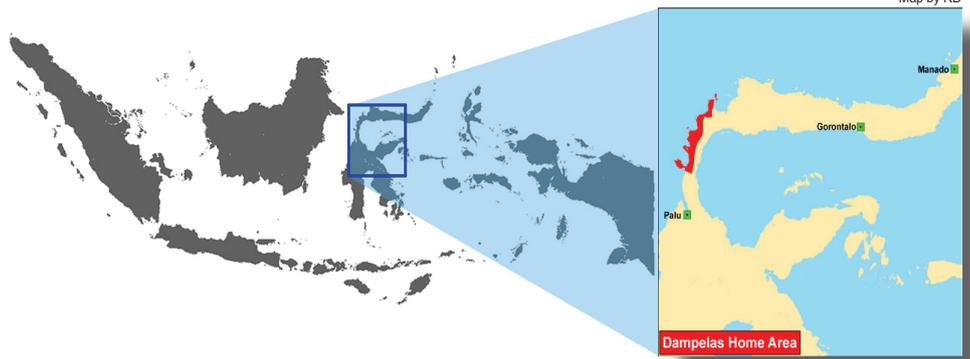


# DAMPELAS



Demography	Dampelas Language	Status
Location: Central Sulawesi	Bible: No	Believers: <5
Population: 12.000	Jesus Film: No	Engaged: Yes
Major religion: Islam	Online Media: No	Indigenous church: 0

## Identity and Location

The Dampelas people live in Damsol District (Dampelas Sojo), in Buol Regency of Central Sulawesi Province. Their home area, on the northwestern peninsula of Sulawesi, is bounded by the straits of Makassar to the west, Tomini District to the east, and South Dampal District to the south.

The Dampelas language is similar to the Tomini language. The word Dampelas originated from the words dampe and las. The word dampe means “seed” or “ancestry”. The word las is used as an abbreviation of Ihlas, the name of the first king who ruled in this area. Therefore, “Dampelas” means those descended from the line of King Ihlas. Before the Dutch entered, this area was a small kingdom under the rule of King Banawa. The Dampelas language is part of a larger linguistic grouping called the Southern Tomini subgroup which also includes the Balaesang, Pendau, Taje and Tajio languages.

## Society and Culture

The Dampelas people believe their ancestors were Tomanoru. The Tomanoru came from heaven and took the form of plants. One of these heavenly plants became a human.

The main sources of income for the Dampelas are hunting, farming, and handicrafts. As a result of their farming methods, they are frequently forced to move as they don’t know methods to keep the soil fertile. So when the land begins to produce a poor crop they move to look for a more fertile area. Most of their area is mountainous and is used for agricultural purposes.

*The Dampelas believe that their forefathers were Tomanoru. These beings from heaven could incarnate themselves in certain plants and one of these incarnated plants became a man*

The jungle yields a harvest of rattan, lumber and resin. The major commodities of the area that are exported to other islands are copra, cloves, rattan and resin.

Traditional handicrafts include woven silk and crafts made from cloves exclusive to Toli-Toli.

## Beliefs

The Dampelas have been Muslim for generations. Many of them are proud of their Islamic identity and seek to devoutly follow the five pillars of Islam. However, many of them still hold to traditional animistic beliefs, such as belief in powerful spirits and sacred places. These sacred places are believed to give protection to people. They also function as places where people can ask for special blessings in accordance with following certain customs.

The Dampelas use weapons or amulets with supernatural powers to thwart enemy attacks. People who use these weapons are said to become “tough skinned” so as to be invulnerable to knives and other weapons. Many seek the help of a dukun (shaman/healer/occultist) to prevent sickness or to cast out evil spirits.

One of the Dampelas traditions is the mogupa ceremony. This ceremony is a blend of cultural and Islamic elements. It is performed as a means of honoring the spirits of the ancestors. Moguto buwiyan is a ceremony to drive out epidemics or serious illness. Other life cycle ceremonies include the monilam (circumcision) and malead (filing of teenagers’ teeth as a sign of becoming adults).

## Needs

Lake Talaga is a beautiful lake near the Dampelas home. The lake as well as the seafront provide significant potential for developing tourism and fisheries, which could increase the people’s income. Working with the government to promote tourism would be a huge benefit to the Dampelas. <sup>(E-RD)</sup>