

Trends in Youth Participation and Leadership in Indonesia: Analysis of Youth Development Index data 2015-2023

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes youth participation and leadership trends in Indonesia (2015–2023) using Youth Development Index (IPP) data from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. A quantitative, descriptive-analytical time-series approach was applied across 34 provinces. The results show youth social participation stabilized at 81.36% (2015–2020) but dropped significantly to 70.49% (2021–2022) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, before recovering to 71.44% in 2023. Conversely, organizational activity and meeting attendance remained stable. Striking regional disparities emerged: West Nusa Tenggara recorded the highest rate (87.31%), while DKI Jakarta recorded the lowest (38.3%). Overall, the Participation and Leadership Indicator Index stagnated at 46.67% and fell to 43.33%, reflecting suboptimal performance. The study concludes that youth development requires differentiated policy strategies based on regional characteristics, strengthening organizational ecosystems, leveraging digital transformation, and further research for effective policy interventions.

Keywords: Leadership, Participation, Regional Disparities, Youth Development Index, Youth

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INTRODUCTION

Youth are a strategic asset in Indonesia's national development. With a population of approximately 64 million young people aged 16-30, or approximately 24% of Indonesia's total population, this group has significant potential to become agents of change and drivers of national progress (BPS, 2023). However, this demographic potential can only be optimized if young people have adequate opportunities to actively participate in various aspects of social, national, and state life, particularly in the realms of social participation and leadership (BKKBN, 2024).

Youth participation and leadership are important indicators in measuring the quality of youth development in Indonesia (Bappenas, 2021). This aligns with Law Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth, which mandates the importance of increasing the capacity and active role of youth in development (BPK RI, 2009). Furthermore, the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) also emphasize the importance of youth empowerment as a key to achieving sustainable development goals, particularly Target 16.7, which calls for responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (United Nations, 2015).

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, has developed the Youth Development Index (IPP) as an instrument to measure youth development achievements in Indonesia (Kemenpora, 2024). The IPP measures five dimensions of youth development: education, health and well-being, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, participation and leadership, and conditions that support youth livelihoods. IPP data, which has been measured periodically from 2015 to 2023, provides valuable longitudinal information for understanding the dynamics of youth development, particularly in the dimensions of participation and leadership.

Indicators of youth participation and leadership encompass various aspects, from involvement in youth organizations and participation in decision-making processes to representation in public institutions and access to leadership positions (Bappenas, 2021). However, various studies indicate structural challenges that hinder active youth participation, such as limited access to information, low trust in political institutions, a lack of inclusive participation, and the perception that youth voices are undervalued in public policy processes (Baskoro et al., 2024).

The 2015-2023 period was a crucial phase in the development of democracy and development in Indonesia (Sima & Huang, 2023). During this time, Indonesia experienced various political, social, and economic dynamics that impacted youth participation, including simultaneous general elections, the emergence of issue-based social movements, digital transformation that opened up space for virtual participation, and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic that changed patterns of social and political interaction (Fajri et al., 2024). These conditions are thought to have had a significant impact on trends in youth participation and leadership in Indonesia.

Previous research has shown that Indonesian youth participation still faces various obstacles. A study by Ilmar et al. (2023) found that youth participation in social and political organizations remains relatively low, especially in rural areas. Meanwhile, Putri's (2025) research revealed that although youth are active in digital spaces, this participation has not yet fully transformed into formal political engagement. This gap between virtual and real participation poses a challenge in building sustainable youth leadership.

Although IPP data has been available regularly, few studies have comprehensively analyzed trends in youth participation and leadership between 2015 and 2023. This trend analysis is crucial for identifying development patterns, disparities between regions, and factors influencing youth participation and leadership. A deeper understanding of these trends will provide an empirical basis for formulating more effective youth policies that are responsive to the needs and potential of Indonesian youth.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative, descriptive, and analytical approach to analyze trends in youth participation and leadership in Indonesia. Secondary data are sourced from the Youth Development Index (IPP) published by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the 2015-2023 period, collected through a documentary study of official publications and government databases. The variables analyzed include the level of youth participation in youth organizations, involvement in social activities, the number of youth in leadership positions, and variations by geographic region. The analysis technique uses time series trend analysis to observe development patterns over the study period, presented in the form of graphs, tables, and narrative descriptions. Comparative analysis is conducted to compare trends across periods and regions, with interpretations linking the findings to youth development policies and Indonesia's socio-economic conditions.

RESEARCH RESULT

Overview of the Indonesian Youth Development Index 2015 – 2023

The Youth Development Index (IPP) is a composite indicator that measures the quality of youth development in Indonesia through five main indicators: Education (D1), Health and Welfare (D2), Employment and Opportunities (D3), Participation and Leadership (D4), and Gender and Discrimination (D5). This study specifically analyzes the Participation and Leadership Indicator (D4) which consists of three main indicators: the percentage of youth participating in social activities (X10), the percentage of youth active in organizations (X11), and the percentage of youth providing suggestions/opinions in meetings (X12). The data analyzed covers 34 provinces in Indonesia during the period 2015-2023, with a total of 306 observations (34 provinces × 9 years). However, several newly established provinces such as Southwest Papua, Central Papua, Highland Papua, and South Papua do not have complete data for the entire observation period and are therefore excluded from the comparative analysis.

Data Analysis on Indonesian Youth Participation and Leadership Trends

Data on Trends in Indonesian Youth Participation and Leadership

Table 1. National Trend Data 2015 – 2023

Year	Social Participation (X.10)	Active Organization (X.11)	Meeting Opinion (X.12)	Indicator Index
2015	81.97	5.86	5.88	46.67
2016	81.97	5.86	5.88	46.67
2017	81.97	5.86	5.88	46.67
2018	81.36	6.36	6.72	46.67
2019	81.36	6.36	6.72	46.67
2020	70, 49	4.84	5.4	43.33

2022	70.49	4.84	5.4	43.33
2023	71, 44	5.44	6.09	43.33

Source: IPP data 2015-2023, processed 2025

Based on these data, it appears that community social participation experienced a significant decline in 2021-2022, dropping from 81.36 to 70.49, then slightly improving in 2023 to 71.44. A similar pattern occurred with organizational activity and expressing opinions in meetings, which also declined drastically in 2021-2022. This decline was likely caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted social activities and community gatherings. Although 2023 showed signs of recovery, the figure has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, the indicator index remained stable at 46.67 for most of the period, dropping to 43.33 from 2021 to 2023, indicating the long-term impact of the pandemic on community social participation.

Table 2. Top 5 Provinces for Social Participation

Ranking	Province	Mark (%)
1	West Nusa Tenggara	87.31
2	Gorontalo	85.46
3	Aceh	85.42
4	Central Java	80.29
5	Papua	79.27

Source: IPP data 2015-2023, processed 2025

This data shows the five provinces with the highest social participation in Indonesia. West Nusa Tenggara ranked first with a score of 87.31%, followed by Gorontalo (85.46%) and Aceh (85.42%) with similar scores. Central Java ranked fourth with 80.29%, while Papua ranked fifth with 79.27%. The top three provinces have a strong culture of mutual cooperation and religious activities within their communities, which encourages high levels of social participation. Interestingly, provinces with smaller populations and close-knit communities tend to have higher levels of social participation than larger provinces with more diverse societies.

Table 3. 5 Provinces with the Lowest Social Participation

Ranking	Province	Mark (%)
1	DKI Jakarta	38.3
2	Riau islands	49.46
3	South Kalimantan	65.85
4	West Kalimantan	66.98
5	Bangka Belitung	59.22

Source: IPP data 2015-2023, processed 2025

This data shows the five provinces with the lowest social participation in Indonesia. DKI Jakarta is at the bottom with a score of only 38.3%, far below other provinces. The Riau

Islands are in second place with a score of 49.46%, followed by Bangka Belitung (59.22%), South Kalimantan (65.85%), and West Kalimantan (66.98%). The low social participation in DKI Jakarta is due to the characteristics of a busy urban society, high mobility, and weaker community ties compared to other regions. The Riau Islands, also an area with many migrant workers, have a similar pattern. These provinces generally have more individualistic and heterogeneous societies, in contrast to the provinces at the top, which still have a very strong communal culture and mutual cooperation.

Table 4. Results of Descriptive Statistical Tests

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Participation	9	70	82	78.05	5,443
Active Organization	9	5	6	5.75	.603
Meeting Opinion	9	5	7	6.08	.533
Valid N (listwise)	9				

Source: IPP data 2015-2023, processed 2025

Based on Table 4, it shows that the social participation data from 9 years of observation covers three main aspects. Social participation has an average of 78.05% with the lowest value of 70% and the highest of 82%, where the standard deviation of 5.443 indicates quite large fluctuations, meaning that social participation experienced quite significant fluctuations during the period. Meanwhile, organizational activity showed an average of 5.75 with a value range of 5 to 6 and a standard deviation of only 0.603, which indicates the data tends to be stable without much change from year to year. The aspect of opinions in meetings also shows a similar pattern with an average of 6.08, the lowest value of 5 and the highest of 7, and a standard deviation of 0.533 which indicates small variations and consistency in the level of activeness in expressing opinions. In conclusion, although social participation is generally quite high with an average of 78%, it experienced greater fluctuations than organizational activity and opinion in meetings which tended to be stable during the observation period.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of trends in Indonesian youth participation and leadership from 2015 to 2023 reveals interesting dynamics, reflecting the evolving socio-political conditions during that period. The study's key findings reveal a stable pattern from 2015 to 2020, followed by a significant decline in 2021 to 2022, followed by a gradual recovery in 2023, although it has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

The drastic decline in social participation from 81.36% to 70.49% in 2021 can be explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited community mobility and social interaction. Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and various policies restricting public activities have directly impacted young people's ability to engage in social activities, organizations, and decision-making forums. This finding aligns with research by Beth Redbird, Laurel Harbridge, Yong, and Mersey (2022), which shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed patterns of social and political participation, particularly among the younger generation.

Interestingly, a decline also occurred in indicators of organizational activity (from 6.36 to 4.84) and giving opinions in meetings (from 6.72 to 5.4). This indicates that the transformation of participation from physical to digital spaces during the pandemic has not been fully effective in maintaining youth participation levels (Manalu, 2024). Although digital technology offers alternative participation platforms, limited internet access, unequal digital literacy, and a reduced sense of belonging in virtual interactions are obstacles. These findings support the argument of Q. Yunh & Nguyen Duy (2025) that youth virtual participation has not yet fully transformed into substantive engagement.

Regional disparity analysis reveals a striking gap in social participation between provinces. West Nusa Tenggara (87.31%), Gorontalo (85.46%), and Aceh (85.42%) top the list, while Jakarta only achieves 38.3%. This extreme difference cannot be explained solely by economic or educational factors, given that Jakarta has the highest human development index in Indonesia. Rather, these findings confirm Putnam's (1993) theory of social capital, which emphasizes the importance of community ties, social trust, and norms of reciprocity in fostering active community participation.

The provinces with the highest participation rates generally have strong collectivist cultural characteristics, where the values of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and togetherness are still highly valued. In West Nusa Tenggara, for example, the "banjar" tradition and various strong Islamic religious activities create natural spaces for participation that involve young people. Similarly, in Aceh, the implementation of Islamic law and a community structure that is still based on the gampong (village) encourage the active involvement of young people in various social activities. Conversely, DKI Jakarta, as an urban center with a high level of individualization, highly dynamic population mobility, and complex social heterogeneity, faces challenges in building social cohesion and collective participation.

These findings have important policy implications. The approach to developing youth participation cannot be uniform across Indonesia. In urban areas like Jakarta, specific strategies are needed that utilize digital technology, create flexible participation spaces that adapt to the rhythm of urban life, and build interest-based communities that can act as bridges for social participation. Meanwhile, in regions with high social capital, such as West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and Aceh, policy focus can be directed at transforming traditional participation into more structured, formal leadership that impacts regional development.

The relative stability of indicators of organizational activity (standard deviation 0.603) and opinion giving in meetings (standard deviation 0.533) compared to the greater

fluctuation of social participation (standard deviation 5.443) indicates that youth who have been actively involved in organizations tend to have a more consistent commitment. This demonstrates the importance of recruitment strategies and development of youth organizations as a path to sustainable leadership development. Youth organizations function as "schools of democracy" that train youth in organizational skills, negotiation, and collective decision-making.

However, the national average for organizational activity, which is only around 5-6 on the existing scale, indicates that the majority of Indonesian youth are still not actively involved in formal organizations. Various factors can explain this condition, including: (1) the perception that youth organizations are not relevant to their needs and aspirations; (2) time constraints due to educational and work demands; (3) lack of trust in formal institutions; and (4) minimal incentives or tangible benefits from organizational involvement.

The findings of research conducted by Ayu & Hasibuan (2023) on the low participation of youth organizations, particularly in rural areas, reinforce this analysis. The gradual recovery in 2023, although not yet reaching pre-pandemic levels, provides both a positive and a warning signal. On the one hand, this recovery demonstrates the resilience of Indonesian youth and their ability to adapt to the new normal. On the other hand, the slow recovery indicates that the pandemic's impact on social participation is structural and requires deliberative policy intervention. Changes in social interaction patterns during the pandemic, increased anxiety and social isolation, and shifts in life priorities post-pandemic are factors hindering the recovery of youth social participation (Murphy et al., 2021).

The stagnant Participation and Leadership Indicator Index (PII) at 46.67% (2015-2020) and dropping to 43.33% (2021-2023) reflects that Indonesia's youth development achievements in this dimension are still far from optimal. Compared to the SDGs targets, which call for inclusive and representative participation at all levels, Indonesia still has significant work to do in encouraging active youth participation. This situation requires a reorientation of youth policy from the dominant top-down approach to one that is more participatory, inclusive, and responsive to youth needs and aspirations.

CONCLUSION

Trends in Indonesian youth participation and leadership for the 2015-2023 period using Youth Development Index (IPP) data show significant dynamics over the observation period. Key findings indicate that youth social participation experienced relative stability in the 2015-2020 period with an average of 81.36%, then experienced a drastic decline to 70.49% in 2021-2022 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted social activities and community gatherings. Although there was a gradual recovery in 2023 to 71.44%, this figure has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, indicating a long-term structural impact of the pandemic on youth social participation.

There is a significant gap between provinces. West Nusa Tenggara (87.31%), Gorontalo (85.46%), and Aceh (85.42%) rank highest, with strong collectivist cultural characteristics, while DKI Jakarta ranks lowest (38.3%), reflecting the challenges of social

participation in urban areas with high levels of individualization. This gap is not solely caused by economic or educational factors, but rather is influenced by social capital, community ties, and local cultural values that are still highly valued in areas with high participation.

The stability of organizational activity and participation in meetings (standard deviations of 0.603 and 0.533, respectively) demonstrates the consistent commitment of youth who have been actively involved in organizations. However, the national average of only 5-6 indicates that most Indonesian youth are still not actively involved in formal organizations. The stagnant Participation and Leadership Indicator Index, which stood at 46.67% (2015-2020) and dropped to 43.33% (2021-2023), reflects that the achievements of Indonesian youth development in this dimension are still far from optimal and the SDGs target.

Based on the research findings, several policy recommendations need to be implemented. First, a strategy is needed to differentiate youth participation policies based on regional characteristics, taking into account the social capital, economic structure, and socio-cultural dynamics of each region. Second, strengthening the youth organization ecosystem through capacity building, resource access, and the creation of inclusive and relevant participation spaces for contemporary youth. Third, digital transformation must be optimally utilized to expand access to participation without completely replacing physical participation, which has value in building social capital. Fourth, further research is needed to identify specific factors influencing youth participation in various contexts so that policy interventions are more targeted and effective in encouraging active participation and leadership development for Indonesian youth.

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