



The Mbugwe of Tanzania

The Mbugwe, who are distinguished by their pierced ears and facial markings. The people were devastated by water-borne disease from 1940 until 1960. During that time, the government started programs that consequently reduced the effect of illness.

The home for the Mbugwe lies in the grassy plains of north central Tanzania, at an elevation of approximately 1,200 meters. The terrain is marked with scattered hills and rock formations, and forests separate some of the Mbugwe villages. Since the area is adjacent to a game park, it is not uncommon to see wild game.

The Mbugwe are principally farmers, though they do keep livestock as well. Their chief crops are rice, maize, and millet; sunflowers and cotton may also be found in the fields. The livestock, mostly cattle and goats, are kept close to the homes to guard against raiding. The homes are constructed with vertical sticks lashed together with rope or reeds. Though the houses are low, they may encompass a large area and be divided into smaller rooms.

Weaving is also an important aspect of Mbugwe life. Woven mats cover the floors of Mbugwe homes, and large baskets are used to store rice and maize. These crafts also contribute to the income of the Mbugwe.

There are several churches within the region occupied by the Mbugwe. Nonetheless, few Mbugwe attend church. Most of the people continue to follow their traditional religion. The influence of Islam is minimal at best.

Primary Religion:

Christian Nominal

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None

Population (date):

24,000 (1996)



The Mbugwe of Tanzania

Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	29	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	10	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	unknown	
Number Of Pastors	40	
Number Of Missionaries Working	2	
Number Of Communities	8	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Translation Medium	None	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Ambivalence and seeming lack of interest.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Swahili version of the film JESUS	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	24000	
World Population (Date)	1996	
Comment (World Population)	This figure was extrapolated using the 1988 Census recommended growth rate which was recently reported as being erroneous. 16,000 is the figure given by the 1992 Ethnologue, based on the last census by tribe in 1966.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Tanzania	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Approximately 225 kilometers north of Dodoma and approximately 110 kilometers south of Arusha. In the Babati district of the Arusha region.	
Country	Tanzania	
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	3100 ft. - 4300 ft.	
Climate	Hot, arid. Major rainy season between January and May.	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	Rice belt	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Comment (Language)	In Tanzania, Kiswahili is the national language; therefore, all languages begin with some form of the "ki-" prefix (i.e. Kimbugwe).	
Alternate Language Names	Kimbuwe, Kimbugwe	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	11	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
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Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	It is hard to give a percentage. The majority of people seem to attend the primary levels of school. Regardless, even those who don't attend pick up at least basic Swahili from family and community.	
Linguistically Related Languages	RANGI	
Linguistically Related Languages	RANGI	
Comments (Related Languages)	54% lexically similar - people can 'hear' Langi but cannot converse.	
Neighboring Languages	NILAMBA	
Literacy		Group Description
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	

The Mbugwe of Tanzania

Item Name	Item Note	
Active Literacy Program	No	
Comment (Literacy)	The literacy rate is difficult to obtain for a single people group in a mixed community.	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Occupation	Farmers - some are hired out to the Indian big land owners	
Income Sources	Agriculture, grass mat making	
Products / Crafts	Grass mats and baskets	
Trade Partners	Langi, Iramba, Iraqw	
Modernization / Utilities	Schools and clinics are sparsely located. Often one serves one village and its accompanying sub-villages.	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Health Care)	Although food is available, there was much evidence of malnourishment, as well as children suffering from 'colds.' It is reported that malnourishment is caused by the making of beer from the food (mostly maize and millet) available. Malaria is endemic, and it is the leading cause of absences at schools. Bilharzia once threatened the very existence of this group, though now it seems to be under control.	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Diet)	Mostly ugali (made of Maize flour), also beans, rice, millet, and some greens.	
Water (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Water)	A major water source was contaminated with Bilharzia. Now this disease seems to be under control due to education. Many rivers run through their area.	
Shelter Description	They have traditional houses made of vertically placed sticks, with flat dirt roofs. The houses are large, occupying approximately thirty square feet with a roof height of about five to five and a half feet. The front half of the house is reserved for goats and other livestock. Modern housing typically consists of mud brick walls and thatch roofs. These houses are taller from six feet, peaking at ten feet, but smaller in area.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Energy)	Wood and coal	
Clothing	Western clothing, women wear 'kangas'	
Transportation	Bicycle. Fr. Michael Barry in Magugu said, "The heart and the soul of the Wambugwe is the bicycle."	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Neighbor Relations	They do have good relations with neighbors. In a city situation, however, the young people do not like to admit that they are Mbugwe because it is a small tribe.	
Authority / Rule	Governing is accomplished through system introduced by the Federal Government.	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Similar	
Self Image	Threatened	
Judicial / Punishment System	State judicial system	
Art Forms	Basket and mat weaving	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat resistant	
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	20	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Swahili (specific)	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Swahili (specific)	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	English	

The Mbugwe of Tanzania

Item Name

Language Of Textbooks Later Years

Comment (Education)

Item Note

English

Most, if not all, schools serve a mixed group of children. There are homogeneous communities but not schools.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status

Engaged

Comment (Reached Status)

Mother Tongue Scripture or portions could be a key.

Bible Schools

1

Comment (Church Growth)

Kanisa la Mungu and the Catholics have active missionaries living in Babati and Magugu, respectively. KLM runs the Bible School. About half of the people are reported to claim affiliation with Christianity.

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Attitude To Christianity

Very receptive

Attitude To Religious Change

Somewhat receptive

Resistance / Receptivity

The evidence of many churches indicates receptivity to Christianity. The limited numbers of true believers over a long history of a Christian presence indicates that receptivity to change is slow.

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Ambivalent

Comment (Religion)

Three denominations have a fairly large presence among the Mbugwe: Roman Catholic, Church of God (Tanzania), and Lutheran. (There are also Pentecostals.) Several church leaders said that there is much nominalism, with people saying they belong to one church or other just to say it. The leaders also said that many are still active in the traditional practices and witchcraft.

Recommended Approaches

Mother Tongue Scripture or portions could be a key.

Current Needs

They need an honest knowledge of God as the God of the Mbugwe, not just an 'outsider's God'.

Items For Prayer

Pray for the breaking and opening of Mbugwe hearts to the truth of the gospel. Ask that the Spirit urge those who are already believers to actively evangelize.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began

1907

By Whom

Roman Catholic Church

Significant Events

Mass was held in Latin until 1966 when Kiswahili was finally allowed. In 1958 Kanisa la Mungu was established.

Comments (History of Christianity)

Canadian missionaries, the Hoffmans, established a church plant among the Mbugwe.

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status

Possible

Available Scripture

None

Comment (Form of Scripture Available)

The Scriptures are available in Swahili as well as the Swahili Jesus film.

Reason For Urgent Need Of Translation

There is an established church.

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature

No

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings

Check with Redio Maalum in Arusha.

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos

No

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio

No

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

The Mbugwe of Tanzania

Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Church of God
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1958
Number Of Adherents	250
Number Of Expatriate Workers	2
Number Of National Workers	4
Number Of Local Workers	20
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	1
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Year Started	1907
Number Of Adherents	3500
Number Of Expatriate Workers	1
Number Of National Workers	26
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)
Organization Name	Pentecostal Assembly of God
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1985
Number Of Adherents	50
Number Of National Workers	1
Number Of Local Workers	1
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)
Organization Name	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1957
Number Of Adherents	10
Number Of National Workers	8
Number Of Local Workers	1
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)

Christian Literature And Media Status

Literature Available	none
Audio Recordings Available	check with Redio Maalum in Arusha
Films Available	none
Radio Programs Available	none
Videos Available	none
Audio Visual Available	none

Status of Christianity