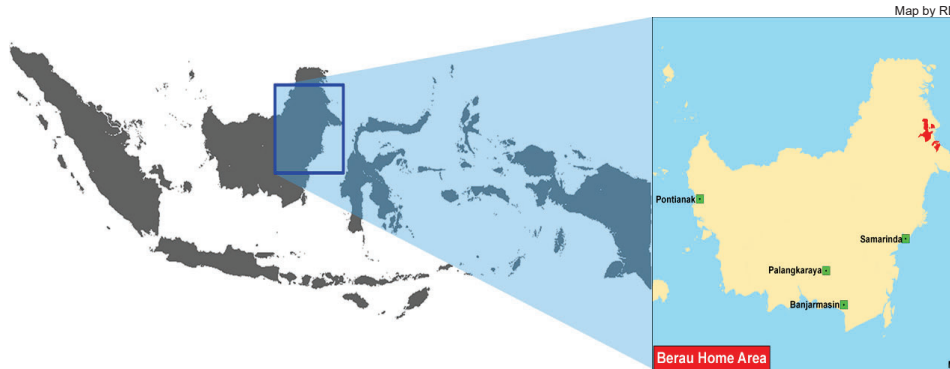


BERAU



Photo by RD



Demography	Berau Language	Status
Location: North Kalimantan Population: 22.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: <20 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Berau people live in the Berau Regency of East Kalimantan. In Sambaliung District they live in Sambaliung, Bangun Bebanir, Gurimbang, Tanjung Perangat, Suaran, Rantau Panjang, Pegat Bukur, and Tumbit Melayu. In Gunung Tabur District they live in Gunung Tabur, Birang, Maulang, Samburakat, Pulau Besing, Merancang Ulu and Batubatu. And in the Tali Sayan District they live in Biatan Ilir, Biatan Ulu, Biatan Lempak, Biatan Bapinang, Karangan, Tabalar Muara, Tabalar Ulu and Tubaan. In these villages, they frequently mix with other groups, especially the Dayak, Jawa and Bugis peoples. The Berau speak their own language, which differentiates them from other ethnic groups in East Kalimantan.

Society and Culture

The Berau mainly make their living as either farmers or fishermen. The farmers grow sweet potatoes, cassava, lentils, fruits, and vegetables. Like other Kalimantan ethnic groups in general, the Berau practice migratory agriculture (shifting from one field to another) mainly because they cannot maintain the soil's fertility.

New farmland is opened by cutting down trees and burning the underbrush. The initial clearing of a field is accomplished with the help of a large group of neighbors. Some Berau living in cities work for government or private businesses. Others work as craftsmen or day laborers. The Berau also produce a handicraft of specially woven fabric, which they often sell to outsiders. A new form of income that has developed recently is the presenting of their traditional ceremonies as a tourist attraction.

Most of the Berau follow the patrilineal kinship system

(tracing descent from the father). Male superiority and dominance is seen in every aspect of life. The men determine issues concerning marriage and rights. In the past, the Berau had class distinctions but these have faded in modern times. Today, wealth and formal education are determiners of one's social status. The richer a person is or the higher a person's formal education, the higher their social standing.

Beliefs

Nowadays most Berau identify themselves as Muslims. However, many Berau people still believe in animism, believing that spirits are in all places and influence humans. Thus, traditional Berau rituals and ceremonies focus on seeking protection through magic by appeasing and controlling both good and bad spirits.

A shaman plays an important role in Berau society and is often asked to use spells to heal sicknesses or initiate other favorable results in people's lives.

Needs

Since the Berau are nomadic, most of them do not have opportunities for a formal education. Typically, only those who are settled receive a formal education. The areas where the Berau live are rich in mining resources, such as gold, coal, lead, zinc, petroleum, and natural gas. These areas also have forestry products like rattan, resin, and wood. Unfortunately, the abundant natural resources have not been managed optimally, so they do not provide the Berau with a better life. For this reason, better management efforts are needed to improve their human resources and help them become self-sufficient and confident. ^(E-RD)