

TITLE

How formative research and a communications campaign changed policy maker and community commitment to reducing stunting in Indonesia

AUTHORS

Kirk Dearden, DrPH, MPH, kirkdearden@imaworldhealth.org, Senior Advisor for Research and Quality Assurance, IMA World Health, Tanzania (corresponding author); Iwan Hasan, BS, World Health, Indonesia; Scott Torres, BS, IMA World Health, USA; Susan Duberstein, MA, IMA World Health, USA; Benjamin Crookston, PhD, Brigham Young University, USA; Josh West, PhD, MPH, Brigham Young University, USA; Cudjoe Bennett, DrPH, IMA World Health, USA; Dr. Cougar Hall, PhD, Brigham Young University; Dr. Ahmad Syafiq, PhD, University of Indonesia, Indonesia; Ms. Mary Linehan, MS, IMA World Health, USA

ABSTRACT

Background Indonesia is made up of 261 million residents scattered across 17,000 islands and 75,000 villages. In Indonesia, more than a third of all children < 5 years of age are chronically malnourished (stunted). To prevent stunting, families must adopt and maintain certain food, care, and health behaviours. However, this is difficult given the disperse population. Indonesia's National Nutrition Communications Campaign (NNCC)—a government initiative supported by IMA World Health and partners—raised awareness about stunting and changed individuals' behaviour through media, interpersonal communication, and community and social mobilization. **Methods** Prior to selecting appropriate education entertainment interventions, the Universitas Indonesia conducted formative research which found that stunting was not a government priority and was largely unrecognized. Ubiquity of infant formula; work outside the home; laissez faire attitudes toward child caregiving; failure to wash hands with soap; the belief that mothers should eat less to avoid delivering large babies; lack of nutrition counselling; and failure to engage men in child feeding were all problems that affected stunting. **Program Approach** NNCC worked with multiple ministries to strengthen government commitment to stunting reduction. It also: 1. Mobilized local coalitions, held public discussions, conducted hearings with local parliament, and developed and distributed advocacy tools. NNCC included local and regional decision-makers in television and radio talk shows. 2. Capitalized on media, interpersonal communication, and community mobilization to increase knowledge, change social norms, and improve nutrition-related practices. This included a mass media campaign, local radio, editorials, banners, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. NNCC used television spots on highly-rated TV programs and educated journalists about stunting's importance. 3. Tracked trending issues to identify matters of interest to internet users. NNCC purchased Facebook ads. High viewership for YouTube ads and web advertorials demonstrated interest in stunting. NNCC linked cross-platform content and promoted "off-air" activities such as one-on-one counselling and support groups. **Impact** NNCC is the Indonesian government's first attempt to reduce stunting nationally, reaching 40 million people through television and

other forms of communication. Each of NNCC's communications activities was important to increasing awareness of stunting and strengthening local and national commitment to reducing it. **Conclusions** Useful lessons for similar campaigns include the following: 1) Engage stakeholders in campaign design and implementation at all levels to ensure broad-based support for stunting reduction 2) Work with local journalists' associations to set the media agenda for stunting reduction by maintaining strong ties with the local press, participating in journalist forums, and training journalists on stunting prevention 3) Use humorous public service announcements with limited technical information to engage priority populations, and 4) Employ social media (YouTube ads, web advertorials, Facebook pages, Twitter, Instagram) to extend the campaign's reach and reinforce messaging from other sources.