



The Role of Lurah Bumi Ayu in Improving Public Health

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Abstract: Public health is a fundamental pillar of regional development as it directly affects the quality of life, productivity, and social welfare of the community. At the local level, the village head (lurah) plays a strategic role in encouraging community participation and coordinating public health programs. This Community Service Program (PKM) aims to analyze the role of the village head in improving public health through a public administration approach in Bumi Ayu Subdistrict, Dumai City. The methods applied in this program include counseling, training, simulation, and free health screening services using an educational approach. The activity was conducted on July 20, 2024, at STIA Lancang Kuning Campus and involved more than 100 participants from various community groups. The results indicate an increased public awareness of the importance of regular health check-ups and early detection of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, and uric acid disorders. In addition, the program strengthened the roles of the village heads, Posyandu cadres, and PKK members in supporting community health services. The discussion reveals that the success of public health programs at the subdistrict level is strongly influenced by participatory, collaborative, and responsive local leadership. This PKM activity is expected to serve as a model for strengthening the role of local government in promoting sustainable community health development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public health is a key pillar of regional development because it directly impacts the quality of life, productivity, and social well-being of the community. Health development relies not only on the provision of medical services but also emphasizes promotive and preventive efforts involving active community participation and the support of effective public policies (Febrianto et al., 2024; Monica, 2024). Low public awareness of clean and healthy living behaviors remains a serious challenge, leading to an increased prevalence of non-communicable and infectious diseases such as stroke, heart disease, and tuberculosis.

In this context, the government plays a strategic role in formulating and implementing public health policies down to the level closest to residents, namely the sub-district. As the lowest administrative level, the sub-district head plays a crucial role as a liaison between the local government and the community in implementing health programs. The sub-district head's role extends beyond administrative functions to coordinating, facilitating, and educating others in encouraging community participation in health programs (Nurhayati et al., 2024; Jannah et al., 2024).

Theoretically, a role is understood as a set of expectations and behaviors inherent in a particular social position (Latip & Malahayati, 2024; Mirza et al., 2023). From a role theory perspective, village heads are expected to effectively carry out their prescribed roles, while avoiding role conflict and role failure in carrying out their duties (Suhardono, 2016). When village heads are able to carry out their roles optimally, they can become agents of change (role models) who encourage the community to care more about environmental and personal health.

Public health itself is understood as an organized collective effort to protect, promote, and improve the health of a population through preventive, promotive, and collaborative approaches (WHO; Turnock in Dadang et al., nd). This definition emphasizes that the success of health programs depends heavily on the involvement of various stakeholders, including local governments and communities. Therefore, the role of village heads is crucial in mobilizing citizen participation, coordinating health services, and ensuring community access to available health facilities and programs.

In facing increasingly complex public health challenges due to social, economic, and environmental factors, the effectiveness of village head leadership is crucial to the success of health interventions at the sub-district level. Village heads who are able to identify community health needs, establish cross-sector collaboration, and foster collective awareness of the importance of healthy living have the potential to reduce disease risk and improve residents' quality of life sustainably (Wibowo et al., 2022; Moku et al., 2021).

Local government leadership, including that of the village head, must be grounded in strategic planning that is based on community needs, empirical evidence, and coordination among stakeholders so that development programs—particularly in public health—can produce tangible and sustainable impacts (Bryson, 2018). The effectiveness of public health improvement largely depends on managerial capacity, governance quality, and the ability of village governments to manage resources and build responsive collaboration with the community, ensuring that the role of the village head is not merely normative but implemented in practice (Edwards, 2011). Furthermore, active community participation facilitated by village leadership has been shown to strengthen policy legitimacy, improve the alignment of health interventions with local needs, and enhance the sustainability of health outcomes at the community level (Rifkin, 2014).

2. METHOD

This Community Service (PKM) activity was held at Jl. Gunung Merapi No. 1, Bumi Ayu Village, South Dumai District, Dumai City, located at the STIA Lancang Kuning Campus. The activity was held on Saturday, July 20, 2024, starting at 08.30 WIB until finished. The implementation of the activity involved a team of STIA Lancang Kuning lecturers with the target community of Bumi Ayu Village as participants.

The methods used in this PKM activity are counseling/training and simulations with an educational approach. This counseling method was chosen because it is considered effective in increasing public knowledge, awareness, and understanding of health issues. According to Samsudin (1987), counseling is a non-formal education system aimed at fostering individual awareness and confidence that the knowledge provided can lead to changes that improve existing practices.

In its implementation, this activity utilizes two main communication techniques: informative communication and persuasive communication. Informative communication techniques are used to convey information and provide participants with an understanding of the role of village heads in improving public health, public service policies in the health sector, and the importance of clean and healthy living behaviors. Meanwhile, persuasive communication techniques are applied to encourage participants to be receptive to ideas, build awareness, and actively participate in efforts to improve public health in accordance with the objectives of the PKM activity.

Through this communicative approach, activities are designed to foster active, constructive, and conducive social interactions between the PKM team and participants. This interaction is expected to encourage active community participation and strengthen understanding of the material presented.

The stages of implementing the activity include several steps, namely: (1) introductions between the PKM team and activity participants, (2) presentation of material by resource persons regarding the role of the village head and public services in the health sector, (3) delivery of the latest information regarding public services and community health programs, (4) question and answer sessions and interactive discussions, and (5) closing in the form of group photos and friendly gatherings as a form of strengthening social relations between the implementation team and participants.

The PKM program targets various strategic groups in Bumi Ayu Village, including village heads and village officials, Posyandu cadres, PKK groups, LPMK and Karang Taruna, community and religious leaders, and the general public. This diverse target group aims to ensure that PKM activities reach various levels of society and encourage collective awareness of the importance of health, while empowering the community to actively participate in health improvement efforts within Bumi Ayu Village.

3. RESULTS

The Community Service program, which included free health check-ups at STIA Lancang Kuning, Bumi Ayu Village, South Dumai District, positively impacted the health and awareness of the local community. The enthusiasm of the residents was evident in the attendance of more than 100 people of various ages who took advantage of this free health service. This high level of participation demonstrates a growing public understanding of the importance of regular health check-ups, especially for those who previously had difficulty accessing health facilities.

One of the main successes of this activity was the early detection of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, and gout. The screening results revealed that approximately 20% of participants had results that required further attention, particularly regarding blood pressure and sugar levels. This enabled at-risk residents to take immediate preventive measures and receive referrals for further treatment. This early detection helped residents better understand and manage their health conditions. These health screenings strengthened the role of village heads, health cadres, and Family Welfare Movement (PKK) members, who actively assisted with the screening and education process. Their involvement improved their skills in basic health care, making them crucial supporters of daily community health services.

The success of this activity helped build collective awareness among residents of the importance of regular health check-ups, fully supported by the Head of Bumi Ayu Village and the village apparatus team. This program not only provided immediate benefits but also strengthened community trust in the village government as the primary supporter of community health. 14 As a follow-up, the village plans a sustainable health program, such as routine health check-ups every three months, nutrition counseling, and joint sports activities. Through this ongoing program, it is hoped that residents will maintain their commitment to health and work together to build a healthier environment in Bumi Ayu Village.

4. DISCUSSION

The implementation of Community Service (PKM) activities in Bumi Ayu Village demonstrates the strategic role of the village head in improving public health through a participatory public administration approach. The results demonstrate that the village head functions not only as an administrative leader but also as a facilitator, coordinator, and motivator in mobilizing the community to actively participate in health programs. This finding aligns with the role concept, which emphasizes that individual behavior is strongly influenced by social expectations and responsibilities inherent in one's position in society (Latip & Malahayati, 2024; Mirza et al., 2023).

Discussions during the Community Service Program (PKM) activities demonstrated that the effectiveness of health programs at the village level depends heavily on the village head's ability to fulfill his or her prescribed role, particularly in establishing effective communication with the community and relevant stakeholders. Village heads who are able to coordinate Posyandu (Integrated Health Post) cadres, the Family Welfare Movement (PKK), community leaders, and youth through the Karang Taruna (Youth Organization) tend to be more successful in fostering collective awareness of the importance of clean and healthy living behaviors. This reinforces the view that implementing public health policies requires local leadership that is adaptive and responsive to community needs (Wibowo et al., 2022).

The outreach and training approach used in this PKM activity proved effective in increasing participants' understanding of public health and the role of the village government. Through informative communication techniques, participants gained basic knowledge about health policies and programs, while persuasive communication techniques encouraged attitudinal changes and a willingness to actively participate. These findings align with Samsudin's (1987) view that outreach, as non-formal education, can foster individual awareness and confidence to make positive changes.

Furthermore, the discussion results indicated that the involvement of strategic groups such as Posyandu (Integrated Health Post) and PKK (Family Welfare Movement) cadres significantly contributed to direct community outreach. Health cadres are viewed as an extension of the village government in providing education and basic health services. This is in line with the concept of public health, which emphasizes the importance of collective and collaborative efforts between the government and the community in preventing disease and improving quality of life (WHO; Turnock in Dadang et al., nd).

However, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity also revealed challenges in implementing health programs at the village level, including limited resources, varying levels of public awareness, and the persistent perception that health matters are solely the responsibility of medical personnel. These challenges demonstrate the need to strengthen the role of village heads (lurah) not only in coordination but also in building social awareness and a sense of shared responsibility for environmental health. In this context, village heads act as agents of change, capable of integrating health policies with the social and cultural conditions of the local community (Mokalu et al., 2021; Jannah et al., 2024).

Overall, this Community Service Program (PKM) activity demonstrated that strengthening the role of village heads through public administration and community empowerment approaches is a relevant strategy for improving public health at the village level. The discussions generated not only theoretical understanding but also practical reflections on the importance of synergy between village governments, communities, and educational institutions in realizing sustainable health development.

5. CONCLUSION

The Community Service (PKM) activity, titled "Joint Health Efforts: Free Health Checks in Bumi Ayu Village," was successfully implemented. It was attended by 100 community members. This community service program is expected to serve as a model for other villages in efforts to improve public health, with the village head playing an active role as the primary driver. Effective collaboration between the government, the community, and health institutions will be crucial to the success of local health programs.

Based on the results of the PKM activities, it is recommended that the role of business incubators continue to be strengthened as catalysts for the creation of youth entrepreneurs through policy support and facilitation from the central and regional governments, as well as the development of partnerships between universities, the business world, and the community. Youth in RT 013, Lubuk Gaung Village, Sungai Sembilan District, are expected to continue to improve their technological literacy and digital-based business management skills (go-digital) so they can adapt to the economic dynamics in the era of society 5.0.

Furthermore, community service activities in the field of entrepreneurship need to be carried out sustainably through training programs, consulting, and business mentoring integrated with the business incubator concept. Therefore, lecturers as members of the PKM Team are expected to continuously improve their capacity and understanding of various aspects of entrepreneurship and business development, thereby enabling them to optimally play a role

as facilitators, mentors, and companions for young people in building productive, sustainable businesses oriented toward improving community welfare.

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