvement program and maintenance of nutritional status of children (Nutrition and Public Health Department, 2008).

From the research results also found that the process of community empowerment activities carried out during this time in Public Health Center of Kupang City is like that has been done at the time of NICE project took place wherein the first is to form a team, determinate the place, then conduct assessment identification of the community by conducting introspective surveys with the community to be aware of the problems that occur around them, if the people experiences the problems then the community group is done community empowerment.

Based on the research, found the result that when the community empowerment activities took place, socialization has been done first to the community, so that people already know that there will be activities done together in overcoming health problems that occur in community's environment. There are some people who are taken to be informants wherein the person can provide information about the community and the person is also trusted by the community such as community leader and religious figure. In the community empowerment activities carried out at the Kupang Public Health Center area also found that during community empowerment activities took place, the community was also given special duties by officers so that the community can participate in these activities.

Communities from the very beginning have been involved, in which communities form a community nutrition group in which the group is responsible for managing activities to address community nutrition. KGM prioritizes itself to create and define an activity plan and then approve the activities to be undertaken after it makes a proposal to get grants from the NICE project where the later activities will be executed based on the existing proposal because the funds provided are also based on the activities that have been detailed in proposal of such activities.

Based on the results of the research found that nutrition officers from the beginning have been involved, in this case to help disseminate the NICE project that goes down to the community where the information given is in socialization to the community to inform that there will be activities such as the provision of community nutrition package. Nutrition officers also act as resource persons, facilitators and supervisor of activities. In empowerment activities not only nutrition officers who play a role in the course of community empowerment activities but there are also other health workers. In dealing with nutritional problems occurring in the community, nutrition officers coordinate with other cross programs such as health promotion or *promkes*, environmental health or *kesling*, and maternal and child health.

## DISCUSSION

Community empowerment activities carried out during this time in Kupang Public Health Center are *posyandu* activities and no other activities or efforts undertaken by nutrition officers and Public Health Center or Health Department. This can happen because Nutrition Officers rely on funds provided to outsiders such as NICE NGOs who have helped fund additional activities undertaken by nutrition officers for the community in solving the community's nutritional problems that have been going on for 5 years and are currently abolished. As nutrition officer, innovatively and creatively can develop ideas and abilities possessed in doing good activities to handle malnutrition cases that occur in children.

Community empowerment activities undertaken by the NICE project are activities that may be financed and which may not. The first is the upgrading of *posyandu* facilities wherein there is procurement of goods such as height measuring instruments, then cutlery for cooking demonstrations and PMT, then the board of *posyandu* empowerment. The most important improvement is *posyandu* itself such as conducting extension activities, and additional activities that are not financed by government such as pregnant mother's class and mother's children class. Before the existence of NICE cooperation, Public Health Center had also empowered pregnant women,

breastfeeding mother and toddler mother conducted in *Posyandu* activities which were routinely held monthly according to the scheduled date by health personnel.

In *posyandu* activities, there are several activities that occur in solving health and nutrition problems for mothers and children which as usual happens such monitoring the nutritional status of children by doing measurement and physical weighing of children, examination of pregnant and lactating mother, giving A vitamin and Fe for pregnant women, age-appropriate immunization of children, PMT for children with under-nutritional status and extension PMT for all children, KIE for mothers and children with health and nutrition problems. Indeed, these activities have been done properly with knowledge, skills and self-motivation of Public Health Center's staff of Kupang City. For example, the provision of breastfeeding food, this program is good for the improvement of children's nutrition, but after the child has recovered, the program is stopped and the parents are unable to provide the nutritional needs of their children continuously because of the poor so that the case will happen again.

In the process of empowerment activities undertaken with the NICE project, there are agreements on the scheduling of activities with the community, the schedule is made based on the time of community willingness because many people have their own busyness such as work, if there is a cancellation or obstacle on the day that has been agreed, it will communicate again along with the health officers who act as facilitator in the community empowerment. The health worker explained that the agreed timetable was made by the community, because it will be done by the community and intended for the community so that health workers follow the community's willingness. Here's a quote on the empowerment process.

Although the knowledge, skills, and motivation of the staff in the Kupang Health Center were good but the officers also found various obstacles in the process of community empowerment that occurred in the Kupang Health Center such as limited funds so that the officers could not continue the empowerment activities more than the funds provided by the government as the time of cooperation with outsiders especially NGOs has stopped funding the empowerment activities undertaken. Besides, the community also lacks awareness of what has been facilitated by the facilitator in this case the fund managed by the community cannot be maintained so on because the people who are not able to control themselves so that the activities that should continue even if it is not funded. Community empowerment does not make people more dependent on various charitable programs. Because, basically, what is enjoyed should be generated on its own (which results can be exchanged with others). Thus the ultimate goal is to empower the community and build the capacity to advance oneself toward a better life.

From the results of this study, it can be seen that the community empowerment activities undertaken did not get a good response from the government because the government showed less in controlling or coordinating with the Health Office of Kupang and Public Health Center because they feel that the community is adequately escorted or accompanied by health workers when community empowerment activities is ongoing. Whereas the existence of communication and coordination relationship with health officer is very good for government to execute its control function to activity that take place in its society. The government is expected to be more sensitive to the problems that occur in the community by establishing good communication and coordination so that after knowing the existing problems, the government can think of a way out for existing problems as a support for the community and the health service in improving public health, addressing malnutrition in Kupang City by issuing policies or building relationships with those perceived as helpful party..

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that community empowerment is collaboration with NICE project which run for five years and no longer running except *posyandu* or community clinical activity and there is no program sustainability because it is no longer facilitated. The process of empowerment activities that have been going on such as doing village assessment, problems identification, problems priority, scheduling activities agreed with the community. In the empowerment activities found also various obstacles from government, officers, and society.

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