

EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNGEST REASONABLE

INDONESIAS CHILDREN HAVE POOR ACCESS TO EDUCATION - ONE YEAR LONG COURSE FOR ADOLESCENT PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Indonesia, with its 210 million inhabitants, is regarded as the fourth most populous country in the world. The rural areas like the Mentawai Islands and North Sumatra are regarded as among the poorest: No access to clean drinking water and sanitary installations characterise the rural areas of Indonesia. Schools are also hardly accessible.

School attendance under most difficult conditions

Mentawai is extremely difficult to reach. In the rainy season, the streets are not passable and the waves are too dangerous for a transit per boat. Many children and youth suffer in Mentawai from malaria, cholera, skin-illnesses and typhus. In most regions of Mentawai, there is - if at all - only one primary school. Many of these schools are closed for some months in a year due to the chronic lack of teachers. The routes to school are often simply too long and dangerous for children. A study has yielded that the likelihood of school attendance with each further kilometre is reduced by 2,5 per cent.



Promoting infants already

During the world educational conferences in the year 1990 in the Thai Jomtien and a decade later in Dakar, Senegal, it became increasingly clear that development advancement should already grasp with infants. The organization Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is also of this opinion. The goal is to educate youth - with its Empowerment of Youth in Child Education Program - in a one year long course who will consequently work as primary school teachers.

Basic education

The target group here are children and youth aged 4 12 years who should be given an elementary basic education in reading, writing and calculating. In addition to that, they take part in hygiene and health precaution courses. Principles are also being conveyed to the children and youth such as the equality of man and woman, the unbiased encounter with people from different ethnic, religious backgrounds and social stratus of society.

Reaching several thousand children

In October 2000 the first four education centres were built, another four were completed in October 2001. Several thousand children and youth have already participated in programs in the education centres of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.