

Optimization of Indonesian Youth Knowledge In Stunting Prevention Assistance

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Abstract. The prevalence rate of stunting in Indonesia in 2021 reached 24.4%, surpassing the WHO standard of 20%. As a result, Indonesia is categorized as having a high stunting issue and holds the 2nd position in Asia. Efforts to reduce stunting are closely related to the role of health cadres. Indonesian youth play a crucial role as agents of change, having a 39.8% influence in community involvement. Kader Muda Sehat training, as an innovative program, aims to train young individuals to become health cadres, enabling them to contribute in assisting the targeted individuals affected by stunting. The objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the Kader Muda Sehat training program in enhancing the knowledge of youths as health cadres in the Banyuwangi Subdistrict, Garut Regency. This study was conducted using a quasi-experimental approach with one-group pre-test-post-test design. Kader Muda Sehat training was conducted over 7 sessions from December 2022 to January 2023, using a hybrid approach, online through Zoom meetings and offline in the Karyasari Village, Banyuwangi Subdistrict, Garut Regency, West Java. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, consisting of 18 young cadres who met the established inclusion criteria. Data collection of young cadre characteristics and knowledge was carried out using pre-test-post-test questionnaires. The research data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate, specifically the related samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test, utilizing SPSS Statistics V25.0 software. The results showed a p-value of 0.000 ($0.000 < 0.05$), indicating a positive influence of Kader Muda Sehat training on the level of knowledge of young cadres regarding stunting prevention assistance. Based on results, it was concluded that there was an improvement in the youths' knowledge after receiving Kader Muda Sehat training about stunting prevention assistance. Kader Muda Sehat training is effective in enhancing youths' knowledge of stunting prevention assistance.

Keywords : health system; stunting prevention; young cadre; youth empowerment

INTRODUCTION

The Study of Nutrition Status in Indonesia (SSGI) conducted in 2021 revealed that the prevalence rate of stunting in Indonesia reached 24.4%, surpassing the WHO standard of 20%. As a result, Indonesia falls into the category of having a high stunting issue and ranks second in Asia after Cambodia (Risksdas, 2018). West Java Province has the highest prevalence of stunting among toddlers in Indonesia, reaching 29.2% (Kemenkes RI, 2021). This figure significantly exceeds the target set by the West Java Province Strategic Plan (Renstra) of 25.2% (Dinas Kesehatan Jawa Barat, 2021). Among the 27 districts/cities in West Java, four of them have high stunting prevalence (30%-39.9%), namely Garut Regency, Cianjur Regency, Bandung Regency, and Cirebon City. Garut Regency is noted as the region in West Java with the highest prevalence of stunting among toddlers, reaching 35.3% in the SSGI 2021. This means that 1 out of 3 toddlers in this regency experiences growth below the standard for their age.

Efforts to mitigate stunting are closely linked to the pivotal role of health cadres, who serve as the frontline of healthcare services closest to the community. Currently, there are 1,133,057 community health cadre members in Indonesia (Kemenkes RI, 2019). Health cadres constitute an essential social asset and community initiative that needs enhancement and active involvement within the family support framework to accelerate stunting reduction, working alongside midwives as part of the family support team (BKKBN, 2021). However, research conducted in Bireun Regency in 2016 unveiled that the general education level of community health cadres was still low, at 45.6%. Additionally, a considerable portion of them (55.9%) executed weighing tasks with suboptimal quality (Fadjri, 2016). Moreover, the average age of health cadres approaching retirement poses a challenge in maintaining service quality. According to a study by Barokah et al. (2022), a significant majority of older-aged cadres, totaling 254 individuals aged 41 and

above (approximately 77.4%), encountered difficulties (75.9%) with infant and child feeding practices.

Presently, there are 64.92 million young people in Indonesia, comprising approximately 23.90% of the population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). These youths serve as a potential resource and represent the future generation, playing a crucial role in society, they hold significant importance as agents of change, particularly in matters of community empowerment. Research conducted by Octarra et al (2022) indicates that 73.54% of young people are not only willing to participate but also possess the ability to effectively engage in activities and decision-making. They demonstrate a strong grasp of their environment and exhibit a commendable understanding of critical issues within their surroundings. Young individuals play a significant role in shaping decisions made by parents or other adults, accounting for 39.8% of the overall decision-making influence (Octarra, 2022).

As part of the effort to enhance public health, the government has initiated programs involving revitalization and rebranding. Knowledge, educational levels, and health cadre training are recognized factors associated with the improved quality of infant weight measurement. They are also linked to enhanced maternal knowledge. Abdillah et al. (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study revealing that nutrition education provided by trained cadres to mothers of infants resulted in a significant increase in energy intake ($p=0.000$) and improved protein intake ($p=0.001$) among infants. The delivery of nutrition education by cadres signifies an effective and sustainable approach for directly addressing issues, particularly through specific nutrition interventions (Abdilah et al., 2020). Recognizing the imperative to enhance the quality of healthcare services within the community and taking into account the potential of Indonesian youth, it is crucial for young people to assume a role in addressing problems and responding to healthcare challenges, particularly in the realm of stunting prevention.

Kader Muda Sehat (KMS) is an innovative stunting prevention program led by young individuals serving as health cadres. The program entails a range of activities that involve fostering community support through regular and scheduled educational sessions, forming study groups, providing supplementary nutrition, and

initiating innovative initiatives addressing identified issues. These activities play a pivotal role in the comprehensive efforts aimed at stunting prevention. They encompass the creation of study groups for toddlers, the provision of supplementary nutrition, and the delivery of essential nutrition education to influential figures, including health cadres (Fitri, R. H, 2022). The primary objective of the KMS program is to equip young individuals to become effective health cadres who can offer valuable support to the target population. This is achieved through comprehensive training sessions that cover various aspects, such as stunting prevention education, problem analysis skills, and community empowerment. These training sessions are designed to prepare them for implementing initiatives within their communities. However, the extent of knowledge among young participants concerning the educational content related to stunting and its prevention, as delivered during the training, remains largely unexplored. As a result, this study seeks to analyze the effectiveness of the "Kader Muda Sehat" training program. The study aims to assess how the program enhances the knowledge of young individuals who serve as health cadres in the Banyuresmi Subdistrict of Garut Regency.

METHOD

The "Kader Muda Sehat" training activities were conducted over a span of 7 sessions, taking place from December 2022 to January 2023. The participants included young individuals hailing from diverse regions across Indonesia. The training encompassed a variety of effective methods, such as lectures, simulations, role-playing, and group discussions. These approaches were complemented by educational tools like PowerPoint slides, posters, and child growth mats. The activities were facilitated through both online and offline platforms. The training curriculum covered a wide range of crucial topics, including: (1) Stunting and its implications; (2) Pregnancy and nutritional requirements; (3) Support for breastfeeding; (4) Maternal psychology, family dynamics, and counseling techniques; (5) Optimal utilization of Maternal and Child Health Booklets; (6) Simulation of child growth and complementary feeding; (7) Strengthening family empowerment. Participants who successfully completed the Kader Muda Sehat training program were subsequently recognized as young cadres.

The research participants were chosen through the purposive sampling technique, comprising 18 young cadres who fulfilled the predefined inclusion criteria. A few of the inclusion criteria were: (1) Successful completion of the Kader Muda Sehat program recruitment, encompassing administrative procedures and interviews; (2) Voluntary commitment to participate in the entire training program; (3) Fulfillment of all pre-test and post-test requirements. The exclusion criteria consisted of: (1) Age exceeding 30 years; (2) Inability to engage in remote learning. This study employed a quasi-experimental methodology, specifically utilizing a one-group pretest-posttest design. Data pertaining to the characteristics and knowledge of young cadres were gathered through pretest-posttest questionnaire instruments. The pre-test and post-test scores were categorized as good when falling within the range of 70-100, and as inadequate when ranging from 40-69. Subsequent to data collection, the information underwent various stages including editing, coding, data entry, cleaning, and tabulation as part of the data processing process. The gathered data was then subjected to analysis using SPSS Statistics V25.0 software.

The analysis techniques employed in this study encompassed both univariate (descriptive) analysis and bivariate analysis. Data normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the results indicated a lack of normal distribution (p -value < 0.05). Consequently, bivariate analysis was conducted using non-parametric tests, specifically the Chi-square test to determine the relationships between research variables, and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to evaluate differences or improvements in knowledge scores before and after participation in the Kader Muda Sehat training.

RESULT

Table 1
Frequency distribution of young cadres characteristics

Respondents' characteristics	N	%
Sex		
Female	17	94,4
Male	1	5,6
Age		
18-21 years old	10	56,6
22-25 years old	8	44,4
Education		
Diploma	8	44,4

Bachelor	10	56,6
Academic discipline		
Health related	12	66,7
Non health related	6	33,3
Occupation		
Employed	4	22,2
Unemployed	3	16,7
Student	11	61,1

Source: processed data

The results of this study revealed that the majority of young cadres were female, constituting 17 individuals or 94.4%, whereas males accounted for only 1 individual or 5.6%. These findings indicate that the female group holds a stronger propensity for participating in health and prevention activities. Empowering women is pivotal in the endeavor to diminish the prevalence of stunting, encompassing the enhancement of their knowledge and amelioration of their health condition (Margadot and Huriah, 2021). As asserted by Shafiq et al. (2019), the maternal health status, gauged by body mass index and the frequency of antenatal visits during pregnancy, emerges as a significant determinant in mitigating the risk of child stunting. This underscores the indispensable role of women in health enhancement endeavors, particularly in the reduction of stunting incidences. Thus, furnishing young women with health education assumes paramount significance in stunting prevention and the preparation of a promising future generation.

However, acknowledging the significant role of women in health empowerment does not imply marginalizing the involvement of men in the process. As highlighted by Has et al. (2022), a correlation exists between the propensity for childhood stunting and a father's actions in stunting prevention (Has et al., 2022). This extends to the decision-making sphere within stunting prevention endeavors. Therefore, when providing health education to households, it is anticipated that men will actively participate in health education and community empowerment, contributing to the collective effort aimed at diminishing stunting. Additional data reveals that the majority of respondents fall within the early young age group, specifically within the age range of 18 to 21 years, constituting 56.6% of the total. This data underscores the young generation's keen interest in health-related matters and their active involvement in health prevention endeavors. As pointed out by Murman D. (2015), several cognitive functions tend to

decline with age, encompassing the ability to process information rapidly, retain memory, and comprehend and assimilate new information (Murman D, 2015). The cognitive prowess exhibited by the young age group in these domains can be a reinforcing element in their capacity as health cadres.

Furthermore, a total of 56.6% of respondents possess a Bachelor's degree (S1) educational background, and among them, the majority (61.1%) are students, with the majority of young cadres, 12 individuals or 66.7%, come from health-related disciplines, while the remaining 6 individuals or 33.3% are from non-health-related disciplines. The disciplines of the young cadres are categorized into health-related and non-health-related fields. The young cadres with health-related discipline come from fields such as midwifery, nursing, nutrition, public health, health promotion, and pharmacy. On the other hand, the young cadres with non-health-related disciplines consist of fields like civil engineering, agribusiness, entrepreneurship, chemical analysis, accounting, and communication studies. This figure indicates a good level of academic participation and a strong commitment, evident from their education backgrounds that are relevant to health issues in this study. Moreover, the diversity in educational backgrounds among young cadres represents the level of awareness and concern of the young generation towards preventive aspects and health efforts within the community, and also gives a positive view of the active role of the youth in supporting health issues.

Level of knowledge of young cadres before and after training.

The outcomes of the study concerning the knowledge levels of young cadres before and after the training are visually presented in Figure 1 below. Before the training, the majority of young cadres exhibited a poor level of knowledge regarding stunting prevention assistance, with 17 individuals (94.4%) having inadequate knowledge, and only 1 individual (5.6%) possessing good knowledge. However, following the completion of the Kader Muda Sehat training, a notable shift occurred, as nearly all participants (94.4%) demonstrated a good level of knowledge, while only 1 individual (5.6%) retained insufficient knowledge.

An examination of the characteristics of young cadres in Table 2 unveiled distinctions in knowledge levels before and after the training,

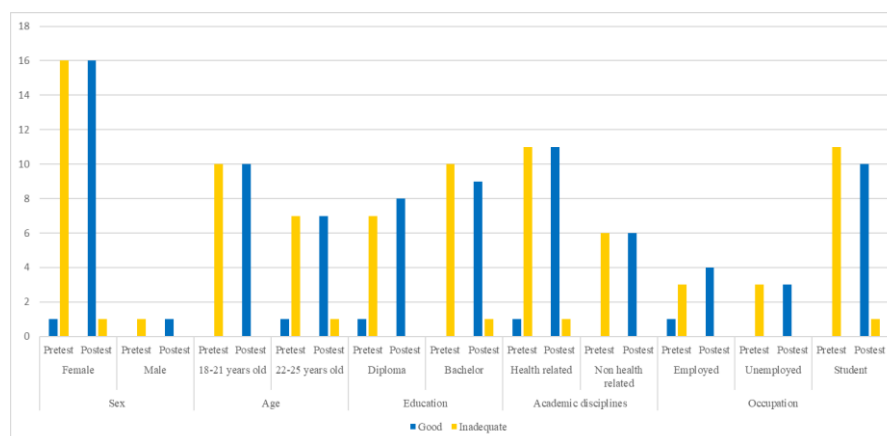
stratified by gender. Specifically, within the female group, 16 individuals (88.8%) had inadequate knowledge before the training, which substantially improved to 16 individuals (88.8%) possessing good knowledge after the training. In contrast, among males, only 1 individual (5.6%) had inadequate knowledge before the training, and this figure advanced to good knowledge levels post-training. Regarding age, young cadres belonging to the early age group (18-21 years) displayed insufficient knowledge, with 10 individuals (55.6%) falling within this category. Following the training, all of these individuals (55.6%) showcased an elevated knowledge level, whereas only 1 individual (5.6%) within the middle-aged group (22-25 years) retained inadequate knowledge even after the training.

Furthermore, considering educational backgrounds, 7 young cadres (38.8%) with a diploma (D3 or D4) education level demonstrated inadequate knowledge prior to the training, which subsequently transformed to 8 individuals (44.4%) possessing a good knowledge level after the training. In contrast, among young cadres pursuing a bachelor's degree (S1), 10 individuals (55.6%) had insufficient knowledge. Following the training, 9 individuals (50%) attained a good level of knowledge, though 1 individual (5.6%) still retained inadequate knowledge despite an increase in their scores from 50 before the training to 67 after the training. In terms of academic disciplines, within the health related field, only 1 young cadre (5.6%) exhibited good knowledge about stunting prevention mentoring, whereas 11 individuals (61.1%) initially had inadequate knowledge. Post-training, 11 individuals (61.1%) demonstrated an enhanced knowledge level, leaving only 1 individual (5.6%) with inadequate knowledge. Conversely, among young cadres from non health related sciences disciplines, 6 individuals (33.3%) possessed inadequate knowledge before the training. However, following the training, all 6 individuals (33.3%) showcased an improved knowledge level.

An evaluation of the study results based on occupation indicated that among employed young cadres, 1 individual (5.6%) held good knowledge, while 3 individuals (16.6%) retained inadequate knowledge before the training. Post-training, 4 employed individuals (22.2%) exhibited improved knowledge levels. Among those unemployed, 3 individuals (16.6%) had insufficient knowledge, yet all 3 individuals (16.6%) showed an enhanced knowledge level

after the training. Among the young cadres who were students, all 11 individuals (61.1%) initially demonstrated insufficient knowledge. However, post-training, 10 student cadres (55.6%) displayed an enhanced knowledge level, with only 1 individual (5.6%) retaining inadequate knowledge. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the "Kader Muda Sehat" training program in enhancing the knowledge levels of young cadres

concerning stunting prevention. The data reveal a significant positive shift in knowledge, reflecting the program's impact on improving awareness and understanding among the participants. The results are consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the pivotal role of targeted training in empowering individuals to contribute effectively to health-related initiatives (Abdillah et al., 2020; Margadot & Huriah, 2021; Shafiq et al., 2019).



Source: processed data

Figure 1
Levels of knowledge among young cadres before and after training

Adding to this discussion, Abdillah et al. (2020) reported in their study on nutrition education that well-designed training programs can lead to notable improvements in knowledge and practices among participants (Abdillah et al., 2020). This aligns with the current study's observation of enhanced knowledge levels among young cadres after undergoing the training program. Moreover, the study by Margadot and Huriah (2021) emphasized the importance of educational interventions in health improvement efforts, stating that effective training can lead to increased knowledge and awareness among individuals, thus enhancing their role in health promotion. The findings of the current research resonate with this notion, as the "Kader Muda Sehat" training program resulted in a substantial increase in the knowledge levels of young cadres, enabling them to actively participate in stunting prevention activities (Margadot & Huriah, 2021).

Furthermore, Shafiq et al., (2019) highlighted the positive impact of maternal health status on child stunting prevention, underscoring the significance of education and awareness. The increase in knowledge levels observed in this study suggests that well-designed training programs can contribute to improving

individuals' capacity to address critical health issues (Shafiq et al., 2019). These outcomes echo the broader research landscape, highlighting the importance of targeted educational initiatives in empowering individuals to actively engage in health promotion and contribute to the overall well-being of their communities.

The Relationship between Factors Influencing Knowledge and the Level of Knowledge among Young Cadres

Table 2
The Relationship between factors influencing knowledge and the level of knowledge among young cadres

Factors influencing knowledge	P-value
Sex	0,803
Age	0,250
Education	0,357
Field of study	0,467
Occupation	0,741

Source: processed data

The analysis of the table reveals that the p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant relationship between gender and

the knowledge level of young cadres regarding stunting prevention mentoring. In this case, the p-value is higher than the alpha level ($0.803 > 0.05$). This contrasts with the findings of the study by Hwang and Oh (2020), which indicated a significant difference in gender's impact on health-promoting behavior ($t = 2.81, p < 0.01$), with males being a significant factor influencing the improvement of health-promoting behavior ($\beta = -0.12, p = 0.03$). The differing outcomes could be due to variations in sample size (Hwang and Oh, 2020). This study included 18 young cadres, while the other study had a considerably larger sample.

The research results indicate that there is no relationship between age and the knowledge level of young cadres regarding stunting prevention mentoring, where the p-value is greater than the alpha level ($0.250 > 0.05$). This aligns with the statement by Mediani et al. (2022) in their study, stating that there is no significant relationship between age and health cadre knowledge (Mediani et al., 2022). This study focuses on the contribution of youth to stunting reduction efforts, particularly within the age range of 16 to 30 years (according to Law number 40 on Youth, 2009), resulting in less variation in the education level and occupation of the respondents. According to Murman (2015), certain cognitive aspects tend to decline with age, including processing speed, memory, and the ability to learn new material (Murman D, 2015). Based on this, it can be inferred that the relatively young age of the respondents, who participated in the training, facilitates their comprehension and assimilation of the provided material.

The cognitive abilities of the young age group can be a supporting factor for them in fulfilling their role as health cadres. The study results indicate that there is no relationship between educational level and the knowledge level of young cadres regarding stunting prevention mentoring, as the p-value is greater than the alpha level ($0.357 > 0.05$). This differs from the findings of Mediani et al. (2022), who showed a significant relationship between knowledge and educational level, indicating that good knowledge is associated with a relatively high level of education, ranging from high school to college (Mediani et al., 2022). In this context, it appears that educational level might not be the primary determining factor in assessing respondents' knowledge about stunting prevention and management.

Similarly, the research findings suggest no relationship between academic discipline and the knowledge level of young cadres regarding stunting prevention mentoring, where the p-value is greater than the alpha level ($0.467 > 0.05$). Likewise, there is no relationship between occupation and the knowledge level of young cadres, as the p-value is greater than the alpha level ($0.741 > 0.05$). Stunting is a multi-sectoral issue that requires various disciplines to address and prevent it. Therefore, Kader Muda Sehat training is conducted with participants from diverse academic backgrounds to maximize the potential solutions that can be implemented and the potential factors supporting stunting prevention and management efforts.

Several factors that could contribute to knowledge enhancement in both age groups include prior experiences, access to information, and exposure to health-related issues. Furthermore, in the effort to improve respondents' knowledge about this topic, a holistic approach involving varied training methods and diverse information sources could play a crucial supportive role. Upon considering these findings, it becomes imperative to recognize the potential limitations, like sample size, that could shape the interpretation of our study outcomes. Larger sample sizes tend to yield statistically more robust insights, whereas smaller samples might not effectively capture nuanced relationships or distinctions. When discussing the influence of sample size on detecting subtle findings, Creswell and Creswell (2018) in *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* explain how a larger sample size can enhance the likelihood of detecting imperceptible differences compared to a smaller sample (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). To enhance the validity of future studies, it's recommended to ensure an adequate sample size, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of potential relationships and outcomes.

Analysis of the Impact of the Healthy Young Cadre Training on the Knowledge of Young Cadres Regarding Stunting Prevention Support

The statistical test utilized in this study was the Wilcoxon test. The testing was carried out to ascertain the positive or negative influence of Kader Muda Sehat training on the knowledge of young cadres. If the pretest and posttest values result in a p-value less than 0.05, then Kader Muda Sehat training has a positive influence on the knowledge of young cadres. Additionally, in

this study, an n-gain score test was conducted to determine the magnitude of the influence or effectiveness of Kader Muda Sehat training. This training was considered to have low effectiveness if the n-gain score is < 0.3 , moderate if it ranges between 0.3 and 0.7, and high if it is > 0.7 (Meltzer, D.E, 2002).

Table 3
Wilcoxon statistical test and N-Gain score the impact of young healthy cadre training on young cadres' knowledge of stunting prevention companioning

Pretest-Posttest	N	P-value	N-Gain
Posttest $<$ Pretest	0	0,000	0,732
Posttest $>$ Pretest	18		
Posttest = Pretest	0		

Source: processed data

Based on Table, the analysis results from this study revealed a p-value of 0.000, which is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05. This indicates that the influence provided by this study was significant and positive for young cadres, leading to an enhancement in their knowledge about stunting prevention. Furthermore, the n-gain score obtained was 0.732, which implies that the impact of Kader Muda Sehat training on the level of knowledge about stunting prevention among young cadres is 73%, categorizing it as high. These findings align with several other studies, albeit conducted on different topics and training methods. Research by Santi et al. (2022) demonstrates that E-Posyandu information system training has a considerable effect on improving the knowledge of health cadres (Santi et al., 2022). Another study by Merry et al. (2019) aligns with the findings of this study, albeit employing different types and content of training (Merry et al., 2019). It indicates that health cadre training can enhance their knowledge and skills in providing counseling on maternal and neonatal health. Based on the aforementioned data, it can be concluded that the implementation of training can improve knowledge and skills across various health education topics essential for the community.

The large impact brought about by the training on young cadres in enhancing their knowledge regarding stunting management and prevention can serve as a strength for the nation's efforts to reduce stunting. Another potential that can be harnessed is the youth who possess high spirits and motivation in maintaining personal health and their surroundings. This is reinforced

by The California Endowment et al.'s statement (2014) that the younger generation has great potential, a spirit of optimism, and creativity to collaborate in encountering the challenges present in society. Therefore, preparing the youth to engage in community health improvement efforts is a beneficial strategy, both in the short and long term.

Furthermore, providing training on the handling and prevention of stunting among the youth can offer dual benefits. Apart from their role as young cadres assisting the target population targeted to stunting, the health information they acquire can also be applied to their own lives, nurturing healthy families in the future. In their study, Wulandari et al. (2021) explain that knowledge stands as the most influential factor in adolescent stunting incidents related to dietary patterns. An individual's grasp of nutritional information influences their mindset and actions when it comes to selecting and diversifying their food choices, ultimately impacting their personal nutritional well-being (Novianti Utami, Letchmi Pandarugan and Nambiar, 2022). The better adolescents understand stunting, the lower the risk of stunting incidents among them (Wulandari et al., 2021). The topics covered in Kader Muda Sehat training are highly relevant to stunting reduction efforts, and anticipating swift application in their daily lives. Moreover, they can disseminate quality health education to the community, particularly the stunting targeted population during the implementation of assistance. The training methods, information sources, and utilization of media need further examination to enhance participants' knowledge. This approach aims to ensure the best and holistic training and education strategies are both beneficial and implementable in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Kader Muda Sehat training program has a positive influence on the enhancement of knowledge among young cadres. The training methods, information sources, and utilization of media for information dissemination need further exploration to effectively improve respondents' knowledge. This approach can aid in the development and implementation of optimal and holistic training and educational strategies in the future. As the goal of Kader Muda Sehat training is to prepare young cadres for supporting stunting prevention efforts among target communities,

further research is necessary to investigate the implementation of knowledge regarding stunting management and prevention, and its impact on actual stunting occurrences. The outcomes of this study are intended to serve as a valuable reference for the Indonesian Government, particularly the West Java Government and the Garut Regency Government, in formulating policies for stunting prevention assistance through the involvement of young cadres. This initiative aims to contribute to the overall reduction of stunting incidents in Indonesia, specifically in West Java, by harnessing the potential of Indonesian youth.

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