

# Advocacy Brief

## Addressing the Rights of Young People: Youth Policy in Papua and West Papua

The Need for Youth  
Policy in Papua and  
West Papua

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### The Need for Youth Policy in Papua and West Papua

Young people are assets to the process of nation-building and socio-economic development. To address the core issues of social development, human rights and equity, it is important to shift towards working with and for young people. To ensure development goals and social welfare policies and programmes are achieved with equity, there is an urgent need to adequately address the needs of adolescents and youth in Papua and West Papua.

Adolescents and youth aged 15-24 years comprise 20 per cent of the population in Papua and West Papua – a significant proportion of the total population. Almost 45 per cent of the population are aged 0-18 years: We have an obligation to act now for the future of Papua and West Papua. Young people are the thinkers and innovators of today and the leaders of tomorrow.

In fast developing and complex contexts such as Papua and West Papua, the challenges and consequences of large adolescent and youth populations are far-reaching:

- Large numbers of children and adolescents are not in school
- There is a lack of quality secondary school education and of links to stable and safe employment
- Increased risk of HIV and AIDS
- Early marriage, early pregnancy and higher risks of maternal mortality
- Violence

Addressing these challenges requires development partners to include young people in participatory decision making processes. There is an urgency to enable young people to exercise their rights and duties; promote learning and empowerment and build their commitment to working alongside government to develop solutions.

Indonesia has a National Youth Law which emphasizes the need to develop the capacities of young people. However, there are no specific youth policies or legislation at the provincial level which specifically address the concerns of young people in a systematic manner. In many provinces and districts across Indonesia, competing demands and infrastructure priorities mean youth development and participation is afforded a rather low priority.

Despite the challenges, the Provincial Governments of Papua and West Papua have recognized the urgency and are demonstrating their commitment to strengthen policy and programming for their young people.

This commitment has further been reinforced by data and evidence obtained through the Assessment of Youth Policies and Programmes in Papua and West Papua. It is impressive to note the Government's growing engagement and commitment for youth policy and encouraging that young people in Papua themselves are calling for the realisation of their entitlements to quality education, health services, meaningful work opportunities and civic participation in all aspects of public life.

## **Situation of Youth in Papua and West Papua: Making the Case for Young People**

Across Papua and West Papua, there are more than 312 ethnic groups and more than 250 distinct languages. Young people live in urban, rural, remote and isolated places in geographically diverse areas in the highlands, lowlands, mainland and islands of the provinces.

With only 1.5 per cent of Indonesia's population, Papua accounted for over 15 per cent of all new HIV cases in 2011. Unlike the rest of the country, Papua is experiencing a generalized HIV epidemic with a prevalence of 3 per cent amongst young people aged 15-24. The 2011 Survey on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices showed that very few in-school youth (12.6 per cent in Papua and 1.67 per cent in West Papua) and out-of school youth (4.5 per cent in Papua and 0.0 per cent in West Papua) had comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

***Young people need access to correct information, quality education and health services to protect and prevent HIV.***

The 2012 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted in Papua and West Papua shows that sexual activity and childbearing for young people starts early, and adolescent pregnancy is a serious issue. Between 11 and 37 per cent of women aged 20-24 years reported having given birth before reaching 18 years of age. In the poorest quintile of Papua and West Papua, 50 per cent and 39 per cent of women (aged 20-49) were married before age 18. This figure stands at approximately 16 per cent for women from the richest quintile in both the provinces. Pregnant adolescents and their infants are at higher risk of mortality than their older women.

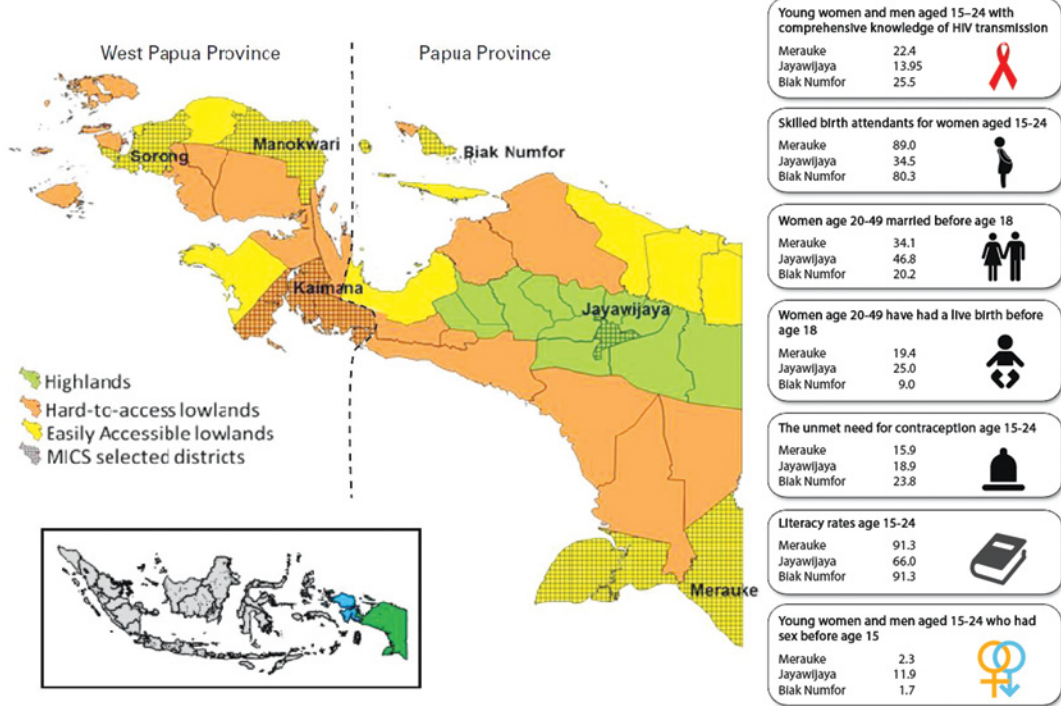
Unemployment in Papua and West Papua across all age cohorts is high but this is especially the case among young people. Meaningful, safe and stable work opportunities are limited for young people. A 47 per cent unemployment rate was reported among vocational training graduates.

In 2012, UNICEF and the Provincial Government supported an Assessment of Youth Policies and Programmes in Papua and West Papua. Based on a participatory design, it incorporated the opinions and voices of large numbers of young people. The results are compelling and confirm that young people are experiencing a range of challenges in the areas of health, education, employment and protection. The assessment provides the first in-depth analysis of lives of young people in Papua and West Papua and includes youth perspectives on conflict; their use of media, information and communication technology and perspectives on leisure activities. Despite the growing evidence and engagement of young people, Government response to the challenges they face has been sector-specific, small-scale and limited in comprehensive approach. Although there is increasing attention and focus on youth issues at the provincial and district level, budget allocation for youth programming is not commensurate with the scope of problems that need to be addressed.

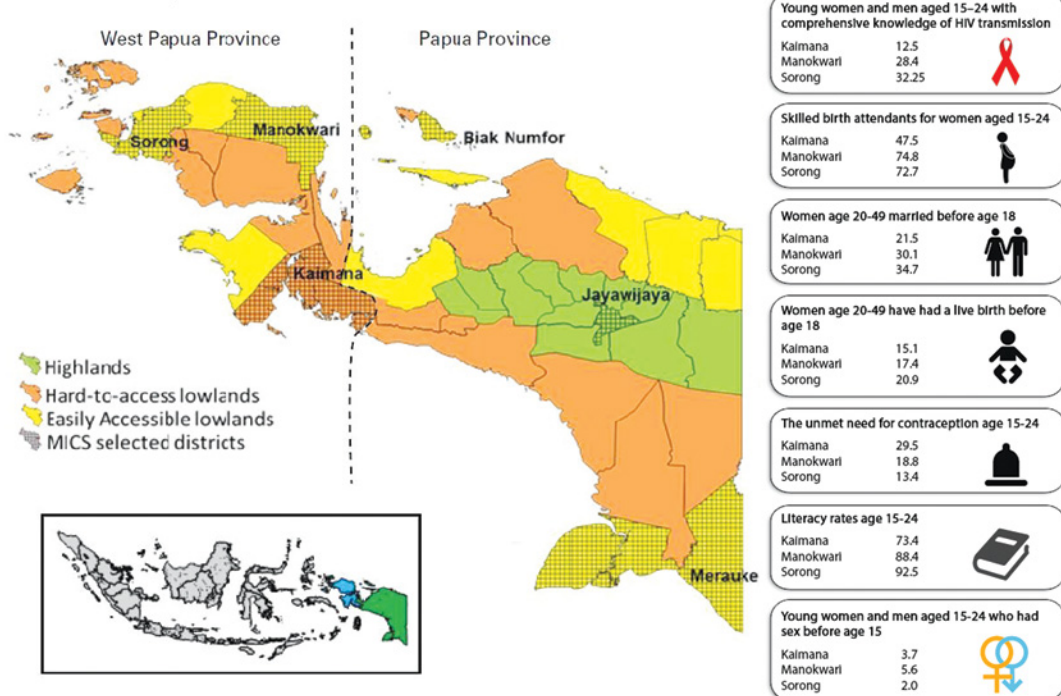


Despite the challenges and notwithstanding existing gaps in terms of information and analysis, available data and evidence, there is immense support from Government and civil society partners in favour of a targeted youth policy and related programmes in Papua and West Papua.

State of Adolescents in **Papua**: Key Figures from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012



State of Adolescents in **West Papua**: Key Figures from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012



## Current Policy and Programme Environment: Emerging Issues

Before embarking on the process of policymaking to address the needs of young people in Papua and West Papua, UNICEF supported the Provincial and District Governments in a stock taking exercise to review all existing policies and programmes that are targeted towards young people in Papua and West Papua. At the provincial and district levels, a review of relevant documents alongside interviews with key stakeholders revealed a limited number of policies and programmes which specifically target young people.

Some of the key emerging issues include:

### Lack of a clear vision

The overall aims and objectives of youth policy and programmes are not clear. While it is positive to focus on areas such as character building, as highlighted in the national law, the importance of incorporating the strengths and vulnerabilities of young people in relation to social development issues such as health, education, employment and protection is not addressed sufficiently.

### Implementation bottlenecks

Programmes often remain ad-hoc and do not have systematic strategies and budgets for implementation and follow up. Where initiatives do exist, or have existed, there have been issues with implementation.

### Limited partnerships and coordination

There is limited coordination between sectors when it comes to youth-related policy and programming even though national policy promotes cross-sectoral approaches. Lack of partnerships and collaborative work and competition for resources were identified as barriers to inter-sectoral work.

### Few promising programmes

There are a few promising examples of collaborative work. Importantly, many of the government interviewees expressed enthusiasm towards collaborative work in the future to enhance policy and programming for youth, acknowledging that when mechanisms are put in place for cross-sectoral planning on issues that are of relevance to various ministries, this can ensure optimal use of resources and better results for all.

## Opportunities

In Papua and West Papua, young people have been reinforcing their role as partners with the government in areas of social research, innovations and civic participation to address issues affecting their lives and to create better opportunities for themselves.

To support this process, the Provincial Government in Papua and West Papua have demonstrated their commitment to strengthening partnerships with young Papuans in the area of social policy planning and development. Provincial and district government partners have expressed interest in working together to generate a youth policy which reflects the commitments highlighted in the national laws and policies; moves beyond conventional perspectives towards considering the broader issues of youth development and participation; and invests in innovative, effective and targeted programmes to address relevant cross-sectoral priorities and needs of young people.



Given the Government's commitment, enthusiasm and goodwill, the following priorities are being proposed:

**Development of a Youth Policy:**

The province can embark on the process of developing a youth policy that is comprehensive and inter-sectoral in nature, and incorporates key elements of planning, resource allocation, programme implementation and monitoring mechanisms. Better investment in youth is critical to the overall socio-development process and success of the provinces.

**Securing Young People's Participation:**

The inclusion of young people in the process of developing youth policy will allow the plans to be better aligned with the aspirations and realities of young people. This would strengthen both the process and its outcome.

The already established mechanisms such as KNPI and the Papua and West Papua Youth Forum are valuable resources that the governments can strategically draw on to seek information and ensure that young people are included in the policy planning process.

**Involving Diverse Partners for Policy Development:**

Most of the issues confronting young people are deeply interrelated and best addressed through cross-sectoral collaboration. The development of a cross-sectoral youth policy presents an exciting opportunity to bring different government sectors together.

Steps should be taken to explore possibilities of who would be involved and how the process would work. Importantly, stakeholders from outside of government, including NGOs; faith based organizations; community leaders and other community based organizations should also be included in this collaborative effort.

**Promoting Coordination and Leadership:**

A well-coordinated and inclusive development process that values its young people as assets, takes time and investment. It requires commitment from the highest political level to initiate and implement an evidence-based youth policy process that is matched with adequate resources. The process must therefore have the buy-in from the highest levels of the government, and appropriate staff should be nominated to lead the process to fruition.

In addition to the issue of leadership, the importance of a well-coordinated process is well understood. Evidence suggests that there is a need for a strong coordinating body that can take the process forward to completion. Once leadership is ascertained, further discussions will be needed to determine which sector (or sectors) will be involved in the collaborative work in Papua and West Papua as well as determining individual roles and responsibilities, towards ensuring accountability and success.

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