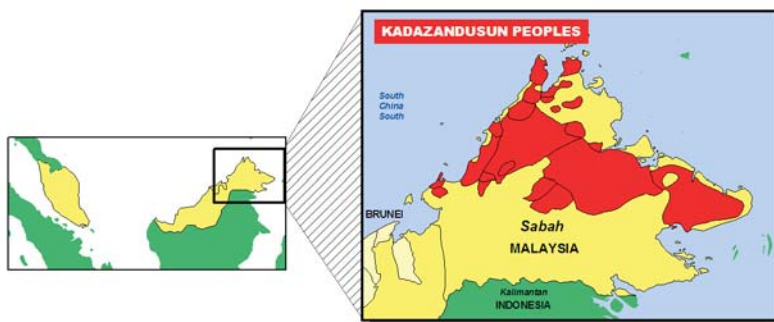


# KADAZANDUSUN PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
480,000	Roman Catholic/Animism	Various Kadazandusun

## Who are the Kadazandusun?

The Kadazandusun people groups are the largest indigenous grouping in Sabah. The Malaysia 2000 census placed their number at 479,944 or about 18.4% of the total state population.

Although the census counts them as a single people group there are in fact more than twenty ethnolinguistic people groups within the number above. The largest of these are the Central Dusun, Coastal Kadazan, Labuk-Kinabatangan Kadazan, Bundu Dusun, Rungus Dusun, Tambunan Dusun, Kinaragang and Tempasuk Dusun. Although these various people groups are scattered across more than half of the state in the western, northern and central portions, most of them live in the interior, usually along one of the many rivers rather than in coastal areas. An exception are the Coastal Kadazan who live along the west coast in the Penampang and Papar Districts.

The Coastal Kadazan dialect is the most well-established Kadazandusun dialect even though they are not the largest people group numerically. This may be due to their close proximity to the capital of Kota Kinabalu, and the fact that their language is used in some Sabah newspapers and radio broadcasts. It is also taught in primary schools.

## What are their lives like?

The Kadazandusun people groups are all primarily agriculturalists with rice growing supplemented by vegetable gardening and animal husbandry. Many have also found jobs in the timber industry that has boomed in the last two decades. Village life is usually communal, but those in urban areas tend to be less so. Although many hold on to certain aspects of their culture, the lifestyle of the Kadazandusun in the urban and developed

areas is quite different from those in the remote rural areas.

## What do they believe?

The Kadazandusun were traditionally animists but have been influenced by both Christianity and Islam. Many of those that the government counts as Christians come from a church tradition where any child that is born into a family that calls itself Christian is also considered to be Christian.

Those holding to traditional religion today believe in a spirit world that is especially important in the cycle of rice cultivation as well as major events in the cycle of life. Although believing in a supreme being who created everything, they also attribute spirits to many things in nature such as birds, animals, and plants. The "rice spirit," in particular, figures prominently in their beliefs and practices. Some of the Kadazandusun people groups are noted for their use of *bobohizan* 'priestesses' for controlling the spirits.

## What are their needs?

While many of the Kadazandusun have experienced the benefits of an improving educational system and the modern economy, those who live in rural areas in particular have not experienced the same level of progress. For those in the mainstream of modernization, a different problem exists as they try to maintain their cultural heritage and identity.

For those trusting in traditional religion, whether it is animistic or nominally Christian traditions, the greatest need is for them to hear and respond to the good news. Pray that many people would believe and have a vital and personal faith.