

## Education on Balanced Nutrition and Healthy Canteens in Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School for Children

Amilia Yuni Damayanti<sup>a)</sup>, Ayu Suryaningtyas Sabastiani, Aziza Nurul Masruroh, Syadza Syafa Nazhifah, Jihan Fauziyah Salsabila

Nutrition Department, Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>a)</sup> Corresponding author: amilia@unida.gontor.ac.id

### Abstract

Balanced nutrition and a healthy canteen have an important role in maintaining public health, especially for children. Currently, people tend to live pragmatically, including the choice of instant food which can hurt health in the future. The prevalence of stunting and nutritional problems in children is still a serious problem in Indonesia. The knowledge of mothers and socio-economic factors have an important role in nutritional problems for children. Therefore, education about balanced nutrition and healthy canteens is important to increase public knowledge and behavior. The results of this community service activity show a significant increase in the understanding of balanced nutrition among student parents. Although improvements have been made, ongoing efforts are needed to ensure this understanding is maintained. This activity also motivates schools to set up healthy canteens as an alternative solution to a healthier diet for children.

**Keywords:** education, balanced nutrition, healthy canteen

### INTRODUCTION

In this era, the majority of people prefer living with a pragmatic culture (living instantly and practically), the same goes for food, even though instant food is consumed periodically will become a disease in the future, such as degenerative diseases (diseases that occur with age) which arise with the main trigger being errors in eating patterns (Susanti & Kholisoh, 2018). A balanced diet is an ideal diet both in terms of quality and quantity for all mankind. Balanced food is required as a nutritional intake for the human body to replace substances lost after activity, eliminate hunger, help the body for great work, and strengthen the body's immunity. Dietary balance can be created by consuming a variety of food elements and their variations, and this is one of the efforts to maintain balance between mind and soul, as in the QS. Abasa: 24-32 (As-Sayyid, 2019).

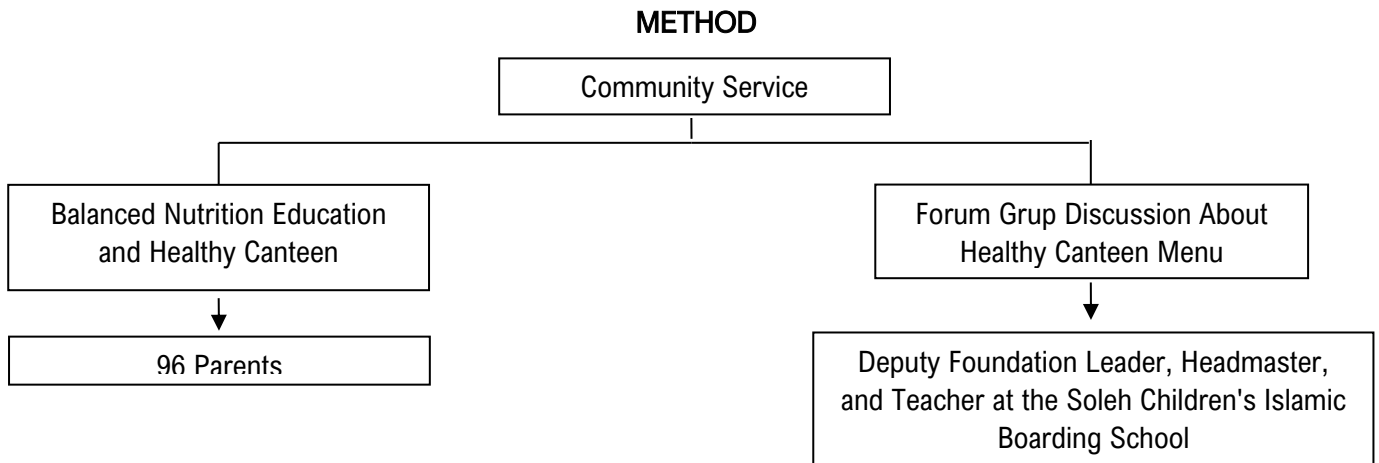
Based on the results of the 2021 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey known that the prevalence of stunting has decreased from 27.7% in 2019 to 24.4% in 2021. Meanwhile, the prevalence of underweight increased in 2021 to 17%, previously in 2019 it was 16.3%. The prevalence of waste from 2019 to 2021 has not changed too much, namely from 7.4% to 7.1% (Ministry of Health, 2020). Parents have a role in completing the nutritional needs of toddlers and the fact that the problem of malnutrition can be irreversible, while malnutrition can affect a

child's brain development. Apart from that, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections (ARI) also affect the nutritional status of toddlers (Sholikah, Rustiana, & Yuniastuti, 2017).

The mother's level of knowledge is one of the factors that causes malnutrition in children because the mother is the closest caregiver and the mother also determines the food that will be consumed by the child and other family members. A mother should know about balanced nutrition so that her child does not experience problems such as malnutrition. One of the factors that influence nutritional status is the relationship between socioeconomic status and nutritional status. The role of parents, especially mothers, in caring for toddlers determines the condition of the nutritional intake that the toddler receives. Therefore, a mother must know how to provide a balanced nutritional intake to her toddler so that the toddler can grow into a healthy child and can grow and develop according to his age. Providing balanced nutrition is an effort to overcome stunting that occurs in toddlers. Providing food intake with good and appropriate portions will help the process of growth and development of a toddler to be more optimal. So that a toddler will achieve a better level of health (Maharani, Wulandari, & Melina, 2018). Providing health education and counseling can increase parents' knowledge of family health, especially children's health (Noviati et al., 2022).

The prevalence of stunting in babies under five years old (toddlers) in Indonesia in 2015 was 36.4%. This means that more than a third or around 8.8 million toddlers experience nutritional problems where their height is below the standard for their age. This stunting is above the threshold set by WHO at 20%. The prevalence of stunting among toddlers in Indonesia is the second highest in the Southeast Asia region, behind Laos, which reaches 43.8%. However, based on the 2017 Nutritional Status Monitoring 26.6% of toddlers experienced stunting. This figure consists of 9.8% in the very short category and 19.8% in the short category (Atala, et al., 2023).

Student's health and nutrition influence their potential development. This is possible to develop in students who are physically and mentally healthy. The potential of healthy students is easier to develop well because it is not affected by existing health obstacles. Student health can start by providing nutritious food and maintaining a healthy environment. Healthy food is food that contains nutrients and vitamins that are beneficial for the body (Adriani & Wirjatmadi, 2013). A healthy school canteen is an activity unit in a school that provides health benefits. Therefore, a healthy canteen must be able to provide healthy main or light meals, which are nutritious, hygienic, and safe for consumption, for students and other school residents. A healthy canteen is a facility, infrastructure, and management that prioritizes fulfilling nutrition according to health standards. Several schools that implement healthy canteen criteria receive School Canteen Food Safety Star award certificates. There are several criteria for a healthy canteen according to BPOM, including: not containing food that contains microbes, not providing food or drinks with bright colors, not providing hard and burnt food, training students to always check packaging labels before buying, and having a hand washing place. (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018) .



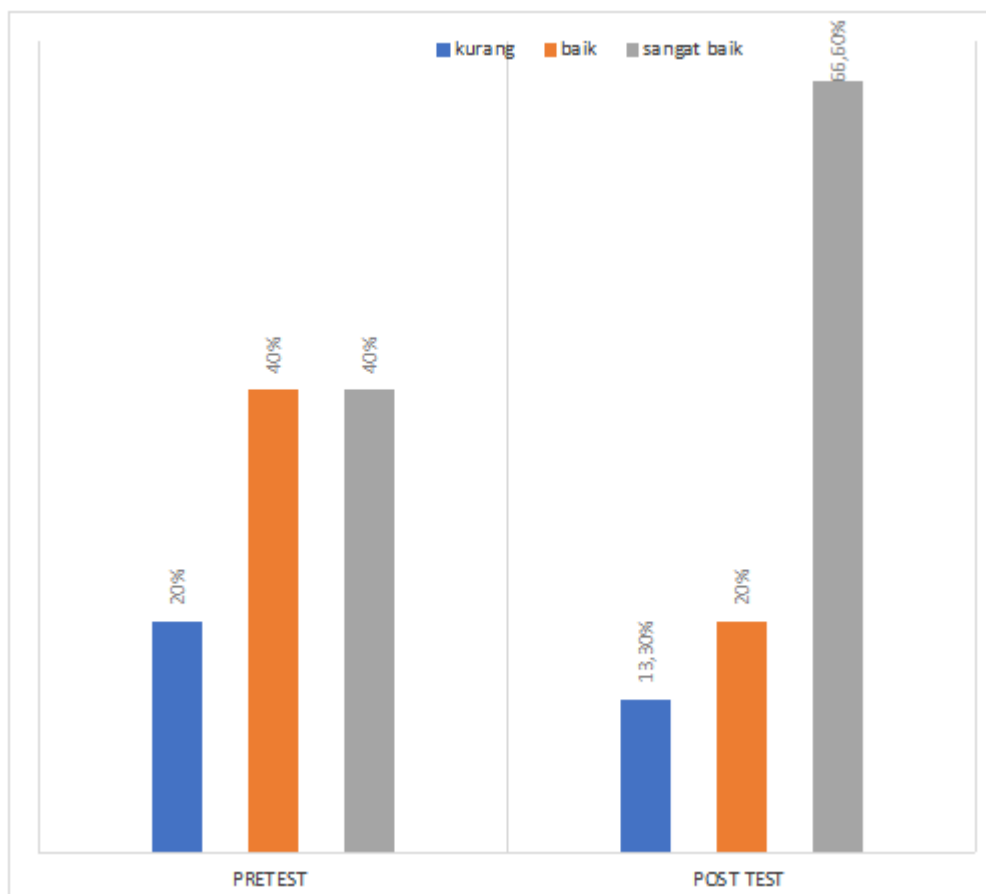
**Figure 1.** Community Service Method

This Community Service includes the preparation stage, including preparing educational tools and media as well as creating and distributing pretest questions. Next, providing education regarding balanced nutrition and healthy canteens to 96 parents, and then a forum discussion activity discussing healthy canteen menus to teachers, headmasters, and deputy leaders of the Soleh Children's Islamic Boarding School Foundation using lecture and question and answer methods. Next, it is closed with post-test activities.

## RESULTS

Most elementary school-age children do not understand the types of healthy food so they need education. Community service accompanied by counseling is expected to be able to provide real understanding and application of types of healthy food to children (Rahmah et al., 2023). Community service is carried out based on evaluations of teachers who want to establish a healthy canteen and aims to educate parents about the importance of balanced nutrition for children's development so that children do not experience problems such as malnutrition, because the role of parents especially mothers, in caring for toddlers determines the conditions of nutrition intake received by the toddler. Therefore, a mother must know how to provide a balanced nutritional intake to her toddler so that the toddler can grow into a healthy child and can grow and develop according to his age. Providing balanced nutrition is an effort to overcome stunting that occurs in toddlers (Maharani, Wulandari, & Melina, 2018).

This activity was carried out from 08.00 – 13.00 on Wednesday, 27 September 2023, the target was 96 parents, and then a group discussion forum was held with teachers, headmaster, and deputy leaders of the PAUD and Kindergarten Foundation at the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School. Karangbanyu Ngawi which was delivered through lecture and question and answer methods.



**Figure 2.** Graph of educational results about balanced nutrition on parents' knowledge

Before being given counseling, a pretest was carried out regarding balanced nutrition. In Figure 2, it is known that before the counseling was given, it was found that parents' knowledge about balanced nutrition was still low, namely 20% poor, 40% good, and 40% very good. In general, the parents of the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi still lack understanding regarding balanced nutrition.

**Table 1.** Results of education about balanced nutrition on parents' knowledge

Knowledge	Before	After	Percentage Increase
	n (%)	n (%)	
Not enough	20%	13.3%	-6.7%
Good	40%	20%	-20%
Very good	40%	66.6%	+26.6%

Furthermore, after providing counseling, it was found that there was an increase in the understanding of the parents of Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi regarding balanced nutrition, namely very good understanding 66.60%, good 20% and less good 13.30% and it was found that the percentage increase increased by 26.6% in Table 1. However, this counseling needs to be provided continuously and sustainably so that parents understand and can know the standards of good food for children and can fulfill balanced nutrition.



**Figure 3.** Process of providing education to parents about balanced nutrition

In carrying out this community service, the aim is to provide education to parents regarding balanced nutrition, where the toddler years are a very important period for the continuation of the very rapid growth and development process, namely physical growth and psychomotor, mental, and social development. Psychosocial stimulation must be started early and on time to achieve optimal psychosocial development. To support the physical growth of toddlers, practical guidance on food with balanced nutrition is needed, one of which is by eating a variety of foods that meet nutritional requirements. Nutritional needs for toddlers include energy, protein, fat, carbohydrates, water, vitamins and minerals.

Nutrition is an important factor in the physical growth and development process of children who are growing and developing. The nutrients needed include breast milk (ASI), energy, protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. In providing nutrition, it is hoped that it will be by a balanced menu pattern and portion sizes adjusted to the child's ability to accept it (Purnamasari, 2022).

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service activities ran smoothly according to the activity schedule and the enthusiasm of the parents and PAUD and Kindergarten teachers at the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi welcomed our arrival and were welcomed in making this activity a success. Before the counseling was given, it was found that parent's knowledge about balanced nutrition was still low, namely 20% poor, 40% good, and 40% very good. In general, the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi's parents still lack an understanding of balanced nutrition. and after being given counseling, it was found that there was an increase in the understanding of the parents of the Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi regarding balanced nutrition, namely very good understanding 66.60%, good 20% and less good 13.30% and it was found that the percentage increase increased by 26.6 %. With this community service activity, the school wants to implement a healthy canteen with a food menu that contains balanced nutrition due to the large number of unhealthy snacks around the school.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## AUTHORS' NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The author ensures that the paper is free from plagiarism.

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APPENDIX



**Figure 4.** Discussion Group Forum with teachers at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi



**Figure 5.** Providing education to parents and taking photos with teachers at Baitul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School Karangbanyu Ngawi