

# REALITY CHECK APPROACH STUDY BRIEF

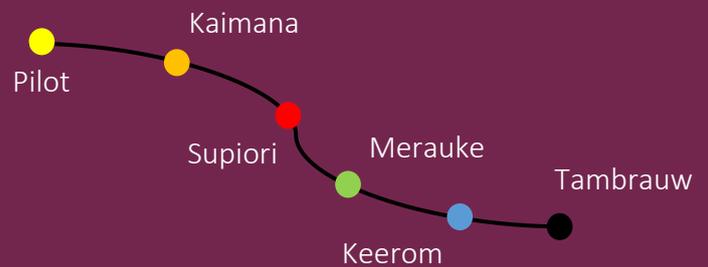
## PEOPLE'S VIEW AND EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATION IN PAPUA 2015

### About the RCA Study

Experts and lay people have their own opinions about what is best for *Tanah Papua* (Papua Land). The RCA team undertook the study in order to learn directly from residents' own perspectives and experiences.

Around 780 residents of five different districts in *Tanah Papua* shared their insights and a total of 17 households welcomed the study team members to stay with them and join their everyday lives. They talked about their aspirations for the longer future, the role of education in achieving these, how they interact as a family and a community, what they think about and experience in schools and

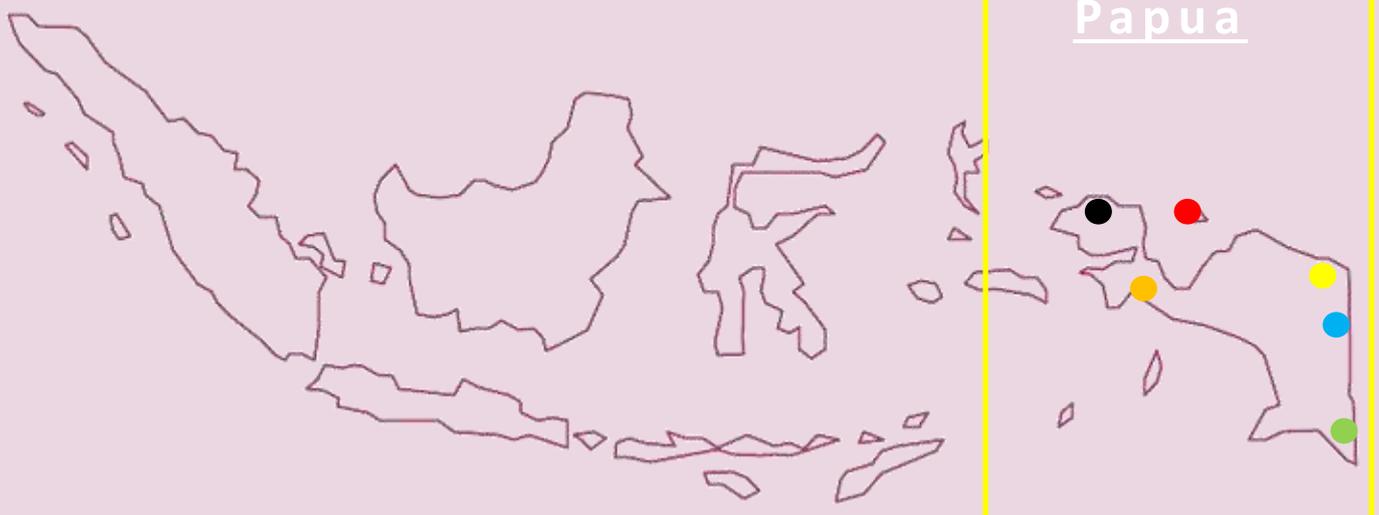
relationships with teachers, as well as about assistance and support provided in education. The full report can be accessed on [www.realitycheckapproach.com](http://www.realitycheckapproach.com).



Good Access

Poor Access

### Study Locations



## People's view of the value of education

Families unanimously support education, especially at primary level and school-going is the norm. But opinions differ on the purpose of education:

We need only **just enough education**, because...

- food is plentiful from farming and fishing
- of increasing dependency on Government of Indonesia's support and assistance
- there are many ways to earn cash here, especially in construction industry

A few need **higher education**, because...

- increased connectivity widens our options and aspirations
- salaried work is becoming more reliable than waged work
- we want to reduce domination of civil-servant incomers and take on civil-service roles ourselves
- we fear being cheated and less able to negotiate our indigenous rights



*“Good school is where teachers don't punish and can play with us.”*

– Students in Supiori, Merauke, Tamberau

Education means...

*“...more Papuans can become civil-servants,” and “...we can deal better with corporations on land negotiations”*

## What is the Point of Education?

People shared that they knew little about what is involved in education. School is seen as “**magic box**” which requires mere attendance to graduate and then find good jobs. With this understanding, it is not rare for schools to fake scores to fulfil parents' expectations. Students graduate with low attainment yet have certificates to compete in the job market with everybody else.

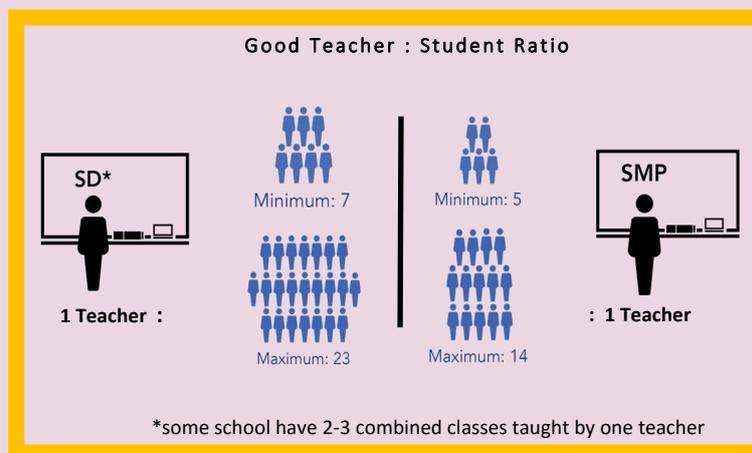
There is little support for both students and parents to understand the concept of studying and little support for homework. Children and parents want education to be more about life skills than academic. When talking about what happens in class, children shared how they like interactive and fun learning where teachers bring them outside the classroom to connect what they see in books with real life; and how shaming, corporal punishment and boring classes discourage them from coming to school.

# Current State of Education

- Mostly very good physical facilities with some schools over-resourced in terms of buildings and other physical facilities.
- Many (sometimes in SMP, too many) teachers employed in school but inefficient use of their time, including minimal contact hours and self-arrangement of unofficial rotas to cover absenteeism, which is acute.
- School scores dominate the education system, posing particular challenges in teaching children with only colloquial (rather than formal) knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia. This, as well as poor study habits, leads to the common practice of teachers manipulating scores.
- Continued low standard of attainment in the primary and junior high levels does not prepare children for entering high school. Problems appear when they have to face competition with others, particularly incomers, leading to poor integration and early exit from school.

*“There are often demonstrations at school if there’s no graduation. Teachers feel threatened..”*

- Students



*“We inflate the scores, which are actually under 30, so that parents do not threaten us.”*

- Teachers

## What is Working Well

- Children going to school and motivated parents
- Volunteer teacher program, by non-government and government agencies
- Few teachers applying interactive teaching methods
- Less strict uniform code, including lenient demands for footwear and often only one uniform instead of 4-5 required elsewhere in Indonesia

## What is Less Well

- High levels of corporal punishment and bullying in school
- Very low teacher-student contact time
- The common practice of having no breakfast before going to school leading to poor concentration in class due to feeling hungry
- Boring lessons in hot classrooms

*“Curriculum should be context specific and language adapted. Can’t apply the Java-based curriculum here.”*

SM3T Teachers, Tambaauw

## Challenges Ahead

- Better understanding of why people want education and better contextualized response to this.
- Demystifying the “magic box” by finding ways to engage parents in schools
- Engaging, fun and context-specific quality education

## How Study Findings can be of Use

According to feedback received from the study’s reference group\*, insights from the study have become inputs for discussion in the development planning process of the education sector, particularly on:

- Opening the decision on choice of language to be used in school to community discussion and preference,
- Developing a communication strategy responsive to communities’ sensitivities over language and culture and the barriers they pose in education,
- Opening up a discussion on prevailing assumptions around socialisation and parenting education to counter the “magic box” understanding.

\*Written feedback from David Harding, PhD of ACDP Indonesia (the Education-Sector’s Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership)

### Rationalize Infrastructure Provision

a new library room has been built next to the old library which has never been used and is locked

The RCA is an internationally recognized qualitative research approach that requires the study team to live with people in poverty in their own homes for a period of time and to use this opportunity to have many informal conversations and interactions with all the members of the household, their neighbours and with the service providers with whom they interact.

For further information about the study please visit

[www.reality-check-approach.com](http://www.reality-check-approach.com)

