

PROJECT TITLE

SIPAUMAT

(Initiative to Improve Services for the Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples)

BACKGROUND

The **Mentawai Indigenous Peoples** are a minority ethnic group in West Sumatra Province that often experiences social exclusion and discrimination from the dominant **Minangkabau ethnic group**. This discrimination stems from differences in cultural customs, beliefs, history, and the geographical location of the Mentawai Islands—the only region distinct from the other 19 regencies/municipalities in the province. Stigmas such as being outdated, ignorant, dirty, exotic, and other negative labels are still commonly attached to the Mentawai community. As a result, social acceptance and development in the Mentawai region lag far behind other areas.

This external exclusion is compounded by **layers of exclusion within** the Mentawai Indigenous community itself. The patriarchal nature of the Mentawai society marginalizes **women, children, and persons with disabilities**, who are particularly vulnerable to injustice and discrimination—not only from the government and other social groups but also from within their own Indigenous environment.

Discrimination within the Indigenous community often arises from distortions in the implementation of customary laws and cultural norms. Patriarchal traditions subordinate women, placing them in lower social and decision-making positions compared to men. Consequently, women are more vulnerable to various forms of violence—physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual—within both family and public settings. Women are also economically marginalized under customary law, as they are denied ownership and inheritance rights over property, land, and resources, leaving them financially dependent on men.

Customary law also fails to adequately protect children, particularly orphans, as guardianship is typically granted to male relatives from the father's side. Children thus face heightened risks of **physical abuse, neglect, and even sexual violence**. The situation is even more severe for **girls and children with disabilities**, who are frequently stigmatized as weak, shameful, and burdensome to both families and society.

In the customary social structure, women are not included in decision-making forums, whether customary or public. As a result, decisions are often made exclusively to serve male interests. The same applies to children and persons with disabilities, whose needs and interests are usually dictated by adults. Their voices are easily manipulated or exploited, and they are often perceived as incapable or unworthy of agency.

Empowering marginalized groups is essential to achieving social equality. This can be done through capacity building, access to services and participation, and increasing both the quantity and quality of their involvement in customary forums, public spaces, and governance. **Cultural approaches are key** to opening pathways toward equality and eliminating injustice and discrimination against **women, children, and persons with disabilities** in Mentawai.

OBJECTIVE

The SIPAUMAT program aims to promote **inclusive governance in Mentawai Islands Regency**, ensuring the **fulfillment and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples**, including marginalized groups (women, children, and persons with disabilities).

WORKING AREAS

The SIPAUMAT program is implemented in:

- **Malancan Village**, North Siberut Subdistrict
- **Muntei Village**, South Siberut Subdistrict
- **Nemnem Leleu Village**, South Sipora Subdistrict
- **Mentawai Islands Regency**, West Sumatra Province

OUR FOCUS

- Promoting and nurturing **GEDSI perspectives** (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) among village and regional government officials to make them more facilitative and inclusive of marginalized groups in governance and development.
- Strengthening the capacity of Indigenous Peoples and marginalized groups who experience social exclusion, so they can become change agents advocating for their rights and access to government services.
- Organizing, raising GEDSI awareness, facilitating participation, and increasing the capacity and active involvement of marginalized groups in accessing basic services, social assistance, development planning, policy processes, and responses to sexual violence.
- Promoting **economic independence** for women and persons with disabilities.
- Fostering collaboration between village governments, regional governments, and civil society organizations (NGOs) in handling cases of sexual violence against women, children, and persons with disabilities, as well as efforts to protect survivors.

PARTNERS

- Mentawai Islands Regency Government
- Malancan Village Government
- Muntei Village Government
- Nemnem Leleu Village Government
- LBH Padang (Legal Aid Institute)
- WCC Nurani Perempuan (Women's Crisis Center)
- PBHI West Sumatra (Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association)
- FORMMA (Mentawai Student Forum) of West Sumatra
- FORMASI (Civil Society Forum) Mentawai

BUDGET

IDR 2,643,317,500

PROGRAM DURATION

Phase I: 2022 – 2025