



The Bungu of Tanzania

The Bungu are a Bantu speaking group of people living among the hills, plains, and ridge-like escarpments to the south east of Lake Rukwa in the Great Rift Valley. Their villages are surrounded by vast expanses of deciduous forest.

The people live in mud brick homes with thatched roofs. Some farm and others fish. The main cash crop is cotton. In the more mountainous villages, they also grow and cure tobacco. For food, they plant rice, corn, millet, and cassava. Many of them also raise goats, cows, pigs, and chickens. The Lake upon which the fishermen depend is reported to be increasing in size, yet becoming more shallow, due to erosion. As a result, the fish are also becoming more scarce. Such work also has its hazards, as the number of crocodiles has been increasing.

The Roman Catholic Church has been in the Bungu area since 1901. Almost all the Bungu are adherents to Christianity in the form of Catholicism, yet to a large degree this is only cultural or nominal. Many still cling to the traditional religion, although most are reluctant to speak of it. Witchcraft is also reported to be widely practiced.

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in their language

Population (date):

36,000 (1987)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	98	
Number Of Pastors	2	
Number Of Communities	9	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Lack of available Swahili Bibles	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)		
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Missionaries are needed at least until there is a sizable core of true believers. Assistance can come from Tanzanians or people from other countries.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	36000	
World Population (Date)	1987	
Comment (World Population)	from Ethnologue	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Tanzania	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	South East of Lake Rukwa	
Country	Tanzania	
Ecosystem Type	Deciduous Forest	
Geological Type	Other	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	They live among the hills, plains, and ridge-like escarpments along part of the Rift Valley.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Comment (Language)	Some of the places are reported to have some different words, but no known dialects. It is assumed that very few, if any, are monolingual.	
Alternate Language Names	Echiungu (language name in Bungu)	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Second Languages	98	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
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Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	Almost everyone we came into contact with spoke Swahili, and very well as their SRT scores show. Very few people interviewed also knew another language, e.g., Fipa, Nyamwezi, etc.	
Linguistically Related Languages	KIMBU	
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Comments (Related Languages)	The people themselves report that their language is most similar to Kimbu, Nyamwezi, Sukuma, and a few mentioned it was similar to Wanda and Nyika. Guthrie classifies it in the following grouping: F.21 Sukuma, F.22 Nyamwezi, F.23 Sumbwa, F.24 Kimbu, F.25 Bungu.	
Neighboring Languages	SAFWA	
Neighboring Languages	KIMBU	
Neighboring Languages	NYIHA	
Neighboring Languages	WANDA	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	80	
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive	

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Item Name

Active Literacy Program

Comment (Literacy)

Item Note

No

83% of the population has been educated, 62% of the population reaching Standard Seven (the last year of primary school). Kiswahili is taught in the first couple years, so it is assumed that most who have studied, can also read.

Economics

Subsistence Type

Agriculturalists

Occupation

farming and fishing

Income Sources

Cash crops are cotton [plains] and tobacco [hills, mountains] (which they also cure).

Modernization / Utilities

fishermen use dug out canoes and traps.

Group Description

Community Development

Health Care (Quality)

Good

Comment (Health Care)

There is a mission hospital in Mkwajuni, in the Bungu area. There are dispensaries within reach of several villages. The hospital sends personnel out periodically to work in the local clinics.

Diet (Quality)

Good

Comment (Diet)

If not affected by drought, they should have rice, maize, millet, and cassava, fish, and various other meats from livestock. Although, it is reported that the fish are getting scarce too.

Water (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Water)

Good water in the town with the hospital. Otherwise they likely use water from the lake or dig wells. (Didn't observe any development in this area).

Shelter Description

Rectangular, mud brick houses with grass roofs. Many compounds have circular grain bins on stilts and/or have reed fences for privacy.

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Energy)

Petrol is available in Mkwajuni. Beyond that, they must make coals from wood. There are vast amounts of forest from which to gather wood.

Clothing

Western. The women also wear the colorful African wraps called kanga.

Transportation

The villagers either walk or use bicycles. The roads are pretty good for vehicles. Sometimes transportation can be found into Mbeya on the back of lorries (trucks). There may even be small buses, although we didn't observe any.

Group Description

Society & Culture

Neighbor Relations

The people live close together generally. Some have reed fences to keep away prying eyes.

Authority / Rule

There is still a chief. He says discipline is through witchcraft, that is, people obey when they think that they might be disciplined by witchcraft. The government officials seem to get cooperation most of the time from the people. However, the children do not seem to obey authority unless they are being chased with switches.

Social Habits/Groupings

Daily in the late afternoon, people gather to drink millet beer, or pombe.

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Integrated

Self Image

Neutral

Recreations

The daily gatherings to drink millet beer.

Art Forms

Some of the houses are smeared with different shades of mud.

Media

Radios are the common form of media.

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Attitude To Outsiders

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Change

Somewhat receptive

Comment (Culture)

They are very curious about outsiders, and will watch them for exceedingly long periods of time. They might be more than "somewhat receptive to change," they may even be eager for it if it comes in the form of development.

Group Description

Youth

Group Description

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Item Name	Item Note	
Comment (Youth)	A study of the youth has not yet been done.	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	9	
Primary School Enrollment	2792	
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	75	
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	32	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Swahili (specific)	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	Swahili (specific)	
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	2	
Comment (Education)	We interviewed teachers from 4 primary schools plus one secondary school. It is assumed that each village has one primary school, which gives us @ 9 schools. Two of the schools were almost all Bungu, and the other two from the more mixed villages were 75% Bungu. The population of enrolled students for the four primary schools equals 1396 students and 32 teachers. One teacher may have anywhere from 27 to 49 students. Probably the total number of students would be twice that. It is difficult to know, as we don't know the size of the other villages. It is unknown whether the schools have textbooks, but if they do it can be assumed that they are in Swahili, the language of instruction.	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Reported	
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	1	
Comment (Church Growth)	3 small Moravian Churches (1 pastor, 1 evangelist). The Moravian pastor in Udinge had 20 Bungu in his church, 10 of whom would have matured in the faith. The Catholic church has 13-18 churches in the parish (3 fathers and 16 catechists). The mission hospital in Mkwajuni is Catholic and run by nuns.	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat resistant	
Resistance / Receptivity	Since almost everyone is Catholic, they are likely to see new Christian denominations as Superfluous. The established church would likely feel threatened if other denominations wanted to plant churches.	
Religious Analogies & Bridges	Their are similarities between the traditional religion and Catholicism/Christianity as told to us by the chief, leader of the traditional religion. Like the Catholics pray to the saints, the Bungu pray to their ancestors. Like Christianity, they have a sort of Trinity: Umbamba the creator, Unguruwe the son of god who did not come to earth, and Umbeta a force of god.	
Spiritual Climate And Openness	Although adhered to by virtually everyone, Christianity appears to be cultural/nominal among the Bungu. Traditional religion is still practiced by a large, unknown percent of the people. Witch craft is also practiced.	
Comment (Religion)	There is also a very small Moravian and Assemblies of God presence in the Bungu area.	
Recommended Approaches	A Bible Translation project could be key as the Bungu are interested in having their language written for preservation purposes. The church leaders are all supportive. With lots of Scripture-in-Use and community involvement, the people can find the truth from within their own church structure. This may reach more people, than bringing in another denomination from the outside who gets perhaps only a few people to cross over.	
Current Needs	The Moravian Pastor said, "People here really are unreached. The Bible's here, but it hasn't gotten in."	
Items For Prayer	The the Holy Spirit would confront the Bungu with the Gospel and their need for it. That they would seek and hunger after truth, and be willing to act upon it by turning their backs to traditional religion and witch craft as the Spirit enables.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Year Began	1901	
By Whom	Roman Catholic Church	

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Item Name	Item Note
Significant Events	The Moravian Church arrived in 1977.

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status	Possible
Available Scripture	None
Uncertain Need Explained	See comments
Reason For Urgent Need Of Translation	See comments
Comment (Scripture)	Linguistically, the Bungu tested high for bilingualism in Swahili, which already has Scripture. However, they've had the RC Church which uses the Swahili Scriptures for a long time, and the truth of the Gospel does not appear to be penetrating their lives. A Bible in their own language may be the key, but it is difficult to know. All of the church leaders were positive towards the idea. Bible translation would at least be non-threatening and appreciated way to work among the people there.

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1901
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)
Organization Name	Moravian
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Main Ministry	Church Planting

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available	Whatever is available is in Swahili.
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