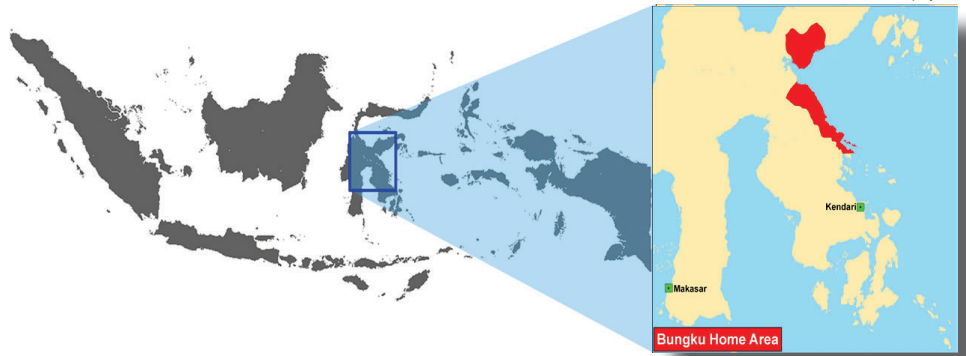


BUNGKU



Demography	Bungku Language	Status
Location: Southeast Sulawesi Population: 38.000 Major religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: <5 Engaged: Yes Indigenous church: 0

Identity and Location

The Bungku people live in the districts of North Bungku, Central Bungku, South Bungku and Menui, in the Poso Regency of Central Sulawesi Province. They are also found in several other areas of Sulawesi. The Bungku people are further divided into subgroups: Lambatu, Epe, Rete and Ro'Uta.

Their language is called Bungku, which has several dialects. The Bungku language is part of the larger Eastern Bungku-Tolaki linguistic group which also includes the Moronene, Kulisusu, Taloki, Koroni, Wawonii, and Mori languages. The immigrant communities in this area use their own languages, such as Bugis, Bajau and Javanese. Many marriages take place between the Bungku people and the immigrant peoples, hence the relationship between the groups is relatively good in this region.

Society and Culture

The Bungku make their living as farmers. They grow rice, corn and sweet potatoes as their primary crops, and coconuts and sago palm trees as their secondary crops.

The Bungku also harvest the resin of certain trees and rattan from the thick jungles that still exist in their area. Their land is typically less fertile than other areas of Southeast Sulawesi.

In the past, Bungku communities were segregated into three classes. The heads of the village formed the elite group. The common people formed the middle group. The slaves were the final and lowest group. The Bungku people once lived in remote inland areas and had little contact with outsiders.

With the building of the Trans-Sulawesi highway, they have become more open to outsiders. Although they are

inhabitants of Southeast Sulawesi, their culture is greatly influenced by the Bugis culture of South Sulawesi. According to local history, some of the Bungku ancestors were a group of Bugis who migrated to the area.

Beliefs

The majority of Bungku have embraced Islam. At the same time, older traditional animistic beliefs are still maintained. For instance, the Bungku still believe in various kinds of spirits and practice various rituals to either pacify or control them. They often ask a dukun (shaman) to intercede with the spirits on their behalf.

Needs

At the present time, the Bungku need assistance and training to manage their coconut, resin and rattan plantations more professionally. Outside training by professionals who would not exploit the Bungku people would be a great contribution to their economic development. Until now, management of these plantations has been done through traditional methods, which have been hampered by insufficient infrastructure.

The roads that link the regency capital, Poso, with other surrounding plantation areas such as Beteleme, Bungku, North Lore, and South Lore are very inadequate. Many investors are needed to develop these plantation areas. Inexpensive medical care and medicines are needed in interior rural areas. Because of financial limitations, transportation problems and other factors, the Bungku people only seek medical help in extreme emergencies.

(E-DM)