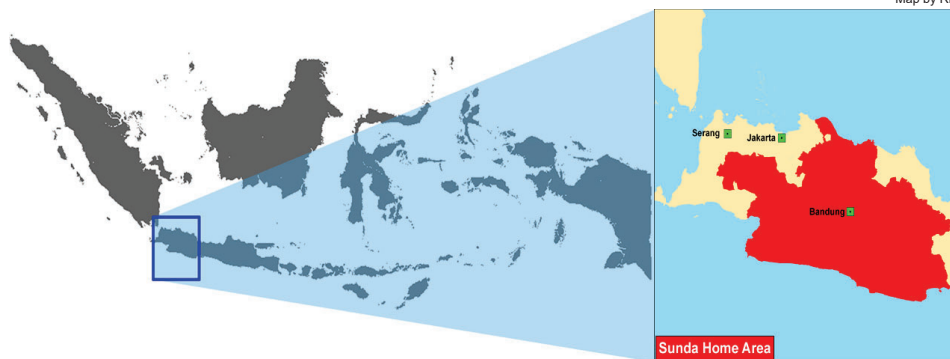


# SUNDA



Photo by RD



Map by RD

Demography	Sunda Language	Status
Location: West Jawa Population: 35.00.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: Yes Jesus Film: Yes Online Media: Yes	Believers: <21,000 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 50

## Identity and Location

The Sunda, the largest unreached people group in Indonesia, are the original inhabitants of West Java Province and Lebak Regency in Banten Province. The area inhabited by the Sunda is called Tanah Pasundan (“Sunda Land”). The Sunda people are also called Priangan or Parahyangan. They live near these other groups: the Jawa, Banten, Betawi, and West Coast Jawa.

## Society and Culture

For many generations, the Sunda have lived in West Java. Traditionally, the Sunda have been farmers, both for their own needs and for commerce. Due to the fertility of the land, West Java is a great area for farming and plantations. This area has long been known as the “rice basket” of Indonesia. In addition to growing rice, there are also tea plantations, particularly in the mountainous areas. Secondary crops and fruits also grow abundantly.

The Sunda are famous for their friendliness. They are similar to the Javanese, particularly in the way they dress and the way they farm. Sunda people place more emphasis on family and openness, whereas Jawa people tend to be more formal and hierarchical. Another difference from the Jawa is that Sunda have a stronger devotion to Islam.

Although they live on the island of Java, the Sunda do not consider where they live to be “Java,” but rather “tatar Sunda” (the land of the Sunda), with its own culture. Someone who moves from West Java to Central Java or East Java is said to have moved “to Java.”

Industrial development and large housing projects have begun to change the Sunda way of life. Many Sunda no longer work as farmers. Many hold influential positions in the government, while others have become effective business people.

In Sunda society, there are three authorities with strong influence: (1) Muslim religious leaders such as teachers, preachers, or worship leaders; (2) local government officials such as the regent and the regent’s staff; (3) shamans with supernatural abilities and martial arts teachers..

## Beliefs

Almost all Sunda are Muslims. In many areas, Islam is mixed with Sunda traditional customs. The Sunda seek to protect their harmony with the natural world. They do this through traditional ceremonies for spiritual life and through group work for mutual assistance. In the legend of Lutung Kasarung, there is a belief that God incarnated himself in the world to protect humankind. This incarnation is called the dewata (gods and goddesses).

## Needs

Statistical data on the inhabitants of West Java shows a high poverty rate. Because of this, the Sunda need help and guidance to raise their standard of living. This can be done by better development of human resources through education and training. Another area needing improvement is the development of small to medium-sized businesses.



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