

The Bebeli of Papua New Guinea



The Bebeli people live in three villages near Kimbe, the capital of West New Britain Province. Their villages are scattered between settlement communities where people speak many other languages. Because the Bebeli live near an urban area and interact with speakers of other languages so often, their language is in danger of dying out. Children can understand some Bebeli, but usually speak Tok Pisin, the trade language, instead.

Education is important in the Bebeli language area, though the lack of jobs can discourage some people from continuing education. Most adults in Moroakea and Banaule can read in Tok Pisin. About half of the adults in Mosa can read in Tok Pisin.

For over 40 years, there have been churches in the Bebeli area. Almost all people call themselves Christians, but church leaders reported that some are nominal Christians. Even though the Bebeli language is dying out, some people asked for Scriptures to be translated into Bebeli and said that even though they understand Tok Pisin, they understand things better in Bebeli.

Missionaries are needed to help the Bebeli people translate the word of God into their language. With training, resources, and the support of local churches, the Bebeli people could work on translation themselves.

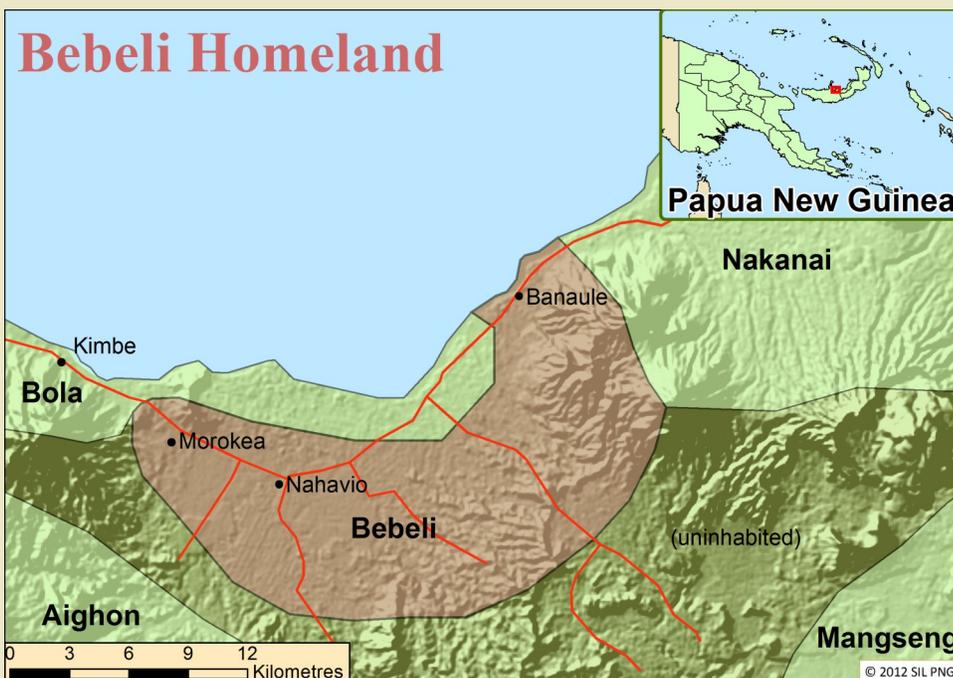
Primary Religion:
 Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
 65%

Churches:
 6

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
 No

Population (date):
 3100 (2009)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian	95%
Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior	65%
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion	30%
Comment	Percent based off of reported use of magic, sorcery, etc.
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is	0%
Attitude to Christianity	Very receptive
Comment	Most people call themselves Christian.
Number Of Pastors	6
Comment	Includes Catholic and Anglican catechists
Number Communities	3
Number Of Churches	6
Comment	Three Catholic, two Assemblies of God and one Anglican
History of Christianity: Year Began	1967
By Whom	German Catholic missionaries
Significant Events	German missionaries established a Catholic mission station near the Bebeli area in 1952. In 1967, the missionaries working at the station started a Catholic church in Banaule village. Catholic churches were established in Mosa and Morokeya villages in the years that followed. Assemblies of God congregations were started in both Mosa and Banaule in 1993. An Anglican church was established in Mosa in 1999.
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No. There are no Scriptures available in the Bebeli language. Even though the Bebeli language is dying out, some people expressed interest in having Scriptures in their language, and said that even though they speak another language, they understand Bebeli the best.
Are Cross-Cultural Missionaries Needed?	Missionaries are needed to assist the Bebeli people in translating the word of God into their own language. There are Bebeli people capable of doing translation, but they would require outside training and resources to do so.

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Group Description

Geography & Environment

The Bebeli language area is located on the north coast of the province of West New Britain, between Kimbe and Hoskins.

Literacy

Comment

Most adults in Morokea and Banaule can read in Tok Pisin. About half of the adults in Mosa can read in Tok Pisin

Economics

Subsistence Type

The Bebeli grow their own food. They occasionally fish in the ocean and buy food from grocery stores in Kimbe

Income Sources

Many people plant and tend oil palm trees on their land. They harvest the oil palm fruit which they sell to processing companies. Some people grow other cash crops - coconuts and cacao beans - which they sell. A few people own small trade stores and sell goods to their neighbors.

Products / Crafts

Oil palm fruit and cacao are two of their major products. Traditional flutes, mats and baskets are also made and sold.

Trade Partners

The Bebeli used to trade frequently with the Bola and Nakanai people. Now trade rarely happens outside of the Bebeli language area.

Community Development

Health Care

Comment

Good

Basic healthcare is available in each village and care for more serious illnesses and injuries is available at the Kimbe General Hospital

Diet

Comment

Good

People eat garden food, like sweet potatoes and greens, and some fish. A variety of foods is available in Kimbe town.

Shelter Description

Houses are a combination of traditional and modern building materials. Some people have incorporated sheet metal and cut timber into their houses, which may also include traditional woven walls.

Electricity

Generators.

Transportation

People use public transportation (vans or trucks) to travel between villages and to Kimbe town. Mosa, Morokea and Banaule are all located near the Kimbe-Hoskins highway. Villages range between 1-5 km away from the road. The Hoskins airstrip provides quick access to flights. Most people walk to their neighbors and rarely travel by water.

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Infant Mortality Rate

4%

Life Expectancy

63.83 years (national average according to <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)

Society & Culture

Neighbor Relations

Though relations with neighbors used to be rough, there is now little fighting. Confrontations and disagreements are handled peacefully.

Authority / Rule

Village Chiefs are still in existence and hold some power to settle disputes, though the village counselor holds most of the authority. The chieftainship is passed down through the son. Government officials as well as the Catholic church also hold some power.

Celebrations

Celebrations take place for the setting of the bride price, cutting the hair of a firstborn child and funerals.

Education

Primary Schools

7

Comment

Four elementary schools (kindergarten-equivalent through grade 2) and three primary schools (grade 3 through 8)

Primary School Enrollment

1500

Secondary Schools

0

Percent of Eligible Students Enrolled

47%

Number of Teachers

51

Comment

10 in Elementary schools; 41 in Primary schools

Language of Instruction Early Years

Tok Pisin

Language of Instruction Later Years

Tok Pisin and English

Number of Schools Greater Than

90% Homogeneous

4

Comment

Education is important in the Bebeli language area, though the lack of jobs can discourage some people from continuing education.

