

## Policy Formulation for Handling Stunting Using the Incremental Model in Padang Panjang City, West Sumatra Province

Defi Permata Sari<sup>1</sup>, Asrinaldi<sup>2\*</sup>, Tengku Rika Valentina<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Master Program Students in Political Science at Universitas Andalas, Padang

<sup>2,3</sup>Lecturer at Master Program in Political Science, Universitas Andalas, Padang

\*corresponding author E-mail: [asrinaldi@soc.unand.ac.id](mailto:asrinaldi@soc.unand.ac.id)

*Received: September 12, 2024; Revised: March 1, 2025; Approved: March 31, 2025*

### ABSTRACT

Stunting has become a national issue, as evidenced by the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 concerning implementing the National Strategy for Accelerating the Reduction of Stunting. Although this national action plan has been developed, its implementation at the regional level requires effort. Even stakeholder coordination could have been more optimal, resulting in unmet objectives. This study highlights the importance of selecting an appropriate policy formulation model for addressing stunting, especially at the local level, considering the many stakeholders involved with diverse interests, particularly within government. Few researchers explain how the choice of policy model is made amidst the various alternative models available for government use. This research examines how the Padang Panjang City Government chose to address stunting using the incremental model. The incremental model is often viewed as non-progressive, tending toward the status quo, and reflective of conservative governance. However, the decision by the Padang Panjang City Government to use the incremental model has positively impacted the reduction of stunting prevalence. The key lies in how the Padang Panjang City Government maintains continuity and stability in the policies adopted by the central government, adapting and developing them according to the local community's needs. This study demonstrates that the Padang Panjang City Government achieved continuity and stability in stunting management policies through an incremental approach shaped by four key variables: consensus and compromise, monitoring and evaluation, resource optimization, and resistance to radical changes. Using a qualitative case study method, data were gathered from interviews with key informants and document reviews. The findings emerged through a systematic process of coding and categorization, highlighting how incremental adjustments effectively reinforced policy sustainability over time.

**Keywords:** Incremental Model, Stunting, Continuity, Policy, Local Government.

## INTRODUCTION

Policy formulation is part of the complex functioning of government administration. The policy actors involved in stunting management in Padang Panjang City are diverse, including local government officials, policymakers, public health professionals, and community leaders. Each of these stakeholders plays a crucial role in the policy formulation process, with their various interests reflected in the agreed-upon agenda setting (Rosenbloom et al., 2022). This study explains the policy formulation for addressing stunting in Padang Panjang City. Stunting has become a national issue and requires the attention of local governments. This is evidenced by the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 concerning the implementation of the National Strategy for Accelerating the Reduction of Stunting, which includes developing a national action plan that focuses on families at risk of stunting. Although this national action plan has been formulated, its implementation is challenging. Even coordination among relevant stakeholders has not been optimal, so the expected goals have not yet been achieved (Gitiyarko, 2022).

In Padang Panjang City, West Sumatra Province, the management of stunting has demonstrated significant success. This was accomplished by evaluating previous stunting management policies and adopting existing strategies to maintain the continuity and stability of these policies in accordance with the conditions of the Padang Panjang community. The Padang Panjang City Government adopted the Regulation of the National Population and Family Planning Board of the Republic of Indonesia No. 12 of 2021 concerning the National Action Plan for Reducing Stunting in Indonesia for 2021–2024. The Padang Panjang City Government further adapted this by issuing Mayor of Padang Panjang Regulation No. 47 of 2022 on the Acceleration of Stunting Prevention and Reduction in Padang Panjang City for 2022–2024. The Padang Panjang City Government recognises that employing the incremental model is the "safest" policy formulation model for addressing stunting. This is evidenced by the decrease in the stunting rate from 19.05%

in 2019 to 15.49% in 2023.

The programs outlined in this policy include several initiatives created by the city government, such as the Stunting Child Foster Parent Program (Basunting Program), the Nutrition Post Program, the National Nutrition Movement, and the Growth and Development Clinic Innovation Program to Prevent Stunting (Sikamek Ceting). Through these programs, the Padang Panjang City Government achieved third place in the progress of the Stunting Reduction Action Upload at the provincial level in West Sumatra (Maulina, 2022). Additionally, the Padang Panjang City Government made policy breakthroughs to address stunting by formulating a policy model that elaborates on the national-level pillars of stunting prevention into a city-level stunting meeting policy and by signing memorandums of understanding with stakeholders. The incremental model chosen by the Padang Panjang City Government is considered effective. The Padang Panjang City Government recognises that utilising the incremental model is the "safest" policy formulation model for addressing stunting.

This article examines the rationale behind the Padang Panjang City Government's adoption of the incremental policy model to reduce stunting prevalence. The choice was not incidental but rooted in two core considerations. First, the local government prioritised effective policy choices over untested innovations, which were perceived to carry a higher risk of failure. Consequently, the incremental model was deemed a safer and more practical approach for achieving measurable outcomes in stunting reduction. Second, by drawing on successful practices from other regions guided by national policy frameworks, Padang Panjang adapted these interventions to the specific socio-cultural characteristics of its local population. While health-based interventions have long been central to stunting policy, the findings suggest that sustainable impact requires broader community engagement, including actively cultivating stakeholder consensus and commitment. To explore these assumptions, the article addresses the following central

research question: How has the Padang Panjang City Government operationalised the incremental model in its efforts to reduce stunting rates?

Governments are experienced in creating, implementing, and evaluating development programs. It is widely acknowledged that development programs cannot be abruptly or radically altered, even when challenges emerge during implementation. Instead, careful and gradual improvements are preferred. For local governments, adopting an incremental model in policymaking is a rational choice, offering simplicity, sustainability, evolution, and ease of development, thus facilitating broader stakeholder acceptance (Hulu, 2023; Nugroho, 2020). The model emphasizes reviewing previous policies to inform new ones, yet evaluations are often neglected despite their vital role in identifying success factors (Lindblom, 1980).

The incremental model is considered the safest among various policy models, as it introduces gradual improvements without dismantling existing frameworks, thereby minimising conflict (Lestari et al., 2021). In contrast, the institutional model prioritises organisational stability but lacks responsiveness; the process model captures political dynamics but neglects rational analysis; and the elite model emphasizes elites over public participation. Similarly, the rational choice model is rigid, while other models like game theory, public choice, system, democratic, strategic, and deliberative models each present critical limitations in responsiveness, inclusiveness, or efficiency (Knill and Tosun, 2020; Hill and Varone, 2021; Schaffer et al., 2021).

In developing countries such as Indonesia, the incremental model has demonstrated notable effectiveness, particularly in stunting reduction efforts in Padang Panjang City. While incremental policymaking is often seen as limited and insufficiently innovative, the practical outcomes in Padang Panjang indicate otherwise. Rather than hindering progress, the gradual and adaptive nature of incrementalism facilitated steady improvements, fostered broad stakeholder support, and minimized political disruption. This evidence highlights that, when appropriately applied, incremental approaches can be

viable and highly effective in achieving meaningful policy results, thereby offering a valuable alternative to more radical or comprehensive policy models in complex local governance environments.

Nonetheless, criticisms of the incremental model persist. It is seen as insufficiently responsive to urgent change and uninnovative, tending to perpetuate old policies with only minor adjustments. For instance, studies of local e-government initiatives in the United States reveal that incremental changes often result in one-way communication without fostering transformation (Norris & Reddick, 2012). The incremental model has been criticized for failing to fully support dynamic and innovative governance, which highlights the need for organizations to adapt their goals in response to environmental changes.

Despite its limitations, the incremental model remains a strategic choice for local governments. It enables policy implementation within an established framework, facilitating minor yet continuous improvements without disrupting ongoing programs (Asrinaldi & Yoserizal, 2019; Syahrudin, 2019). Bureaucratic tendencies to maintain policy continuity ensure that new developments build upon existing efforts. In this sense, local governments make “smart” choices that align with organizational goals (cf. Wu et al., 2015). Furthermore, incrementalism reduces political tensions by accommodating feedback, such as from local parliaments (DPRD), without substantially altering policy substance.

Fear of failure and potential negative societal impacts make incrementalism an attractive option. Local governments often emulate successful strategies from other jurisdictions, making adjustments that suit their specific contexts (Mawardi, 2023). This gradual approach minimizes errors and facilitates rapid corrections, which is crucial in addressing complex local governance challenges.

However, the cautious nature of incrementalism can hinder innovation. Constraints related to time, resources, and public demands further limit

governments' ability to adopt alternative models (cf. Hayes, 2001). Moreover, few studies have explored how incremental models integrate variables and sub-variables to sustain the continuity and stability of modified policies. While incrementalism has often been criticized for its limitations, such critiques have largely overlooked the contextual adaptability of the model in certain governance settings. Lindblom (1979) acknowledged that incrementalism may neglect the need for larger, fundamental reforms, and Hogwood and Gunn (1984) warned that it risks institutionalizing existing inequalities by discouraging substantial change. However, the case of Padang Panjang City demonstrates that these weaknesses are not universally applicable. In the management of stunting reduction programs, incremental policymaking proved to be dynamic, adaptive, and effective, suggesting that under specific conditions—such as strong evaluation mechanisms, consensus-building, and careful resource optimization—the incremental model can overcome its perceived limitations. This study, therefore, addresses a significant gap in the literature by showing how incrementalism, when strategically implemented, can achieve substantial policy outcomes even in the face of complex social problems.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study research method. According to Thomas (2021), case study research is a qualitative approach to exploring a case within a bounded system or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time. The most important aspect of this case study method is the detailed and in-depth data collection, which also involves various sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports) and reporting on case descriptions and case-based themes (Sena, 2023). Therefore, the case study method is appropriate, as it draws on successfully reducing stunting rates in Padang Panjang City, West Sumatra Province.

The data for this research is categorized into two main parts. The first part consists of primary data collected through fieldwork, which involved conducting in-depth interviews with a purposively selected group of informants. This selection process utilised the snowball sampling method. The second part includes supplementary primary data, enriched with secondary data from prior studies published in scholarly journals, books, conference proceedings, and other academic publications, enhancing analytical depth. This study involves 14 informants who represent a variety of institutions, including government officials from the Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Padang Panjang City, the Health Office of Padang Panjang City, the Social Service Office of Padang Panjang City, Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) in Padang Panjang City, the Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP PKK) of Padang Panjang City, as well as members of the general public.

Data analysis involves coding field data based on transcriptions and organizing the collected information. In this study, interview data was analysed through dynamic and reflective stages of coding and categorization. After completing the interviews, all recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researcher thoroughly read through the entire transcripts to capture the nuances and meanings of the informants' experiences. In the initial stage, crucial segments from the informants' statements were assigned labels or codes, consisting of key words or short phrases that reflected each statement's essence. These codes were not imposed based on a pre-existing framework; rather, they were allowed to emerge naturally from the data (data-driven), following the principle of open coding. Once the coding was finished, the researcher began to group similar codes into preliminary categories based on thematic similarities. The categories were continuously refined through repeated readings of the data, constant comparisons between categories, and careful consideration of the relationships among emerging themes. Thus, the coding and categorisation process was not merely a technical procedure but

an integral part of the meaning-making process, forming a crucial foundation for the subsequent analysis and drawing of conclusions in this study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Padang Panjang City Government is part of the local government administration in Indonesia, which, through decentralization, manages its affairs based on the principle of autonomy. Padang Panjang City is situated in a highland area with a rolling topography, characterized by gently sloping terrain, with 21% of its total area, or 2,300 hectares, having slopes below 15%. The remainder consists of hilly, steep, and landslide-prone areas. Administratively, Padang Panjang City is divided into two sub-districts: Padang Panjang Barat (West Padang Panjang), covering an area of 975 hectares divided into eight urban villages (kelurahan), and Padang Panjang Timur (East Padang Panjang), which encompasses an area of 1,325 hectares and also comprises eight urban villages. The governance of Padang Panjang City operates under Law No. 23 of 2014 on regional governance, functioning as a small city in Indonesia. The Padang Panjang City Government has accomplished numerous achievements by learning from policies implemented by other governments through in-depth studies. For instance, its success in tackling stunting is attributed to applying the incremental model.

The incremental policy-making model used for stunting began with the evaluation and adoption of existing policies by the Padang Panjang City Government, which were then developed gradually. This policy adoption was based on prior government initiatives addressing stunting, which were subsequently adapted through staged policy development. In this adoption process, the Padang Panjang City Government also made minor modifications informed by feedback from the initial policy implementation. Several refinements were made to ensure the stunting intervention policy could be implemented and assessed for further improvements.

Adopting the incremental policy model was driven by consideration of the potential failure to achieve the desired reduction in stunting rates.



Accordingly, implementing this model supported the Padang Panjang City Government's efforts to maintain stunting at a manageable level. Nevertheless, its application was adapted to local conditions by taking into account the compromises and consensus established among involved actors, ensuring consistent monitoring and evaluation, optimizing available resources to support implementation, and limiting the scope for radical changes to existing policies.

The Padang Panjang City Government's approach to policy formulation exemplifies the logic of incrementalism as a strategy for minimizing risk while promoting programmatic continuity. Instead of radically overhauling stunting intervention policies, the government has adopted a gradual adaptation process rooted in modifying existing frameworks from other regions. This method allows flexibility in aligning national directives with local needs and conditions, ensuring that stunting interventions remain contextually relevant and operationally feasible.

A key institutional innovation in this regard is the establishment of the Stunting Acceleration Team (TPPS) under Mayor Regulation No. 47 of 2022, which contextualizes Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 and Regulation No. 12 of 2021 from the National Population and Family Planning Board. These national frameworks emphasize a region-specific implementation model, urging local governments to devise tailored responses to the stunting crisis.

In Padang Panjang, this translation into local policy materializes through prioritized programs such as the Supplementary Food Program (PMT), which targets nutritionally vulnerable groups including pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under two years old. The incremental nature of this policy lies not only in its targeted interventions but also in the simultaneous enhancement of food quality through a Food Fortification Program, systematically improving the micronutrient content in widely consumed staples.

Moreover, the local government reinforces service delivery through a Home Visit Program aimed at strengthening maternal and child health monitoring. This initiative is accompanied by structured training for healthcare personnel, enhancing early detection and treatment capacity within community settings. Educational and behavioural change components are also foundational to this policy framework. For instance, nutritional awareness campaigns are conducted at neighbourhood levels (RT/RW) and integrated into school curricula, demonstrating a systemic effort to embed stunting prevention across multiple domains of public life.

Significantly, the government's strategy extends beyond formal state mechanisms. The involvement of civil society actors, NGOs, private sector entities, and informal community leaders highlights the multi-stakeholder nature of stunting reduction efforts. This pluralistic and inclusive approach demonstrates a nuanced understanding that stunting is not merely a health issue but a governance challenge requiring collective action across sectors and social groups.

### **Variables Affecting Stability And Sustainability In The Incremental Model**

One advantage of implementing the incremental model in policy-making is its stability and sustainability, which are favoured by governments, especially those at the local level. In line with this, the Padang Panjang City Government has strategically chosen the incremental policy approach to address the stunting issue. This aligns with the form of governance outlined in Law No. 23 of 2014 on regional governance, which mentions concurrent functions carried out jointly by regional and central governments (Said, 2015). The city government's aim is to avoid policy failures in handling stunting, thus opting to maintain the sustainability and stability of existing policies.

Interestingly, the Padang Panjang City Government focuses on several critical variables within this incremental model to effectively address stunting. This focus aims to continuously enhance the existing stunting handling policies.

First, the incremental model prioritizes consensus and compromise among stakeholders to address the stunting issue. Other actors involved include the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Padang Panjang City, which aligns with the DPRD's role in overseeing the implementation of policies by the Padang Panjang City Government. The stunting handling policy is detailed in the Regional Action Plan (RAD), which is implemented using a high-risk family approach and formalized through a Mayor's Decree. The local government receives information about RAD preparation from the central government, directly led by Bappenas. Based on this, proposals regarding indicators, objectives, and targets are discussed at the national level, involving various agencies, ministries, civil society organizations, and academics. The RAD is prepared through consensus and compromise, starting with activities such as Focus Group Discussions, meetings, and socializations that involve government and non-government stakeholders to produce achievement variables and indicators related to the implemented policy (cf. Dwiyanto, 2022: 18-19).

The RAD, resulting from the compromise and consensus among all involved actors, is not just a document but a living, breathing policy. It is supported by Special Allocation Funds (DAK) from BKKBN West Sumatra, amounting to IDR 1,726,274,000 for stunting mitigation. At the grassroots level, health centers (Puskesmas) throughout Padang Panjang City implement this policy's compromise and consensus. These health centers, with their active promotion of Nutritional Posts and Supplementary Feeding Programs (PMT), are the frontline warriors in the battle against malnutrition and stunting. Their efforts in educating the community on stunting issues and providing supplementary food to families experiencing stunting for ten days are invaluable.

In practice, all stakeholders are firmly committed to implementing the policies, such as health centres (Puskesmas) and Integrated Service Posts (Posyandu), which focus more on preventing and managing stunting. Various

programs and innovations are directly engaged with family life within each Working Group (Pokja) formed to detail the results of agreements and compromises for the sustainability of the established policies. Among the innovations developed at the Pokja level are the Centiga Asik Topung Program (Prevent stunting with exclusive breastfeeding and back acupuncture) and the Gijah Lenteng Program (Active and outstanding mother movement to prevent stunting).

The Padang Panjang City Government rapidly adapts when issues arise with the implementation of stunting management policies. Consistent with the incremental policy model, this approach provides the Padang Panjang City Government the flexibility to select and modify alternative stunting management policies. For example, the Padang Panjang City Government has developed several policy alternatives that can be applied based on available resources and the existing policy environment. These alternatives include nutrition education programs targeting families and communities, health interventions specifically for mothers and children, providing food supplements to vulnerable children, and improving access to healthcare services through infrastructure enhancements and sufficient healthcare personnel. This approach ensures that each policy alternative is relevant, effectively implemented, and efficiently executable in Padang Panjang.

Indeed, governments often face limitations in the available alternatives for producing policies that are relevant to all. Therefore, policy analysts evaluate and adjust the available policy options to meet the existing objectives (Kraft & Furlong, 2013). The choice of alternatives is also closely linked to monitoring and evaluating the stunting management policy, ensuring the stability and sustainability of the desired policy. The alternatives produced through this process are democratic, involving a stunting forum with various stakeholders, such as local government, the Health Office, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, academics, and the private sector.

Together, they discuss and formulate concrete steps to address stunting in Padang Panjang.

The process begins with preparation and gathering current data on the stunting situation, followed by focus group discussions that produce policy recommendations and intervention programs. The results of these discussions are presented in a plenary session for joint agreement, after which an action plan is developed. This plan includes specific programs such as nutrition interventions, improvements in healthcare services, education, and sanitation enhancement. The plan is implemented with regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure effectiveness and a positive impact. The process concludes with reporting results and follow-up for necessary program adjustments to reduce stunting prevalence in Padang Panjang. This reality illustrates how consensus and compromise are achieved when selecting policies from the many available alternatives as part of the improvement efforts. It is a crucial aspect of the incremental model chosen by the Padang Panjang City Government to maximize policy performance. Moreover, the limited resources and the need for swift action make the city government pragmatic in addressing the stunting issue.

Second, the incremental model prioritizes regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that changes are implemented without causing more significant impacts. The Padang Panjang City Government understands this context and focuses on reducing stunting by adjusting existing policies to local conditions. This pragmatic strategy has indeed made a significant impact on reducing stunting rates. By integrating the city government's policies with Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 on Accelerating Stunting Reduction, the city government can oversee and implement Mayor Regulation No. 47 of 2022 on Strategies for Accelerating Stunting Reduction. Monitoring and evaluating policies is a crucial stage in the incremental policy formulation model, aiming to assess previously identified policy options. At this stage, each alternative is

evaluated based on specific criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, political feasibility, and sustainability.

The monitoring and evaluation of policy alternatives by the Padang Panjang City Government occur every three months, involving all Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPDs). During these evaluations, data from October, November, and December are analyzed to assess the progress in accelerating stunting reduction. The purpose of this monitoring and evaluation is to intervene to reduce stunting rates in the area. The monitoring and evaluation aim to identify the causes and weaknesses of the strategies employed so that they can be improved and enhanced in the next period (Divayana, 2018). The evaluation process involves collecting empirical data and conducting in-depth analysis to understand the potential impacts of each policy. This analysis includes assessing both positive and negative impacts and taking into account unintended consequences. After the study, policy alternatives are compared to determine the option most aligned with the goals and needs. The results of this evaluation are used to formulate policy recommendations based on evidence and thorough analysis, and to provide feedback that can be used to revise and improve the evaluated policy alternatives.

Third, the stability and sustainability of this policy are reflected in the success of the Padang Panjang City Government in managing available resources, despite their limitations. For example, programs such as providing supplementary food (PMT) or nutrition education, which have proven effective, continue with minor adjustments based on evaluation results. The incremental model is chosen due to limited funding sources and healthcare personnel for implementing new programs that entail significant costs. The Padang Panjang City Government favours the incremental model as it emphasizes gradual changes informed by previous policies. The success of these policies provides a strong foundation for continuing and adjusting existing programs, such as supplementary food provision and nutrition education. Furthermore, the Padang Panjang City Government conducts

regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure the policy remains relevant and effectively reduces stunting.

The incremental model allows for a more efficient use of resources. Instead of incurring significant costs for radical changes that may not succeed, the government can leverage existing resources and focus on interventions that have already proven effective. Uncontrolled costs also pose a challenge, as reliance on funds from OPDs, without additional efforts from sub-districts to seek donors, results in budget limitations that hinder the comprehensive implementation of programs. The inability to provide nutritious food for children can lead to long-term health issues, with stunting emerging as a problem that needs immediate attention. Therefore, the choice of sustainability and stability in implementing programs to reduce stunting, as the Padang Panjang City Government chose, is consistent with the incremental model (cf. Bochel and Bochel, 2018: 44-46).

Fourth is the variable of resistance to radical changes, which holds that opting for the incremental model can reduce policy failures that arise from fundamental changes. Essentially, government policies are designed to address societal problems. This policy implies that the main guarantee from the government, as policymakers, is that implementing these policies does not create new, more significant problems. Instead of resolving issues with new policies, governments might inadvertently create more critical problems, leading to worse consequences. Therefore, the incremental model can help prevent additional negative impacts from policy changes (Nugroho, 2020, pp. 39-42).

The same applies to the Padang Panjang City Government, which strives to utilize existing policies and continuously evaluate them to improve solutions addressing stunting issues in the city. To this end, the Padang Panjang City Government carefully reidentifies policies that can be used and reapplied after making appropriate adjustments to meet current needs. The policy identification conducted by the Padang Panjang City Government

involves exploring various action options previously implemented in response to specific issues or problems. The main goal is to find the most effective, efficient, politically, and socially acceptable solutions for the community. In this context, revisiting and refining existing policies is relevant, considering and adjusting them according to problem-solving scenarios supported by valid data within the incremental model.

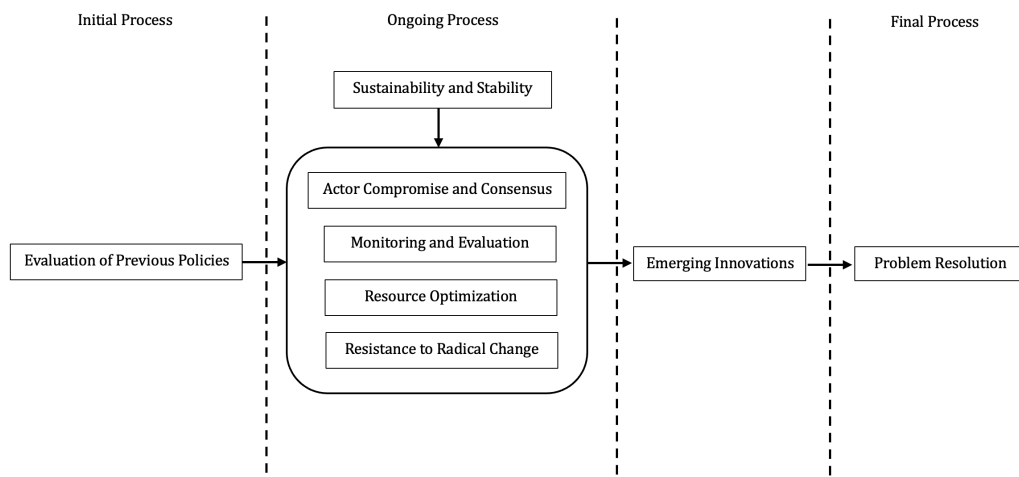
During the problem identification phase, the incremental model emphasizes the importance of a gradual and collaborative understanding of the issues. This understanding is implemented through the Electronic Community-Based Nutritional Recording and Reporting (e-PPGBM) system, which is accessible to relevant stakeholders, ensuring that the policies created are suitable for the conditions in Padang Panjang. This condition aligns with the incremental model's principle that problem identification begins not with searching for ideal solutions but with the observation and evaluation of existing policies, such as through Focus Group Discussions that address regional conditions and analyze past policies.

Through the incremental model, data is managed in an integrated manner, allowing for the tracking and reporting of community nutrition related to the prevalence of stunting in Padang Panjang. The variable emphasizing resistance to radical data changes in evaluating policy sustainability and stability has yielded significant results in reducing stunting rates quickly. Moreover, in the incremental model, this analysis is not aimed at seeking radical changes but rather at finding ways to improve existing policies through gradual adjustments (Nugroho, 2020). For example, based on e-PPGBM data in December 2023, the prevalence of stunting was 15.49%. However, through the application of the incremental policy model with several implemented programs, it decreased to 12.83% by April 2024.

Thus, the four variables mentioned above are crucial in determining the sustainability and stability of implementing this incremental model by the Padang Panjang City Government. The interrelation of these four variables



underscores that the choice of the Padang Panjang City Government's choice to use this incremental model is appropriate for addressing the stunting issue in the city. Briefly, Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between each variable, which can be constructed into a model and projected for similar cases in various regions across Indonesia.



**Figure 1.** Determinants of Policy Sustainability and Stability in Padang Panjang City

The proposed model underscores that the viability of the incremental policy approach fundamentally depends on the presence of compromise and consensus among policy actors, not only during the formulation stage but also throughout implementation. This negotiated alignment among stakeholders typically begins with a shared recognition of the need to sustain existing policy trajectories, albeit with necessary adaptations that reflect evolving contextual demands. The emphasis on preserving continuity while avoiding abrupt or radical changes forms the normative core of incrementalism and highlights its pragmatic value in politically plural and administratively constrained environments.

Moreover, the model posits that the success of incremental policy implementation hinges on the consistency and rigor of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms across all execution stages. Rather than treating

evaluation as an auxiliary function, the model integrates it as a central process to ensure the gradual alignment of policy outcomes with intended objectives. This reinforces the principle that incremental change requires constant feedback loops to maintain coherence and responsiveness.

Equally important is the strategic mobilization of available resources to support the operationalization of this model. The effectiveness of incremental policymaking depends not only on its design but also on actors' ability to optimize existing institutional, financial, and human capital. In this sense, the model advances an understanding of incrementalism as not just a political or procedural choice but also as a capacity-sensitive strategy that thrives on adaptive governance and collective ownership.

## CONCLUSION

This article outlines how the incremental model applied in Padang Panjang has demonstrated significant success. Although there is criticism that the incremental model does not foster innovation in programs, this pragmatic choice has driven satisfactory development performance. In the case of Padang Panjang, the incremental policy model was not only a rational choice but also a strategic adaptation to the political and institutional dynamics at the local level. The success of stunting reduction efforts in the city demonstrates how incrementalism can be effectively employed when grounded in sustained consensus among policy actors, particularly through a shared commitment to maintaining continuity while implementing adaptive changes. Rather than introducing radical policy shifts, local actors prioritized gradual modifications informed by local needs and conditions. The city government's emphasis on consistent monitoring and evaluation, combined with the strategic use of available human, financial, and institutional resources, illustrates how incrementalism, often criticized for its lack of innovation, can in fact offer a coherent and responsive framework for managing complex public issues in developing contexts.

In addressing stunting in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra Province, the local government adopted the incremental model, which supports program adaptation and flexibility. This approach is evident in the stunting management process through the incremental model, enabling the Padang Panjang City Government to continuously evaluate and gradually enhance previous policies while tackling specific issues that arise during implementation. The policy's sustainability and stability, despite resource constraints, have contributed to the success of the Padang Panjang City Government in reducing stunting. Policy recommendations for improvements are paired with strategies that incorporate innovations aimed at reducing stunting. Through the stability and sustainability inherent in the incremental model selected by the Padang Panjang City Government, they have successfully lowered stunting rates.

This study challenges common critiques of Lindblom's incremental model, which is often viewed as rigid and lacking transformative capacity. By examining the case of stunting reduction in Padang Panjang, it demonstrates that incrementalism can be effective in urgent policy contexts. The model's success here lies in its ability to facilitate timely responses through consensus and compromise among key actors. This collective commitment allows stakeholders to implement policies efficiently, countering the assumption that incrementalism is too slow or inadequate for emergency situations.

These findings suggest that the success of incrementalism is not solely determined by the model's internal logic but is also highly contingent upon political cohesion, actor commitment, and institutional coordination. Therefore, this study contributes to the theoretical refinement of incremental policy-making by situating it within a more dynamic, context-sensitive framework, emphasizing its potential effectiveness in localized governance systems that face urgent developmental challenges.

This article affirms that the incremental model is not merely a choice, but rather an effective model for addressing the stunting issue in Padang

Panjang. This approach provides more responsive policy adjustments, reduces risk, and improves resource efficiency, despite drawbacks such as slow processes and limited innovation. The justification for using the incremental model is backed by empirical evidence and analysis demonstrating its success in the local context.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The researcher extends gratitude to DRTPM-DITJEN DIKTI RISTEK, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, for funding this Master's Thesis Research under Contract Number 041/E5/PG.02.00.PL/2024 for the year 2024.

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