

FREE LUNCH FOR STUDENTS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES AND LESSON LEARNED FOR INDONESIA IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE GOLDEN GENERATION 2045

By

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ABSTRACT

Human Resources who are physically healthy, spiritual, intelligent and have integrity are an effort of the Republic of Indonesia to promote public welfare and educate the nation's life as stipulated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, must be carried out continuously, comprehensively and continuously. In this case, the strong commitment of the Government of President Prabowo Subiyanto greatly determines the success of Astacita's programs, one of which is a nutritious meal program for students, toddlers and pregnant women. This is a new program, which must be carefully prepared with adequate resource support, including bench marks to take lessons from the success stories of other countries, such as the United States, France, Japan, South Korea and others.

The design of this study is qualitative descriptive using secondary data from credible publications, which are analyzed qualitatively to describe the phenomenon of the research variables. The results found that the success of other countries in organizing free lunches for students is a human investment program for the state in preparing superior human resources that have been going on for tens or even hundreds of years, have significant benefits in improving the degree of health, quality of human resources and the economy of the community. It is recommended that Indonesia prepare a nutritious lunch program carefully, both in terms of regulations/laws, institutions, human resources to manage, the use of technology and financing so that it is sustainable, not just lasting 5 years.

Key words : Free Lunch, Human Resource Quality, Golden Indonesian Generation 2045

1. INTRODUCTION

That in order to advance the general welfare and educate the nation's life as stipulated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, a strong commitment is needed from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in mutual cooperation by involving the participation of all elements of the nation so that the intended stages and directions can be realized; Moreover, now the Indonesian nation is serving to prepare for the 2045 Golden Generation. The vision and mission should not only be used as political jargon, but more than that, it must be carefully planned and the efforts made to realize it must be carefully planned. A clear roadmap is needed that includes regulations/laws, institutions, Human Resources (HR), technology support and financing. In this case, the Prabowo Subianto Government in its campaign promises will realize Astacita, in which there is a priority program to provide nutritious lunches for students from early childhood education to high school, including food for toddlers and pregnant women. It is also necessary to think about the legal aspect so that the program continues continuously, regardless of who the President is.

Lessons learned from the experience of other countries, such as South Korea, which in 2016 prepared 2.8 billion USD or 0.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to finance the *Universal Free Lunch Program (UFLP)*. The results of this UFLP reduce the percentage of underachieving students and increase the academic grade of students. The impact is universal, including increased participation and spending on non-free after-school programs, where parents use the cost of saved lunches to invest in education. (Kim, 2021)

In the United States, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) has been in place since 1946, with various modifications and focuses including tackling malnutrition. The government provides nutritious, balanced and free or low-cost lunches every school day to 30.4 million students and the regulation or Breastfeeding Act on Healthy and Hunger-Free Children was passed by the United States Congress in 2010. (Izumi, et.al.2018). The School Lunch Program in the United States will benefit from providing a facility for nutritionists to teach nutrition to students and increasing the number of schools involved in Farm to School so that more students have experience with nature (Julie,2024). Japan organized a school lunch project starting about 60 years earlier around 1963 where the content, standards, guidelines, and qualifications of nutrition teachers had been clearly defined by Shokuiku policy for food and nutrition education. In Thailand, the school lunch project

started with budget support and then focused on malnourished and needy children. In 1999, free lunches were expanded to include all elementary school children. In 2008, the National Food Committee was formed, to take care of national food management and food education (Kobayashi and Udimrat,2023).

In France and Japan, the school food program has become a place of bio-politics and gastro-politics which is a project to create a gastro-citizen. In the last fifteen years, public health and education administrators have transformed school food programs to improve nutritional health, food safety, quality, and national culinary traditions (Moffat and Gendron (Ed),2018). A political transformation of school food is needed to reorganize school food as part of the infrastructure of daily life, on the grounds that school food can and must be the vanguard in building a new economy rooted in concern for society and the environment (Gaddis & Roberd (Ed)).

In Norway there is no national management of The School Meal Project, which is an important opportunity to improve the nutritional status of children and adolescents in their physical and cognitive development. The students felt that there was a social event where students made new friends and learned smelly skills, habituated to healthy eating, improved social equality and school functioning (Illokken,et.al.,2021).

The experiences of other countries mentioned above can be used as a *bench mark* and valuable lessons for Indonesia to organize a nutritious lunch program so that it runs smoothly and succeeds according to the expected achievement targets.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to find and describe the variables in a narrative (non-numeric) manner regarding the free lunch program for students in several countries as valuable lessons for Indonesia in preparing for the Golden Generation 2045, including through a nutritious lunch program for students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Free Lunch in Some Countries

Since 1946 the United States Federal Government has organized the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The government provides nutritious, balanced and free or low-cost lunches every school day to 30.4 million students and has passed the Law on Healthy and Hunger-Free Children (Izumi, et.al.2018). Nutritionists are also prepared to teach nutrition to

students and increase the number of schools involved in Farm to School so that more students have experience with nature. (Julie, 2024). In France and Japan, the school food program has become a place of bio-politics and gastro-politics which is a project to create a gastro-citizen. And it has been developed to improve nutritional health, food safety, quality, and national culinary traditions (Moffat and Gendron (Ed),2018).

In Norway there is no national management of The School Meal Project, which is an important opportunity to improve the nutritional status of children and adolescents in their physical and cognitive development. The students felt that there was a social event where students made new friends and learned smelly skills, habituated to healthy eating, improved social equality and school functioning (Illokken, et.al., 2021). School food programs in France and Japan have become bio-political and gastro-political venues that are projects to create gastro-citizens (Moffat & Gendron, 2018). Japan has a certification program that allows dietitians to teach nutrition. Japan also includes agricultural experience as part of its academic curriculum to encourage holistic development in students (Julie, 2024).

In 2016, South Korea prepared 2.8 billion USD or 0.2 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to finance the *Universal Free Lunch Program (UFLP)*. The benefits are many, including being able to improve the academic grades of students, reducing the percentage of underachieving students, helping to reduce parental expenses and being able to increase education investment from cost savings on free lunches (Kim, 2021). The school lunch menu in South Korea, in general, consists of rice, soup, kimchi, side dishes that focus on proteins made from meat, fish or tofu, vegetables or fruits.

In Japan, free lunch is included in Shokukuku's policy for food and nutrition education. In Thailand, the school lunch project started with budget support and then focused on malnourished and needy children. In 1999, free lunches were expanded to include all elementary school children. In 2008, the National Food Committee was formed, to take care of national food management and food education (Kobayashi and Udimrat, 2023). It is necessary to transform school food politics in order to reorganize school food as part of the infrastructure of daily life and build the economy of the community and the environment (Gaddis & Robert (Ed)).

From the experience of various Countries, that School lunches are essential for the health and well-being of students, especially for low-income students—and ensuring that students get the nutrients they need throughout the day to study. Research shows that receiving free or

reduced-priced school lunches reduces food insecurity, obesity rates, and poor health. In addition, the new school food nutrition standards have a positive impact on the selection and consumption of student food, especially fruits and vegetables. (<https://frac.org/programs/national-school-lunch-program/benefits-school-lunch>).

b. Valuable Lessons for Indonesia

Adoption from the good experience of other countries that organize free lunch programs which provide very important benefits for the preparation of human resource quality through the fulfillment of nutritional intake for students that support the health, welfare, and academic achievement of students. Indonesia can take valuable lessons from the experiences of these countries, including: a) improving student nutrition and health; b) Increase attendance at school; c) assistance support for underprivileged families; d) increase the involvement of stakeholders based on the penta helix, in this case involving local farmers to provide foodstuffs, thus creating synergies between education and agriculture; e) Integrating nutrition education in lunch programs; f) Develop a distribution system that ensures access to healthy food throughout the region, including remote areas; and g) All students have equal access to healthy food, reducing stigma for those from underprivileged families. By adapting these elements, Indonesia can develop an effective and sustainable free lunch program, supporting the health and education of students across the country.

c. Preparing for the Golden Indonesia Generation 2045

The nutritious lunch program for Indonesia is a Sustainable Contemporary Public Policy where it must be ensured that this program is carefully prepared between regulations, institutions, human resources management, technology utilization and adequate budgets in one national policy that is integrated with education and health sector policies. It is necessary to encourage and develop the involvement of various stakeholders based *on the helix* (government, academics, industry, society and media).

In relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the nutritious lunch program is an effort to achieve the 1st goal of No poverty; 2nd No hunger; 3rd Healthy and Prosperous Life; and 4th Quality Education. Preparing for the Golden Indonesia in 2045 where the quality of human resources is expected to achieve significant excellence must start as early as possible,

starting from the policy of supporting nutritional intake for pregnant women up to the first 1000 days of birth. The period of the first 1000 days of life includes the time from conception to the child's two years of age. This is a critical period for physical and mental growth and development. Proper nutrition during this period is essential for: a) Physical Growth: Good nutrition supports the growth of bones, muscles, and other body tissues; b) Brain Development: Adequate nutrition, especially omega-3 fatty acids and micronutrients, contributes to optimal brain development. Nutritional intake for pregnant women is very important for maternal health as well as fetal growth and health, reducing the risk of malnutrition/stunting, improving long-term health, and providing a solid foundation for future generations. Investing in nutrition in this critical period will bring great benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATION

The free lunch program is a contemporary public policy that will be carried out by the Prabowo Subiyanto Government is a strategic step in an effort to improve the degree of health, education of children and prevent stunting (stunting). By learning and adapting the best practices of organizing free lunches from other countries, Indonesia can create effective, sustainable, and beneficial programs for all communities in improving the quality of education in preparation for the golden generation of 2045.

Based on the conclusion above, it is recommended to the Government of Indonesia to design a free nutritious lunch program in a comprehensive and integrative manner so that it is more effective, efficient and does not overlap so that this strategic effort will gradually produce the Golden generation in 2045.

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