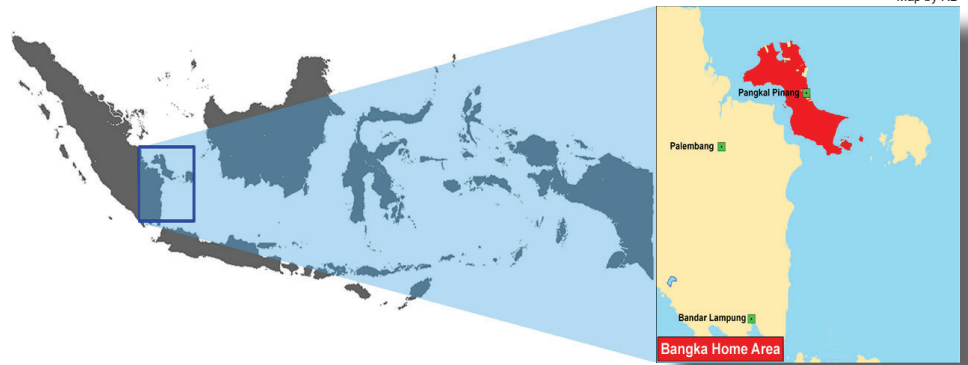


BANGKA



Photo by RD

Persiapan Makan Siang Bersama di Masjid



Map by RD

Demography	Bangka Language	Status
Location: Bangka Belitung Population: 375.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: < 15 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Bangka live on the island of Bangka in the South China Sea, off the east coast of Sumatra in Bangka-Belitung Province. Other Indonesians often visit this island because it has beautiful beaches and it is easy to reach from Palembang, the capital of the province of South Sumatra. Inhabitants of the island are composed of two groups: those of Malay descent and those of Chinese descent. Both of these groups call themselves Bangka. Nevertheless, differences exist between the groups including physical traits, economic status, and place of residence. The Malay of Bangka are typically dark skinned and not very wealthy, tending toward poverty. Both groups tend to live in ethnic neighborhood clusters. About 60% of the population of Bangka Island are Bangka Malay and about 25% are Bangka Chinese.

The Bangka language is part of the Malay language cluster. There are also some minor differences between the area dialects of Bangka, but they are mutually intelligible.

Society and Culture

The island of Bangka is famous for widespread tin mining, which has been developed since the 18th and 19th centuries. Bangka was influenced by the Hindu kingdoms of Indonesia. This can be seen in the artifacts and ancient inscriptions found there. For example, the "Lime City Inscription" is estimated to have been written in 686 AD.

Bangka people earn their living in a variety of ways. Many work in the tin mines. Others work as farmers, fishermen and boat builders. They also makes handicrafts such as necklaces, doormats, and items of porcelain and ceramic, and engravings in tin. Many of those who live in the city are traders or businessmen, especially those of Chinese descent.

The line of descent is bilateral (traced through both parents). According to tradition, the newly married couple does not live near either set of parents. As a result there are many mixed marriages between the Bangka and other ethnic groups that have come into the area. This outside influence can be seen in their wedding customs. The engagement ceremony is typically done in a traditional singing dialogue. This is done by the groom's side by giving gifts to the prospective bride. The groom sings part of a poem and the bride answers with a poem in kind. Islamic influence is evident in the wedding procession which is accompanied by tambourines and drums. Another regional art form is sepintu segudan, a drama telling the story of the community working together to help one another.

Beliefs

Most Bangka people are Muslim, especially the Bangka Malay, while the Chinese background Bangka are Buddhist or Confucian. The Bangka Malay mix Islam with animism, which is still very common in the community.

Needs

Currently, the tin mining industry has decreased because little recoverable tin is left to mine. The land that has been mined is ruined and very difficult to reforest or use for farming. The government has put in place regulations which forbid community mining without permission, but permission is very difficult to receive. This decision has had a negative impact on the community because much of the population has been dependent for years on income from tin mining. It is very difficult to find alternative livelihoods due to the people's lack of skills. Because of this, the greatest need at this time is to develop the skills of the Bangka community. Among the possibilities are tourism and developing the fishing industry, which still has great potential.