

The Nanubae of Papua New Guinea



representative photo

The Nanubae people live in three villages in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, two of which are along the Arafundi River.

Their staple food is sago, a flour processed from the trunk of the sago palm. The people supplement their diet with fish they catch in the river.

There are two dialects of the Nanubae language. One is spoken in the village of Imanmeri and the other in two other villages, Yamandim and Wambrumas,

Canoes are the main form of transportation.

The Catholic Church began working in the Nanubae area around 1960. In 1992 the PNG Revival Church established a small congregation in Imanmeri. Although most of the people would claim to be Christian, some are only nominal Christians and still use traditional religious rituals such as magic for hunting and fishing and attracting women. Fear of evil spirits and belief in their power is common.

There are elementary schools in Imanmeri and Yamandim, which use both the vernacular and Tok Pisin.

Primary Religion:

Animism

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

15 %

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

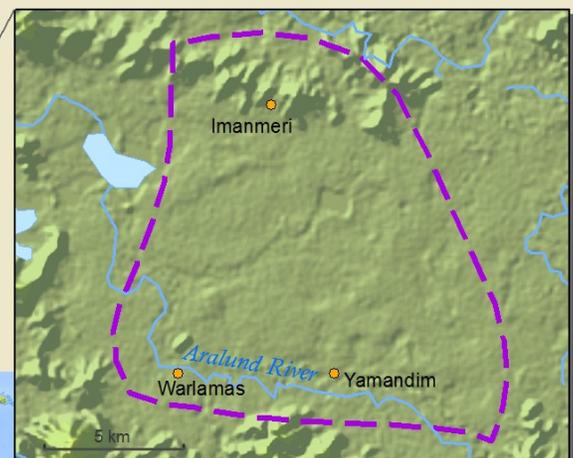
None

Population (date):

1270 (2005)



NANUBAE HOMELAND



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Group Description

Geographical information

The large village of Imanmeri is on a ridge above Yimas Lakes. The other two villages, Yamandim and Wambrumas, are situated along the Arafundi River.

Language information

The people have a positive attitude toward their language.

There are two dialects of the Nanubae language, one spoken in Imanmeri and one spoken in the other two villages.

While men in Yamandim and Wambrumas are able to speak Tok Pisin, the trade language, they choose to speak Nanubae most of the time. The children in Yamandim and Wambrumas primarily speak Nanubae, but those in Imanmeri prefer Tok Pisin. Women and children in Yamandim and Wambrumas have limited proficiency in Tok Pisin. Nanubae is also known as Aunda or Kapagmai. It is 61%-74% cognate with the Tapei language.

Education

There are elementary schools in Imanmeri and Yamandim, in which both the vernacular and Tok Pisin are used.

Economics and Diet

The people in this language group catch fish in the Arafundi River to supplement their diet which consists primarily of sago paste made from the sago palm. A flour is processed from the trunk of the palm, then mixed with a little water and cooked over a fire. The resulting dry, pancake-shaped "fraim" may be eaten plain, with cooked greens or with fish.

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Status of Christianity

History

The Catholic Church began working in the Nanubae area around 1960. In 1992 the PNG Revival Church established a small congregation in Imanmeri.

While 95% of the people would call themselves “Christian” many are only nominal Christians and still follow traditional religious rituals such as using magic for hunting, fishing and attracting women. Fear of evil spirits and belief in their power is also common.

Missions

All churches have local leadership. There are five pastors in these churches but no missionaries.

Everyone in Imanmeri can understand the Scriptures in Tok Pisin, children and women in the other two villages have limited proficiency that language.

Scriptures

The Bible has not been translated into Nanubae. It would be beneficial for the Nanubae people, especially those living in Yamandim and Wambrumas, to have the Word of God in their own language.