



People on the Move

Advancing the Discourse on Migration & Jobs

October 2018

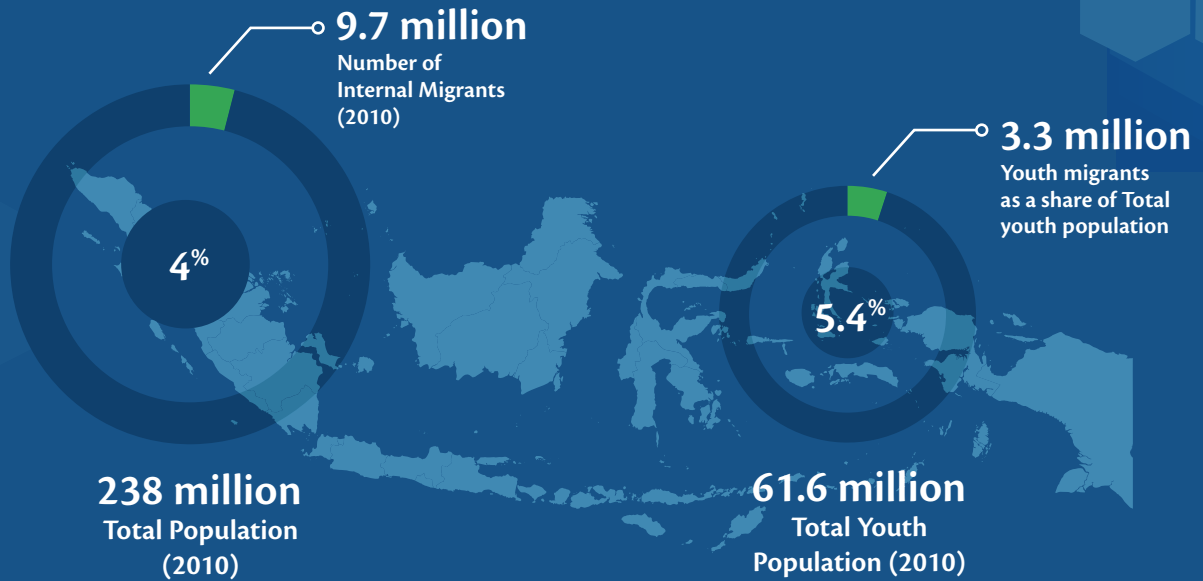
INTERNAL MIGRATION AMONG THE YOUTH IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA

It's not just about the money

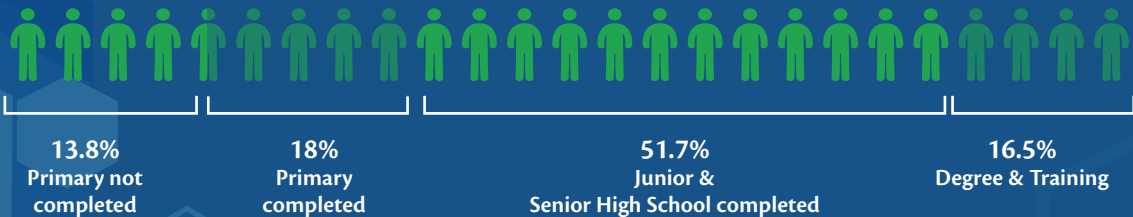
Viesda Pithaloka, Fellow, AKATIGA; Lecturer in Urban and Regional City Planning, National Institute of Technology, Indonesia

AKATIGA is a non-profit research institute that was founded in 1991, by a group of social science researchers at Institut Teknologi Bandung and Bogor Agricultural University. Through various activities, AKATIGA helps the marginalized in expanding their access to resources and policy-making processes, especially in areas such as labor, small business, agriculture, community development, budgetary policy, and public services. AKATIGA provides input and recommendations based on the results of research to drive policy change. The process is done through advocacy and strengthening networks of marginalized groups, civil society, government, the media, and international institutions. This chapter was completed with support from Knowledge Sector Initiative, BAPPENAS, Australian Aid and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

INDONESIA



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* estimates are based on those who have migrated within 5 years between 2005-2010

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Setting the context: East Nusa Tenggara

Inequality between regions in Indonesia is persistent, as development continues to be centered in western Indonesia, and particularly in Java. Java hosts approximately 60 percent of the country's population as well as nearly 60 percent of its economic output. In much of eastern Indonesia, local economies are driven by natural resource sectors, which may create wealth but relatively few jobs.¹ Nevertheless, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's commitment to "develop Indonesia from the peripheries" has come with large-scale state investment in eastern Indonesia, with the hope of spurring more opportunity in some of the country's least developed provinces.²

One of those provinces is East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur, or NTT), an archipelago


province of more than 500 islands in the southeastern corner of Indonesia. Throughout much of Indonesia's colonial and post-colonial era, the central government invested little in NTT's human capital, viewing the province primarily as a site for extractive resource sectors. In the last two years, NTT's economic growth has been higher than Indonesia's overall economic growth, facilitated by state-led infrastructural development.³ However, prior to this, economic growth was around 3-4 percent per year and was even negative from 2011-2012.⁴ NTT remains the third poorest province in Indonesia, with the third-lowest human development index.^{5,6}

NTT is a region with a predominantly rural economy. Agriculture employs 63 percent of the

Table 1

Comparison between NTT and Indonesia



	NTT	Indonesia
 Population (2016)	5.2 million	261.1 million
 Youth Percentage (2015)	25.05%	17.1%
 Economic Growth (2011-2014)	1.19%	5.9%
 Economic Growth (2016)	5.18%	5.02%
 Labor Force Participation Rate (2015)	69.25%	65.76%
 Poverty level (2017)	23%	10.64%

Source: BPS, 2016

labor force in the province.⁷ Unlike other regions of Indonesia, agricultural output is low due to poor land conditions—steep land contours and dryness.⁸ The growth of other job-creating sectors has been of minimal significance due to NTT’s geographical location—far from Indonesia’s main population centers—and inadequate supporting infrastructure. However, tourism has been growing recently, and state-sponsored

infrastructure projects have also begun creating jobs in construction. These sectors account for some of the gradual shift to non-agricultural employment. But this is not sufficient. Within the next few years, it is predicted that one-third of the population in NTT will enter the working age population, meaning rapid growth in the demand for productive jobs.⁹

Migration as a stage of life

Out-migration from NTT in search of employment opportunities and higher incomes is a long-standing pattern, due to the province's chronic underdevelopment. While NTT is widely known for sending high volumes of international migrants—with men frequently working as palm-oil plantation laborers in Malaysia and women as domestic workers through Southeast Asia and the Middle East—internal migration, within the province as well as to other parts of Indonesia, is also significant. As of 2015, of all the migrants, 39 percent move internally within the country, of which 96 percent migrate within the province.¹⁰ As the central government invests more in the infrastructure of the province, migration to the province's urban centers, such as Kupang and Ende, is also on the rise. For example, between 2010 and 2015, net in-migration increased Kupang's population of youth – defined as those between the ages of 15 and 29 years – by 11.3 percent.¹¹ Nearly all of these migrants come from within NTT.

As a study conducted by the International Labour Organization showed, while migration generates remittances, it also has the potential to deplete the local human resource base.¹² Moreover, a JustJobs Network study in the neighboring province of Indonesia demonstrated that remittance capital

does not necessarily deliver long-term economic dynamism in origin communities.¹³ Internal migration of youth in NTT for education and employment raises similar concerns. While many government and donor programs in the region aim to stem migration by creating opportunities in origin communities,¹ the number of migrants, especially among youth, remains high.

In Indonesia, based on SUPAS from 1971 to 2010, people between 20-24 years old are among the highest migrating age-group. Youth (between 15 to 29 years old) in NTT are 25 percent of the total population of the province but comprise 56 percent of the migrant population.¹⁴ Some of the self-reported reasons for migration include education, work and social freedom—i.e. a desire

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to live in a different social and cultural environment, away from familial obligations.¹⁵ A deeper understanding of internal migration patterns among youth in NTT could help identify appropriate policy measures toward supporting just job

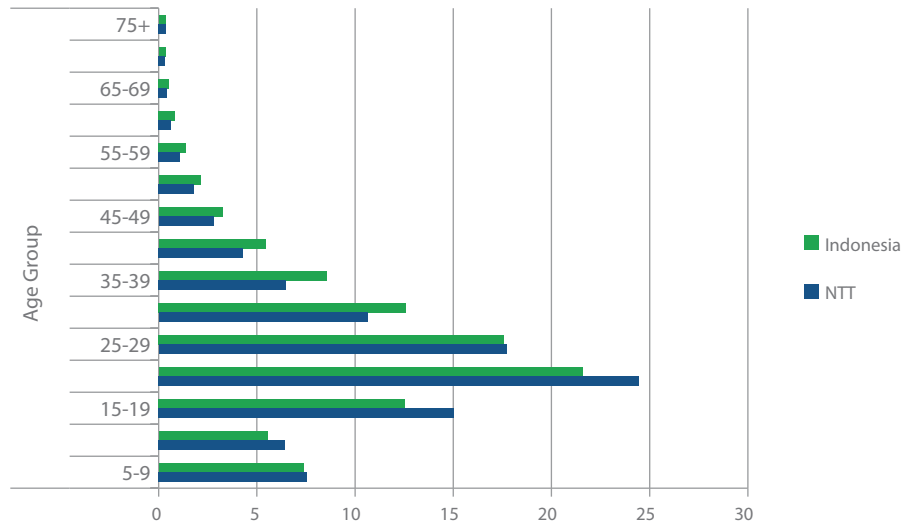
creation for this population.

AKATIGA conducted qualitative research in 2016 in six villages on the islands of Timor, Sumba and

¹ One of donor programs provided by PLAN International is called Youth Economic Empowerment. The program aims to enable youth to start independent businesses in agriculture and horticulture. However, many of the targeted young people still choose to migrate even after receiving the training.

Figure 1

Percentage of people living outside NTT as migrants, by age, 2010



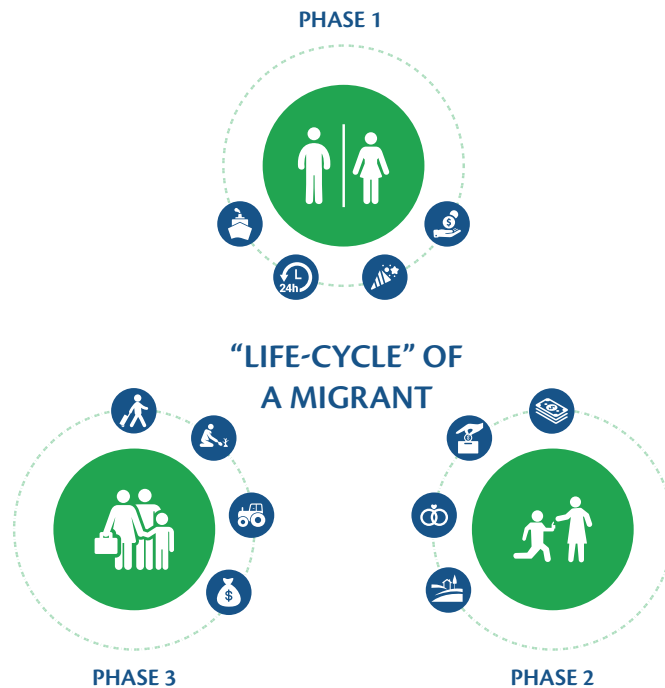
Source: Census 2010. Central Bureau Statistic Indonesia

Flores, all within East Nusa Tenggara. Researchers employed participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with several stakeholder groups: youth, the elderly, the village and district government, vocational schools and a local NGO. Data collection focused on understanding the patterns of youth migration, including social and economic motivations and migration pathways.

Among other insights, qualitative research showed that youth in NTT tend to imagine migration as a key part of their current stage of life. The “life-cycle” of a migrant can be divided into three phases.

In the first phase, youth place high value on new experiences, opportunities and exposure. It is

during this phase that many young people—regardless of whether they have a specific plan or job lined up—migrate to small urban centers within NTT. In urban labor markets like Kupang and Ende, they confront a largely informal labor market that involves different levels and forms of vulnerability. Research by the JustJobs Network and Perkumpulan Pikul, a Kupang-based civil society organization, shows that young male migrants often work in jobs that offer little income security but high levels of flexibility—such as daily wage work at the Kupang port. In contrast, many young female migrants wind up in retail jobs where their employer provides food and accommodation but also places restrictions on their movement and expects them to work long hours.¹⁶



In the second phase, youth begin considering marriage. Both men and women begin considering job opportunities not simply from the perspective of gaining new experiences of earning cash in an urban economy, but also from the perspective of saving for marriage, family life, or even land purchase. It is during this transitional period where many young people who have migrated begin considering the option of returning to their origin communities.

Marriage defines the third phase, and this is the point at which many young people move back to their hometowns. The rate of return depends on where young people have migrated, and likely depends on whether the labor market in that destination has provided stable opportunities. In Kupang, for example, the population of young people aged 15 to 29 swelled by 22 percent due

to in-migration in the 2010-2015 period, and contracted by 10.7 percent due to out-migration (a net in-migration rate of 11.3 percent); this suggests that about half of the young people who come to Kupang decide to leave by the end of their 20s, most of which destined for their origin communities. In Ende, by contrast, both in- and out-migration rates stood at about 11 percent in the 2010-2015 period, suggesting that most of the young people coming to Ende decide to return at some point in their later youth.¹⁷

For many, the return coincides with marriage. Moreover, young men usually inherit agricultural land from their parents when they get married, and this land becomes their source of livelihood. Women do not inherit land from their parents, though they have the right to manage land owned by their husbands.

A targeted approach to skill development?

In summary, the evidence suggests that young people in NTT often migrate as part of a coming-of-age process, seeking out social, cultural and economic opportunity and exposure, but that many will eventually return to their origin communities to pursue traditional occupations, especially given the low quality of jobs available in NTT's urban centers.

This migration pattern may present an opportunity for policymakers and civil society organizations that seek to empower youth with productive skills to prosper in rural locations, in either agricultural or non-farm work. Urban centers like Kupang and Ende host large numbers of young people who will eventually return to rural communities. While government and donor-funded programs are trying to retain youth in villages through economic empowerment programs, it may be that providing skills training in urban locations would do more to accomplish these aims.

For young people who envision their future in the village but who have come to the city for a new experience, to earn more money, or to follow friends, skill development programs could offer training for higher-value-added agricultural activities and better financial management to use savings more productively. Return migrants would carry back valuable skills, therefore, that can help to promote more sustainable economic activity in NTT's rural regions. Meanwhile, for youth who have come to cities and who would

rather retain an urban lifestyle, skill development centers could offer occupational training in sectors with increasing labor demand in NTT, such as construction, real estate and tourism.

Not only would this approach harness the volumes of youth in NTT's urban centers—reaching more youth than ad hoc programs implemented in a few villages here and there—it would also grant young people more agency to choose the skills they want to develop, based on the way they imagine their future. Using limited government and non-profit funding efficiently, the same physical infrastructure could be used to train young people in both rural and urban occupations.

A final benefit to this approach would be its greater gender sensitivity. According to Perkumpulan Pikul, some female migrants are motivated to migrate by their lack of land inheritance—meaning they do not see a future for themselves in agriculture.¹⁸ If women are presented with a variety of skill development opportunities in urban locations where they have migrated, they have greater agency to choose between agricultural and non-farm occupations, whether their intention is to remain in their destination or return home. The size and scope of village-based programs rarely offer the chance for this kind of gender sensitivity.

In order to achieve sustainable and equitable economic growth, it is important to understand

not only economic but also the demographic dynamics of the region. Patterns and trends in migration, factors that motivate youth to move out of their villages and then come back, and their

aspirations, skills and experiences will provide insights to guide focused policy design and intervention for holistic and long-term impact.

Endnotes

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JustJobs

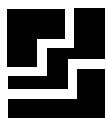
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