

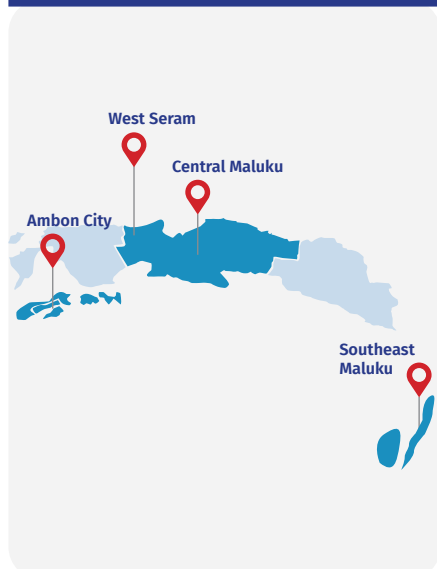
## Factsheet INOVASI Program in Maluku

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**Start Date:** July 2024 (Phase 3)

**Focus:** Literacy, Educational Leadership, Mother Tongue Transition, Education Policy Advocacy

**Location:** Central Maluku, West Seram, Southeast Maluku, Ambon City



### Context

Maluku is located in eastern Indonesia, consisting of thousands of islands around the Banda Sea and spanning 46,914 km<sup>2</sup>. It is known as the “Land of the Kings” (“*Negeri Para Raja*”), as each village is led by a local king who enforces a traditional system, shaping community values and norms. For livelihoods, Maluku relies on agriculture, fishery, and spice trade.

Despite having abundant natural resources, Maluku’s geographical condition causes it to be isolated and not easily accessible. Infrastructure development and transportation access to the province are inadequate, so the provision of basic services, including education, is quite limited. Additionally, the impacts of climate change, such as unpredictable weather patterns and rising sea levels, are making it increasingly difficult to provide education services and meet basic needs in the province.

As a result, educational outcomes in Maluku remain a concern, particularly in literacy. On Indonesia’s Reading Literacy Activity Index—released by the Minister of Education and Culture in 2019—Maluku scored 33.5 which placed it on the 24th out of 34 provinces. It was classified as a low-literacy province. Data from the 2024 Maluku Education Report also showed that only 40-70% of regular primary school students have met the minimum literacy standard, even fewer than 40% students in Islamic primary schools (*madrasah ibtidaiah/MI*) have achieved such a benchmark. Therefore, the majority of students in the province struggle with basic reading skills that are essential for their academic and personal developments.



## About INOVASI

INOVASI has been working since Phase I (2016-2020), Phase II (2020-2023), and is now onto Phase III (2024-2027). In Phase 3, INOVASI also expanded to additional provinces—Maluku, West Java, and, to an extent, the Capital City of Nusantara—making it 6 provinces in total. INOVASI also widened the scope from early grades to one-year pre-primary until sixth grade of primary school.

The INOVASI program has five key focus areas that also become our Intermediate Outcomes. They are: 1) Curriculum and Assessment, 2) Teaching Practices, 3) Educational Leadership, 4) Gender Equality and Inclusivity, 5) Climate Change.



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## Program Highlights



### Intermediate Outcome 1 & 2: Curriculum, Assessment, and Teaching Practices

#### Challenges

Students' literacy and numeracy outcomes in Maluku indicate a significant gap in comparison to the national average. The majority of teachers lack access to locally relevant teaching materials and effective assessment tools, hindering their ability to address students' diverse learning needs. It eventually affects students' comprehension of foundational skills.

In addition, geographic isolation and uneven teacher distribution exacerbate the disparity of educational quality in Maluku, especially between urban and rural areas.

#### What we do

INOVASI partners with a range of stakeholders to strengthen teacher capacity, including with teacher education institutions (LPTKs) such as Pattimura University and IAIN Ambon.

In addition, INOVASI collaborates with local governments, including the Maluku Provincial Office of Education and Culture, the Central Maluku District Office of Education and Culture, and the Maluku Provincial Secretariat. The program also works closely with technical implementing units (UPT) from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education—such as the Teacher and Education Personnel Development Centre (BGTK), the Education Quality Assurance Agency (BPMP), and the Language Centre—as well as with the Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre under the Ministry of Culture, the Religious Education Training Centre (BDK) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and several local community organisations.

Through these partnerships, teachers are supported to develop teaching materials and learning approaches that are relevant to the local context, making lessons more accessible and easier for students to understand in the classroom.



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## Intermediate Outcome 3: Educational Leadership

### Challenges

Many school principals, particularly in remote areas in Maluku, have limited capacity in academic supervision and school management. They also cannot access qualified leadership and professional development training programs. As a result, teachers do not have the necessary support from school principals to implement innovative learning approaches and achieve educational aims.

### What we do

INOVASI, in collaboration with local governments, implements the Educational Leadership Program. This initiative aims to improve school principals' and education administrators' leadership quality, managerial skills, and academic mentoring skills. Therefore, the program focuses on equipping school principals and education administrators with materials about:

- Teacher professional development
- Monitoring the learning process
- Implementing best practices in teaching and learning
- Facilitating teachers' reflection to improve learning practices



## Intermediate Outcome 4: Gender Equality and Inclusivity

### Challenges

Maluku has a linguistic diversity, as many local languages are used in daily life and activities. It makes students generally start school only speaking their mother tongue, then they have difficulty following lessons and learning delivered in the Indonesian language. This language barrier affects their potential and self-confidence to develop and master foundational skills.

### What we do

INOVASI facilitates and supports the partnership between Sulinama Foundation—local community organisations focusing on education—and the Central Maluku Regency Government to implement language transition in schools. It leverages mother tongue or local language as a bridge, helping students grasp fundamental concepts before gradually transitioning to Indonesian as the language of instruction in education. Hence, students are able to enhance learning comprehension, build confidence, and develop foundational and essential skills, while still respecting their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.



Linguistic rights are human rights. Children who grew up speaking their mother tongue should not be forced to learn directly in the Indonesian language. Instead, their mother tongue should serve as a bridge, helping them transition smoothly to Indonesian, so they can tackle more complex issues.

— Johnny Tjia, Director of  
Sulinama Foundation



## Intermediate Outcome 5: Climate Change

### Challenges

Weather patterns are getting unpredictable in Maluku. Extreme weather, such as heavy rainfall or flood, frequently damages school infrastructure and disrupts the learning process. Communities who rely on agriculture and fishery also face economic and transportation access instability due to the weather. It ultimately forces students to work and help their families' economic needs, leading to increased absenteeism in schools and even dropouts.

Additionally, displacement and psychological stress caused by natural disasters may hinder students' focus

and capacity to comprehend learning in schools and achieve academic success.

### What we do

INOVASI assesses that a comprehensive strategy is needed to overcome the impacts of climate change and ensure quality education for all students in Maluku. It involves curriculum development, teacher capacity building, educational leadership improvement, inclusive policies, and climate resilience initiatives. INOVASI currently works with local stakeholders to increase the understanding of climate change and its impact on education and communities.



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The Innovation for Indonesia's School Children (INOVASI) is a flagship partnership program between the Australian and Indonesian governments. It aims to improve education policies and practices in Indonesia, one of which is by supporting the learning and mastery of foundational skills for all primary-level students. INOVASI has been working since Phase I (2016-2020), Phase II (2020-2023), and is now onto Phase III (2024-2027). Its working area encompasses seven provinces in Indonesia.

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INOVASI Pendidikan

INOVASI works with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the National Development Planning Agency, and local partners in our working area. The program is managed by Palladium on behalf of the Australian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).