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SOCA Academics at Posyandu of Desa Cileles, Jatinagor, West Java for Fieldwork

□ Guest Submission □ November 8, 2024

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On 14 September 2024, as part of the SOCA UNPAD Scholarly Advancement Program (SAP) 2024, academics of the Department of Sociology, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), IIUM embarked on a day of fieldwork to observe and learn from our hosts at several local sites where Universitas Padjadjaran (UNPAD) academics run their community engagement programs. We started our day early and made our first visit to the district office of Desa Cileles. Desa Cileles is a

minute drive uphill from the UNPAD Jatinangor Campus.

We were welcomed by Pak Jajang, an officer from the district office who generously ushered us around the village. We walked through the peaceful streets of Desa Cileles, exchanging questions and thoughts with UNPAD academics, students, and Pak Jajang. Within the Cileles district, we visited two community-based health sites, *Posyandu Dadali 6* and *Posyandu Dadali 7*. The sites are in strategic areas accessible to the community within walking distance.

Posyandu is an acronym for *Pos Pelayanan Terpadu* in Bahasa Indonesia, translated as integrated services post. It aims to provide health education and health care services to the community. *Posyandu* is one of the Indonesian government's initiatives to increase the availability and accessibility of primary healthcare services in rural areas. At *Posyandu*, basic health care services are delivered to the community once a month on the agreed date and time; here, they arrange the appointment date to match the *Posyandu* number. This is so that the community members can easily remember their appointment dates. The *Posyandu* is typically run by volunteers, primarily women known as health cadres or *Kader Posyandu*. The health cadres are trained by health workers from the Ministry of Health to assist them in delivering basic health services. One of the current initiatives is to address stunting. Targeting conceiving mothers and children less than 5 years of age, the basic healthcare services at *Posyandu* include maternal and child health, immunisation, nutrition and health promotion. As part of their routine activities, *Kader Posyandu* assist the health workers by measuring the weight and height of babies or children under five years, giving advice on the importance of nutritional food for mothers and creating health awareness to the community.

Posyandu Dadali 6 and *Posyandu Dadali 7*, which we visited, also serve as a social laboratory for UNPAD to study, among other community health issues such as stunting. The visit to *Posyandu Dadali 6* and *Posyandu Dadali 7* provides SOCA academics with the first-hand experience of observing the socio-cultural contexts of the local community and learning from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erna Herawati's project in addressing stunting in Sundanese rural

We received a warm welcome from four passionate *Kader Posyandu* (Picture 1) during our visit to *Posyandu Dadali 6*. The half-hour visit was fruitful as we could engage with them and observe their sense of communal responsibility. Their passion can be seen in their excitement about serving the community at Desa Cileles. They even demonstrated some morning exercises for our heart health! These health cadres also highlighted how they identified more cases of non-communicable diseases among the villagers even though, in the past, this was considered ‘diseases of the wealthy.’ They noted that there have been changes to the villagers’ lifestyle and social conditions, affecting their diet and health conditions. Thus, a re-education process needs to raise awareness among the villagers. This was one of the examples of the roles of the health cadres.

Although our visit was brief, it made an impact on us. We noted some of our reflections and takeaways below:

- 1. Strong community empowerment and coordination can create impactful change.** From the volunteers we met at *Posyandu 6*, we observed a group of energetic, well-trained and empowered women who care about the health of their community. They advocated for providing blood pressure monitors and other equipment needed to ease the health monitoring among the villagers. Through the training the *Kader Posyandu* receive, they passionately educate their community.
- 2. Lifelong learning and the role of academics to serve the community.** Academics can play an essential role in educating community movers. Educated community movers benefit the community exponentially. Through their training and education as cadres, they conducted several weekly programs and supported the monthly checkups at *Posyandu*. Dr Erna expresses her work with the community as a form of serving the community,
- 3. Social Values are at the core of social change.** The Cadres we met from *Posyandu Dadali 6* were incredibly passionate about how they could contribute to the village, which intrigued us. They shared that they hold on to the values of *Sabar* (patience), *Jujur* (honesty), *Tawakal*, and *Ikhlas*, despite

further, and doing good for others was one of the most inspiring and thought-provoking aspects of community life.



Picture 1: Posyandu Dadali 7



Picture 2: Dr. Sharifah Fatimah Al-Attas and Dr. Szariannie Sulaiman

Our visit to Posyandu Dadali 6 and Posyandu Dadali 7 gave us many insights and inspired us to improve our future community engagement initiatives. We are grateful for the warmth and

and students from FISIP, UNPAD for accommodating us throughout our fieldwork.**

(The writers, Dr. Sharifah Fatimah AlZahrah Syed Hussien Al-Attas is a SOCA academic and Coordinator of USIDAR, and Dr. Szariannie Binti Sulaiman is a SOCA academic at AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM.)

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