

## SUCCESS STORY

### Legal Aid in Indonesia: Clearing the Path to Justice



C4J staff meet with women and children in a village to discuss their challenges accessing legal aid to identify solutions for better access to court services. According to the Indonesia Children Protection Commission (KPAI), nearly 50 million children do not possess a birth certificate in Indonesia. Not having a birth certificate will impede their access to health services, school enrolment, passport, and the right to vote.

An old man in his best red shirt came to the Sidoarjo District Court, East Java, and sat anxiously in a corner of the legal aid room awaiting his turn for assistance with a birth certificate petition. In another corner, an intern busily checked a big pile of petitions for birth certificates. “I’ve learned from my neighbors that now we can file birth certificate petitions without having to pay any court fees,” the old man said. He was not alone. Outside the room other justice seekers were waiting for their turn. This service is essential because all children older than one year must have their birth certificate processed through the general courts.

SEMA 10 of 2010, the Supreme Court’s regulation on providing legal aid services in the general district courts, includes directions on such services as administering waivers from court fees (*prodeo*), mobile courts (*sidang keliling* or *zitting platz*), and the room for providing legal aid services (*posbakum*).

In March 2012, the USAID Changes for Justice (C4J) Project, hosted a national workshop in cooperation with the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia and the World Bank’s Justice for the Poor (J4P) Program to improve implementation of SEMA 10. Courts like Sidoarjo have since acknowledged that the national SEMA 10 workshop and the civil case technical guidelines, issued following the workshop, have assisted them to provide more effective services to the poor, including birth certificate petitions.

One judge at the Sidoarjo District Court noted: “After the national SEMA 10 [legal aid] workshop in Jakarta, the number of birth certificate petitions has increased significantly.”

Birth certificate petitions are currently the most popular form of legal aid support requested in the courts. To meet demand, the Sidoarjo District Court has dedicated more funds for fee waivers. In larger district courts in nearby cities like Surabaya, petitions for birth certificates have already exceeded 8,000 this year. Such improved services are motivating more and more of the public to find their paths to justice at the front door of the court.

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