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## **Policy and Program Evaluation Concept: Stunting Reduction Acceleration in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

Stunting remains a critical public health issue in Indonesia, with the government implementing various policies and programs to accelerate its reduction. This study evaluates the effectiveness of these initiatives using William Dunn's policy evaluation framework, focusing on six criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and accuracy. Despite efforts such as the Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT) and the Family Hope Program (a conditional cash transfer), the decline in stunting rates has been minimal, from 21.6% in 2022 to 21.5% in 2023, far below the 14% target set for 2024. The analysis reveals inefficiencies in budget allocation, disparities in regional implementation, and inadequate community engagement. Key challenges include uneven health facility distribution, cultural barriers, and misaligned priorities in budget spending. The study underscores the need for improved policy integration, targeted budget allocation, and enhanced community participation to achieve significant progress in stunting reduction.

**Keywords:** stunting reduction, policy evaluation, public health, Indonesia, William Dunn, program effectiveness

### **1. Introduction**

Policy is one of the instruments used to serve and improve the community's welfare. The state is responsible for understanding and regulating the order of life. One form of policy in Indonesia is handling stunting, which is regulated. Stunting is a condition of slow growth and decreased IQ in children (Ramadani & Lubis, 2023). In more detail, stunting is a growth and development disorder experienced by children due to poor nutrition, repeated infections, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation (WHO, 2025). This condition creates a problem in a person's development and abilities that can affect their future life. As an instrument of state administration, the government must take a role in improving health and meeting the community's needs. As policymakers, the government must think creatively to create new ways to deal with problems when formulating policies (Fleischer, 2024). Regarding stunting, the

government must establish a policy to reduce the stunting rate. The following is data on the prevalence of stunting until 2023.

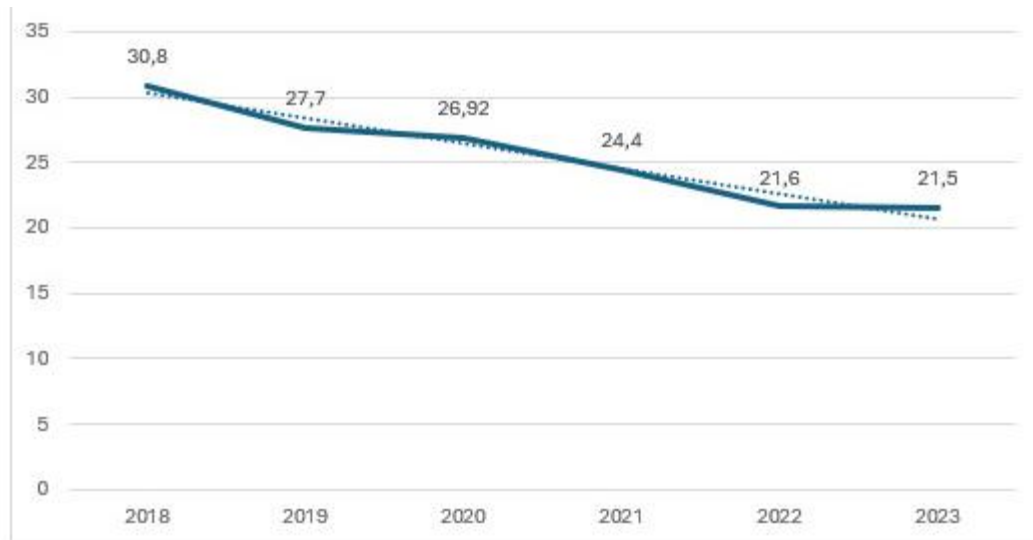


Figure 1. The Prevalence of Stunting

Source: Ministry of Health, 2023

Figure 1 shows that there has been a decline in stunting rates from 2018 to 2023, but the decline is not very significant. In 2024, the government is targeting a decline in stunting rates of 14% (Ministry of State Secretariat, 2023). The Minister of Health also emphasized the slow decline, that inappropriate methods still hamper the implementation of reducing stunting rates; in addition, all provinces in Indonesia are still low in reducing stunting rates (Papua Provincial Health Service, 2024). Thus, it can be concluded that the policy to reduce stunting rates has been carried out from year to year. This policy is further strengthened through Presidential Regulation 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. In addition, in providing special interventions, the government, through the Ministry of National Development Planning, issued Ministerial Decree Number 61/M.PPN/HK/05/2023 concerning Determining Districts/Cities as Focus Locations for Integrated Stunting Reduction Acceleration Interventions in 2024. Both regulations regulate the acceleration of coordination and integration in accelerating stunting reduction. The government focuses on handling stunting in each region and focuses on areas with a high prevalence of stunting in Indonesia. The following is data on the distribution of stunting prevalence in each province in Indonesia:

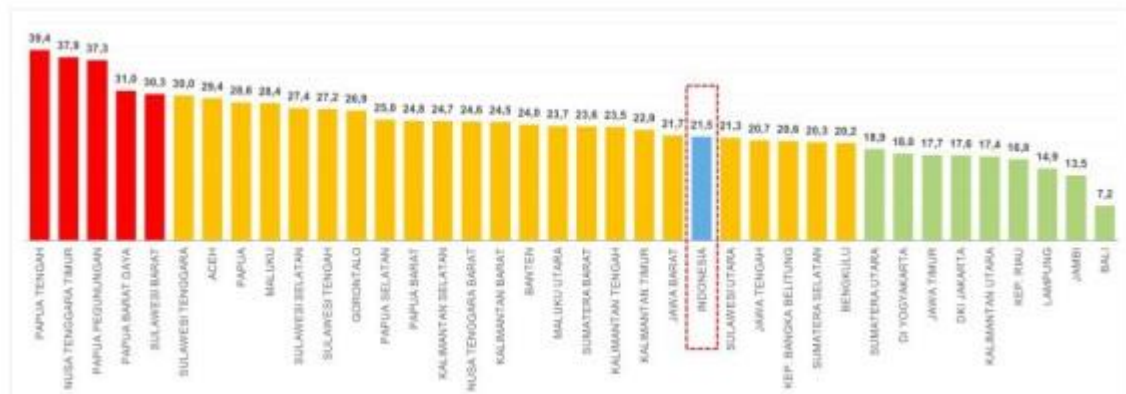


Figure 2. Distribution of Stunting Rates in Each Province in Indonesia in 2023

Source: IDN Times, 2023

Figure 2 explains that the stunting rate that exceeds the national average is still relatively high. The government needs to focus on several policies implemented to reduce stunting rates so that evaluation is needed to ensure that policies implemented in the community are on target, effective, and efficient. In addition, the large number of provinces that exceed the national average is a special note, and the policies that have been implemented are still not optimal or need changes in the mentoring pattern. In addition to mentoring, monitoring is crucial for enforcing this policy based on the potential in the region. The following is a map of the distribution of toddler stunting prevalence:

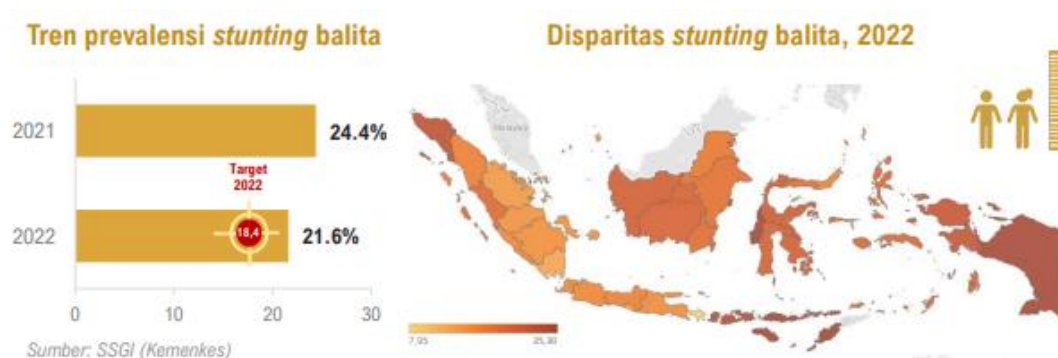


Figure 3. Map of Prevalence of Toddler Stunting in 2022

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Indonesia (SDGs) Report, 2023

Figure 3 shows that Indonesia failed to achieve the target of accelerating stunting reduction in 2022, where the target was 18.4%, while the results were still 21.6%. The second image in Figure 3 also shows the distribution of stunting disparities in toddlers in 2022, and it can be seen that eastern Indonesia dominates in terms of the high prevalence of stunting. This differs significantly from Java and parts of Sumatra, which have relatively low stunting rates. Nurpaikah et al. explained that several factors influence the policy of reducing stunting rates, so it is not optimal. First, regarding budget allocation, the government does not yet have a priority scale for budget use. The provision of health equipment to support stunting measurements has not been

maximized; the government prefers other agendas that do not directly target vulnerable communities or toddlers (Nurpaikah et al., 2024). Second, there are limited health facilities; this is very clear in the 3T areas in Indonesia, with the fact that health facilities are not evenly distributed, so the optimization of the policy of reducing stunting rates has not been maximized. The third is the incompetence of health workers. Many health workers are still not focused and competent in educating the community early about the dangers of stunting. Finally, there are factors from society and the surrounding environment. The culture and habits inherent in the birth process to toddlerhood are one of the causes of the increase in stunting. The community prioritizes a culture that does not focus on fulfilling pregnant women's and babies' nutrition (Nurpaikah et al., 2024). The acceleration of stunting reduction, which is still below the set target, requires a policy evaluation. The methods and programs designed and implemented are still not optimal, as evidenced by the decline in prevalence, which is still very small. Therefore, this paper will discuss the policy evaluation for accelerating stunting reduction using William Dunn's theory.

The purpose of writing this paper is as follows:

1. To explain the concept of policy and program evaluation; and
2. To analyze and evaluate policies to accelerate stunting reduction in Indonesia.

## **2. Method**

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. In its implementation, a theoretical analysis was conducted based on secondary data, including research results such as books, journals, articles, websites, and other relevant data as references in conducting the research analysis. The literature review is a research model obtained from summaries and reviews of research articles or previous research documents with the same focus (Agus et al., 2023).

This research also employs several related theories as analytical tools, such as the public policy theory proposed by Dye (1978), Wollman's policy evaluation (2007), and the six criteria of public policy evaluation, according to Dunn (2018).

## **3. Results**

### **Public Policy**

Policy results from integrating various ideas, theories, ideologies, and interests that reflect a country's political system. Dye in Anderson (1978:2) explains that public policy means 'whatever government chooses to do or not to do,' which means that public policy is about what the government chooses to do or not to do.

There are three interrelated dimensions in public policy, namely public policy as a goal, which is a series of government actions to achieve the expected results; public policy as a hypothesis, which means that policies are made based on theories, models, or hypotheses about cause and effect, and public policy as a step or action that is legally valid because it is made by an institution that has recognized authority in the government system (Bridgman & Davis, 2005).

Furthermore, Dunn (1994) explains that in formulating a public policy, several stages must be carried out, including:

**1. Agenda Preparation**

This stage is a process stage to identify public problems or issues that must be addressed. Problems are obtained through the problem structuring process. There are four things in problem structuring, namely, 1) problem finding, 2) problem definition, 3) problem specification, and 4) problem recognition.

**2. Policy Formulation**

At this stage, it discusses the problems included in the policy agenda and then seeks solutions to solve them. The existing policy options help solve the problem. Each policy alternative then competes to choose the best one to solve the current problem.

**3. Policy Adoption**

At this stage, the policy begins to be adopted, and the stakeholders' role is very influential.

**4. Policy Implementation**

At this stage, the policy begins to be implemented by certain implementers by maximizing available resources. According to Paton and Sawicki (1993), implementation involves a series of activities aimed at realizing the program, where in this role, the executive regulates the method for organizing, interpreting, and implementing the policies that have been set.

**5. Policy Evaluation**

This stage discusses the assessment of policies that have been set and implemented.

**Policy and Program Evaluation**

Evaluation is an essential element used in developing and implementing high-quality public policies and programs. Policy evaluation is conducted to assess the performance results of a policy that has been implemented. This aims to see the extent of government intervention to improve the welfare of individuals and society, maintain public sector accountability for its spending and activities, and identify improvements in public policies and programs.

According to Wollmann (2017), evaluation is a tool used to analyze involving evaluators and policy observers of a policy to obtain all information regarding the performance assessment of a policy program. Program evaluation is nothing new or revolutionary (Chelimsky, 1989). Chelimsky further stated that program evaluation has been around for a long time, in one form or another, developing slowly and gradually with various forms. Program evaluation is the application of systematic research methods to assess a program's design, implementation, and effectiveness. Program evaluation plays an important role for decision-makers in the executive and legislative branches.

Policy evaluation is an assessment of the results of implementing a particular policy by looking at the facts of the existing problems so that it can determine the steps taken in the future (Lester & Stewart, 2008). It is based on strategic and technical policies. Strategic policy evaluation can be carried out over a long period, while technical policy evaluation is carried out quickly after the policy is implemented.

Furthermore, Wollman (2007) groups policy evaluation into three types, including:

1. Ex-ante evaluation is carried out before a decision is made.
2. Ongoing evaluation is carried out to measure and address the impact and results of ongoing policies.
3. Ex-post evaluation, namely, policy evaluation carried out after the policy has been completed.

Furthermore, policy evaluation, when referring to the concept initiated by Dunn (2003), states that it not only produces conclusions regarding the extent to which problems have been resolved but also contributes to the clarification and criticism of the values that are the foundation of the policy, helping in the adjustment and reformulation of a problem. Furthermore, Dunn states that evaluation can refer to interpreting, assigning numbers, and assessing an object or program. Evaluation has a meaning related to the value and benefits of policy results. In addition, evaluation can also describe the achievement of policy performance.

Furthermore, according to Dunn (2003), public policy evaluation consists of six criteria, namely:

1. Effectiveness, namely whether the objectives targeted in a policy have been achieved.
2. Efficiency concerns how much effort and resources are needed to achieve the desired results.
3. Adequacy is how effective it is in satisfying needs, values, or opportunities that can give rise to problems.
4. Equality is a policy based on equality whose efforts can be felt fairly.
5. Responsiveness is how far a policy can satisfy specific community groups' needs, preferences, or values .
6. Accuracy, which is assessing whether the results of the recommended policy alternatives are the right choice of goals.

Based on the concepts and theories proposed by several experts, it can be concluded that policy and program evaluation is a systematic process to assess the extent to which a public policy achieves its goals, as well as the impacts it produces, both positive and negative. This evaluation is carried out to measure the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and fairness of the policy and identify areas that need improvement. Information obtained from the results of policy and program evaluations is essential for three extensive purposes (Chelimsky, 1989), namely:

1. For policy formulation, namely as a justification for the need for a new program.
2. For policy implementation, namely, to ensure that a program is implemented effectively and efficiently.
3. For accountability in public decision-making, namely to determine the effectiveness of an operational program and the need for continuation, modification, or termination.

### **Derivative Programs of the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Policy**

The implementation of the stunting reduction acceleration policy that has been running in Indonesia has been carried out by various ministries, institutions, and regions. Here are some examples of stunting reduction acceleration programs:



Table 1. List of Accelerated Stunting Reduction Programs

No	Program/Activity Name	Responsible Agency
1.	Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT)	Ministry of Health and Health Services in the regions
2.	Family Hope Program—Conditional Cash Transfer Program (PKH)	Ministry of Social Affairs
3.	Posyandu Program—Integrated Health Post	Ministry of Health and Health Services in the regions
4.	Community Based Development Program	Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration
5.	Family Planning Program (KB)	Ministry of Population and Family Development
6.	Stunting Risk Family Assistance Program	Ministry of Population and Family Development

Source: Processed from various sources, 2025

Table 1 details examples of programs that have been implemented to accelerate stunting reduction. These programs are carried out across ministries and institutions and are part of the entire existing program. The low rate of decline in stunting rates has resulted in the need for an overall policy evaluation, both in terms of its regulatory basis, designation, and policy targets.

### Case Study

Evaluation of the stunting reduction acceleration policy in Indonesia can be carried out by following the six policy evaluation criteria proposed by William N. Dunn: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and accuracy. The following is an analysis of how each of these criteria can be applied in evaluating the policy to accelerate stunting reduction in Indonesia:

#### 1. Effectiveness:

The policy to accelerate stunting reduction was established in 2021 through Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. The President has set a national target for stunting rates to be reduced to 14% by 2024, but in reality, from 2022 to 2023, they have only decreased by 0.1%. This is still very far from the target to be achieved in 2024.

According to research conducted by Jaya et al, community-based initiatives that align cultural values with public health policies have proven effective in decreasing the incidence of stunting, highlighting the importance of incorporating cultural perspectives into the formulation of impactful social policies (Jaya, et al, 2025). Various efforts have been made to accelerate the reduction in stunting rates, such as increasing the budget for handling stunting in 2024. The government's target for reducing yearly stunting must decrease by 3.8% (Ministry of State

Secretariat, 2023). This figure cannot be realized and does not match the national target. Therefore, the government needs to evaluate the national target by comparing policies and targets with implementation in the field until the realization of its achievements. To what extent has the government optimized various sectors, both central agencies, institutions, and regions.

## 2. Efficiency

In analyzing the efficiency variable, it can be seen how the existing resources are used optimally to implement this policy. In this case, we try to analyze whether the funds spent on stunting prevention programs provide results that are comparable to the costs incurred. Based on the data obtained related to the budget for handling stunting, it was found in one region that of the 10 billion rupiah budget allocated, more was used for activities that were not on target, such as official travel, which spent a budget of around 3 billion rupiah and holding meetings of 3 billion rupiah. If accumulated, the total budget for the two activities reached 6 billion rupiah, more than 50% of the total budget allocated. More of the budget should have been allocated to purchase eggs, milk, fish, meat, vegetables, and other nutritious foods that can directly impact the community. This shows that the program is considered less than optimal in terms of efficiency because the budget is still largely inappropriate.

## 3. Adequacy:

In analyzing the adequacy variable, the interventions carried out by the government can show whether they are sufficient to overcome stunting in areas in need and whether the government's presence through this policy has been able to reduce stunting in children in all regions.

The analysis, referring to Figure 1, shows that the stunting reduction acceleration program in Indonesia has shown results, as indicated by the decline in stunting rates every year. However, the decline is still far from the government's target of 14% in 2024.

Based on the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI), the national stunting prevalence 2022 was 21.6%. To achieve the target of 14%, the government is targeting reducing the prevalence of stunting by 3.8% per year until 2024. Meanwhile, the prevalence of stunting in 2023 in Indonesia was 21.5%, which only decreased by 0.1% from the previous year. This shows that in 2023, the target of reducing stunting per year by 3.8% has not been achieved.

Then, referring to Figure 2, it can be seen that there are five provinces with very high stunting rates, which are more than 30%. This figure is very concerning when compared to other provinces. This shows that in terms of the adequacy variable, the policy of accelerating the reduction of stunting is still not optimal, where the reduction in stunting is still far from the target, and there are still several areas where the prevalence of stunting is very high.

According to research conducted by Wijaya, the key challenges in addressing stunting encompass inadequate nutritional knowledge and the persistence of traditional feeding practices at the individual and interpersonal levels, limited access to health and nutrition services at the community level, inconsistent quality of healthcare delivery at the institutional level, and a lack



of policy coherence at the national level (Wijaya, 2024). Conversely, enabling factors such as targeted nutrition education interventions, strong community-based support systems, and the integration of health and nutrition programs have demonstrated significant potential in mitigating stunting.

#### 4. Equity:

If we look at Figure 2 regarding the distribution of stunting rates in each province in Indonesia, there is an increase in stunting in the eastern part of Indonesia including the provinces in Papua and Nusa Tenggara. This indicates that there is still a reasonably large gap between eastern Indonesia and other regions. In fact, the budget and intervention for the acceleration of stunting handling have been regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 72 with a focus on areas that still have high stunting rates.

According to research conducted by Lumbantoru and Susanti, the gap occurs due to access to health and health facilities and uneven budget allocation (Lumbantoruan & Susanti, 2014). This phenomenon is evident in eastern Indonesia, which still has very few health facilities and health workers. Compared to big cities in Indonesia, stunting handling is very different; for example, Depok City, West Java Province, can provide Additional Food Provision (PMT) for pregnant women, even with its pros and cons. The gap that still occurs and has not been controlled by the central government is still a serious concern.

#### 5. Responsiveness:

The community needs government assistance to prevent stunting. One of the regional government programs aimed at reducing stunting is the Provision of Additional Food (PMT). Various regions in Indonesia have implemented it, but there are many findings that many regions misuse the program. The city of Depok, which has implemented the PMT program for pregnant women, has received much criticism because the food provided is unsuitable and does not meet nutritional adequacy standards (Kompas, 2023). The community is also not involved in the planning and suitability of the food for pregnant women.

The community, especially pregnant women, directly criticized the irresponsible Depok City Government, even finding political elements on food packaging with a photo of the mayor. The community responded very negatively to policies that should have had a positive effect but became useless. In addition, the use of the stunting handling budget that was not optimal without considering the priority scale resulted in stunting rates that were still stagnant and only decreased slightly, thus drawing much criticism from the public.

#### 6. Accuracy

Stunting reduction policies and programs are the government's primary focus in preventing stunting. Various policies and programs have been implemented, such as Family Planning (KB), Integrated Service Posts (Posyandu), and so on, but the decline in stunting rates is still very slow and insignificant, so it does not reach the national reduction target every year. This is reinforced

by the statement of the Minister of Health regarding the slow decline in stunting rates caused by methods that are still less appropriate in each region (Papua Provincial Health Office, 2024).

Accuracy in implementing policies and programs must also be seen from the aspirations and needs of the community. Currently, many programs for accelerating stunting reduction do not see the root of the problem. Poverty and education levels are one of the root causes of the slow decline in stunting rates. Policy and program models must address these problems and various health problems aimed at preventing stunting from the pre-marital period.

#### **4. Discussion**

Public policy is a government instrument that serves and helps the community. One of the public policy cycles is policy evaluation. The concept of policy and program evaluation is a systematic process to assess the extent to which a public policy achieves its objectives, as well as assessing its positive and negative impacts. This evaluation is carried out to measure the policy's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and fairness and identify areas that need improvement. Chelimsky (1989) also emphasized three objectives in policy evaluation: policy formulation, policy implementation, and accountability.

The policy and program evaluation results in the case study on the policy to accelerate stunting reduction showed that there was still suboptimality in each variable analyzed using William Dunn's policy evaluation theory. In the effectiveness and efficiency variables, national targets were not achieved, and the budget did not focus on the priority scale and needs of the community. The adequacy variable is still not optimal, as indicated by the still high stunting rate in each province and more than 50% of provinces in Indonesia above the national average, while the equality variable is almost the same as adequacy where there is a gap in stunting in each region and uneven policies.

In the responsiveness variable, many people are against government policies, especially local governments, in overcoming stunting. The public considers that the government is not serious about providing policies such as providing additional food (PMT) to pregnant women, which seems perfunctory and has political meaning. The significant role of social capital—comprising social networks, shared norms, and mutual trust—in enhancing the effectiveness of stunting reduction initiatives (Astuti, et al, 2025). Finally, the government does not see the root problems of stunting in the accuracy variable. Poverty and education are two of the root problems of the increasing number of stunting, so the policy model must accommodate all of them.

There are some suggestions that can be given in this study, including:

1. Budget allocation and priority scale preparation in implementing policies and programs to accelerate the reduction of stunting rates must be the primary focus. The implementation of activities that do not have a direct effect on the community must be reduced.
2. The government is expected to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to assess the efficiency of resource allocation in programs to accelerate the reduction of stunting. This aims to ensure that the funds spent are comparable to the results achieved.
3. Integration of various stunting prevention and poverty alleviation programs must go hand in

hand and contribute to society.

4. Evaluation of education and intervention programs aimed at increasing nutritional literacy among the community, especially in areas with high stunting rates.

Policies and programs must be prepared based on community aspirations and conditions in the field. The government is also expected to conduct periodic reviews of policies and programs to assess their relevance and effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on evaluation findings.

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