

# UGM Students Raise Nutrition Awareness for Autistic Children

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Autism is a disorder that affects communication functions and social interactions. Behavioural disorder makes nutrition intake difficult for autistic children because they are very selective choosing their foods. This causes diet variations among the children to be low in addition to diet mistakes that may increase behavioural disorder intensity.

Currently, efforts to improve the nutrition among autistic children are hard to find. There has been little support for providing good diet for them.

“The case is observable in the weight of autistic children which is usually higher than that of other children. Hence, education on the diet for autistic children is very important to give to parents, teachers, and children to reduce the frequency of child behavioural disorders,” said Nadia Yasmine, medical student of Universitas Gadjah Mada, on Tuesday (11/6) at UGM.

Along with fellow students Muklas Rahmanto, Rattyasta Rahumung Mardika, Safira Tasya Amelia, and Rafidah Fawwazia Hidayat, they tried to improve the nutrition awareness of autistic children by setting up a smart class programme. The programme gives access to the right diet for autistic children.



"We run this programme along with *Bina Anggita* school for autistic children as our partner in Banguntapan, Bantul, Yogyakarta," she said.

Nadia said the programme's projects run from April and May 2019, including introduction to fruit and vegetable through colouring events, also data collection of the children nutrition.

The UGM team plans to continue the programme gradually. Under the supervision of lecturer, dr. Arta Farmawati Ph.D, in June 2019, they will renovate the dining room of the *Bina Anggita* school and socialise nutrition modules to parents, establish cadres among parents and teachers, website introduction on nutrition and educational games.

"We hope the programme will impact on the empowerment of facilities and school projects, improving nutrition awareness and knowledge, and eventually the children can apply good diet behaviour," said Nadia.

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