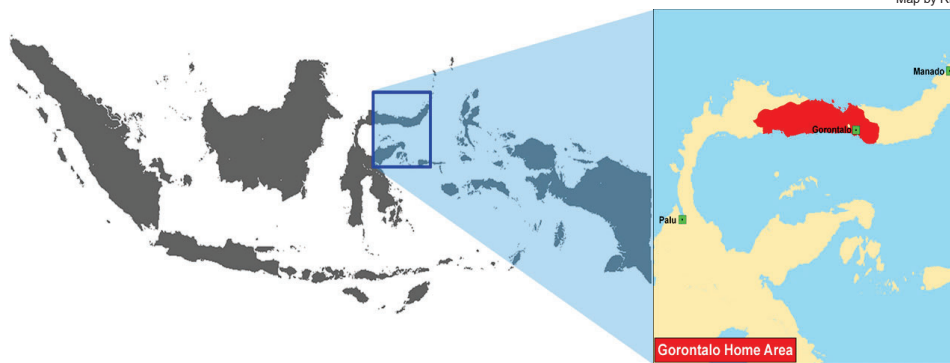


GORONTALO



| Demography | Gorontalo Language | Status |
|---|---|---|
| Location: Gorontalo Population: 1.100.000 Major religion: Islam | Bible: Yes Jesus Film: Yes Online Media: No | Believers: <500 Engaged: Yes Indigenous church: 0 |

Identity and Location

The Gorontalo people live in on the island of Sulawesi in Gorontalo Province. They are bordered on the east by North Sulawesi Province, on the west by Central Sulawesi Province, by the Sulawesi Sea to the north and Tomini Bay to the south. In the year 2000, Gorontalo officially gained provincial status when North Sulawesi Province was divided in two.

The area is composed of extensive coastlines, rugged mountains and a large central valley with beautiful Lake Limboto at its center. The Gorontalo people have traditionally lived along the coast and in the fertile lowlands beside rivers.

The Gorontalic language family includes three dialects: Gorontalo (spoken by 90% of people in the area), Suwawa in the eastern region, and Atinggola along the northern coast near Bolaang Mongondow Regency.

Society and Culture

The Gorontalo make their living by farming or fishing. Other jobs vary as vastly as selling second-hand clothing in the local market to running national companies. A number of Gorontalo people are powerful national figures as well. Local handicrafts include kopiah dari rotan (a type of Muslim hat), a unique kerawang embroidery and woven mats. Handicraft centers are found in the various surrounding districts as well as the municipality of Gorontalo. Tourists can enjoy views of Lake Limboto from three ancient Portuguese forts. The city offers many hotels and four airlines from the newly expanded airport as well.

Gorontalo genealogy is bilateral (traced through both parents). Within the immediate family, children are not allowed to joke with their father, but must act respectfully. This is also true for interaction with older adult relatives. However, relationships are more relaxed

with grandmothers and older siblings.

Beliefs

The Gorontalo people have been Muslim since the 16th century. They observe Friday prayers with colleagues from work. Many residents also walk to one of their neighborhood mosques for evening prayers. Each village typically has one to three mosques. Fasting is widely observed during the month of Ramadan. Those of higher position or education tend to be more diligent in their religious observances than their poorer village counterparts.

Despite being strongly Islamic, many Gorontalo still believe in motolohuta (supernatural creatures) and hulobalangi (mysterious powers) of which they are both fearful and fascinated. Many people believe that the graves of people who possessed supernatural powers in ancient days are sacred. These graves are scattered throughout Gorontalo.

Needs

Gorontalo leaders are aware of the challenges inherent in organizing and governing a new province. Public projects such as creating drainage systems as well as the opening of new businesses (restaurants, local printers and others) are important parts of ongoing development.

Outside investors are highly sought after to create jobs and train local workers. However, many Gorontalo are still dependent on the government or an associated agency to coordinate the distribution of their crops and products. Population increase and monetary crises related have resulted in widespread malnourishment. Additionally, illegal logging has opened the way for rampant erosion and infertile slopes.

