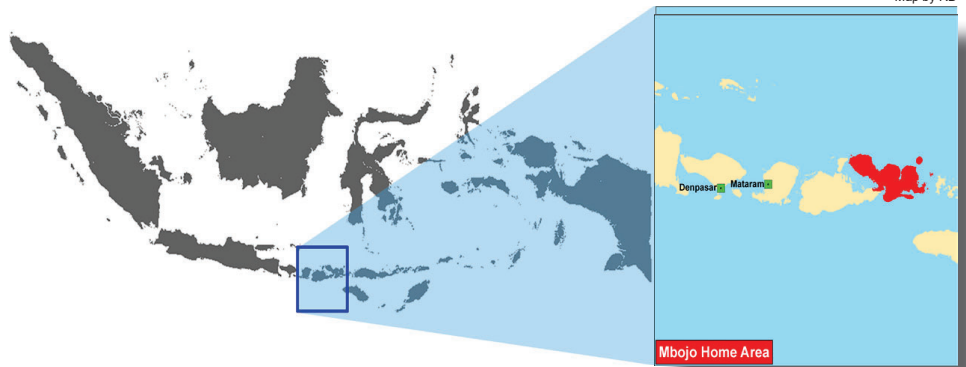


# MBOJO



Photo by GB & BW



Map by RD

Demography	Mbojo Language	Status
Location: NTB Population: 800.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: NT Jesus Film: Yes Online Media: No	Believers: <200 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 7 (home)

## Identity and Location

The Mbojo, also referred to as the Bima or Dompju, live in the low flatlands of the Bima and Dompju regencies in the province of West Nusa Tenggara, on the eastern side of the island of Sumbawa. Some of them also live on the island of Sangeang. Although this area has a long coastline with many bays, most of the population do not make their living from the sea. The northern part of their land is a fertile area while the southern part is barren. The Mbojo language, called Nggahi Mbojo has several dialects, known as Bima, Bima Donggo and Sangeang.

## Society and Culture

The main livelihood of the Mbojo is farming and also wet rice farming using the irrigation system called panggawa. They are also very well-known as horse breeders. Many of the women are skilled braiders of floor mats using bamboo and coconut palm leaves, while others are adept weavers of the famous traditional cloth from their area known as tembe nggoli. While many Mbojo have moved outside their homeland, many people from other ethnic backgrounds have moved into their area. The villages of the Mbojo are called kampo or kampe; they are led by a village head called a Neuhi.



Photo by GD & BW

This top village leader is helped in his work by highly respected village elders. The position of village leader is inherited, being passed down in a family from one generation to the next. The Mbojo are not closed off to outside influences. In the past they viewed education as a threat to their cultural traditions, but now they support education from early elementary school through university studies. They now hold the perspective that outside influences are good especially in the areas of culture and technology. The modes of transportation in this area include carts and wagons pulled by water buffalo and horse-drawn carts sometimes referred to as benhurs, having taken

that name following the release of the famous American film Ben Hur. In 1969, the Indonesian government established a transmigration site in the Nangameru area of Dompju. As a result, many Jawa people and others from heavily populated areas in Indonesia came into the area as transmigrants. This gave rise to many misunderstandings between the original inhabitants and the transmigrants, and the evident social differences have widened the chasm between the two groups.

## Beliefs

Although most Mbojo are devout Muslims, they still believe in spirits and practice forms of animism. This means that they visit shamans (occultists/spirit experts/traditional healers), who are numerous in the area. They ask for advice and help from these shamans especially in times of difficulty and crisis. The Mbojo are afraid of local gods like Batara Gangga (chief of the gods), Batara Guru, Idadari Sakti and Jeneng, as well as other spirit types called Bake and Jin, which live in trees and high mountains. They believe these spirits can bring sickness and disasters. They also believe in and fear the sacred trees in Kalate and Murmas, where the god Batara and the gods of Mt. Rinjani dwell. The Mbojo call their belief in the spirits of the ancestors pareno bongi. In the 1930s, hundreds of Mbojo in the mountain areas around Dompju heard the gospel and received it. Today there are four villages in the mountains with a "Christian" population of 90 percent, but they do not fully understand the gospel. They live in isolation and poverty.

## Needs

Medical assistance is greatly needed because the people predominantly make use of shamans or traditional healers. Helping to increase their awareness of how to make a living from the sea would greatly assist them in improving their economic state.<sup>(E-RD)</sup>