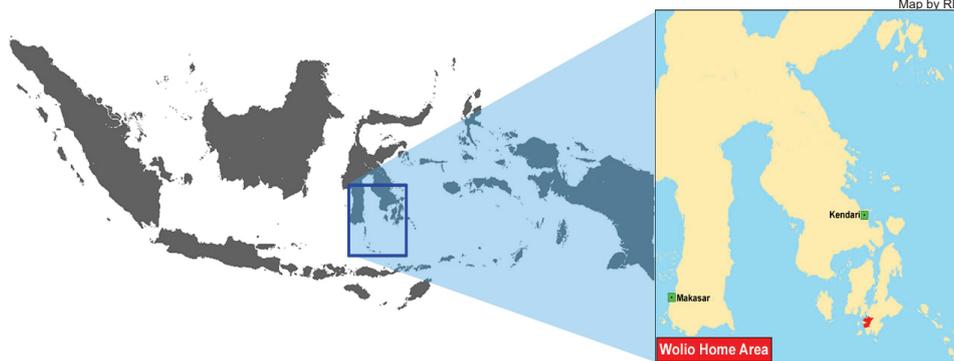


# WOLIO



Photo by JD



Demography	Wolio Language	Status
Location: Southeast Sulawesi	Bible: No	Believers: <10
Population: 240,000	Jesus Film: No	Engaged: Yes
Major religion: Islam	Online Media: No	Indigenous church: 0

## Identity and Location

The Wolio (also known as the Baubau, Buton or Butung) live on the islands of Buton, Muna and Kabaena in Southeast Sulawesi Province. Their ancestors were immigrants from Johor, Malaysia at the beginning of the 15th century, who founded the Buton dynasty. In 1540, the sixth king became a follower of Islam. He reshaped the kingdom to become a sultanate, and established himself as the first sultan. The sultanate of Buton lasted until the death of the last sultan in 1960. With his death, the Buton sultanate ended its formal reign and its customs have disappeared.

Buton today is known for its production of asphalt and is currently being explored for oil and other minerals. Many people have moved to other islands to find work. At present, some Wolio people live in the areas of Maluku and Papua. In everyday conversation, the Wolio speak the Wolio language, which is part of the Wotu-Wolio language cluster (which also includes the Kalao, Laiyolo, Kamaru, and Wotu languages). Arabic is also understood by some, and its script is used in religious writings and older Wolio writings.

## Society and Culture

In each Wolio village there is usually a market for selling materials related to clothing, such as silk, cotton and others. Many villages also have small stores, and peddlers can be seen selling their wares throughout the village. Wolio people live as farmers because their land is very fertile. Many of them also work as sailors and shipbuilders. The water around Buton and Muna is filled with fish, especially tuna and those found around coral.

Wolio houses are built of wood, two meters above the

ground, with small windows added. The roofs are built with small boards and coconut leaves. In the Wolio community, the men are mainly involved in labor outside the home, while wives work in the home and manage the family and their finances.

Marriages on Buton are monogamous. Newlywed couples live with the wife's parents until the husband is able to build their own house. Both parents share responsibility for raising children.

Wolio people place a high priority on education for their children. This, added to their willingness to study foreign languages, has resulted in noticeable social advancement.

## Beliefs

Almost all Wolio are Sufi Muslims. According to their teachings, they practice mediation in order to receive visions from God, or to find hidden truths far beyond their own reasoning. They believe in reincarnation as a result of past Hindu influence. They also believe that evil spirits cause illnesses and helpful spirits give guidance.

## Needs

The Wolio need greater opportunities for work that can provide enough money for their livelihood. Because they live on small islands, their primary need is for means of transportation to connect with the outside world. Their fishermen need better training and more knowledge to improve production and distribution of their sea products. In addition, teachers, and educators are needed to satisfy the Wolio people's thirst for knowledge, and to develop their potential.