

The Bamasaba of Uganda

The Bamasaba are a Bantu people group of about 1,000,000 who live in eastern Uganda, Mbale and Sironko Districts, adjacent to Mt. Elgon at the Kenyan border. They were the first people to inhabit the western and southwestern slopes of Mt. Elgon. The area is considered the food-basket of Uganda and is also known for producing high-quality Arabica coffee, the main cash crop. The Bamasaba are subsistence farmers, growing bananas, sweet and Irish potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes and onions. They also raise cattle and other livestock and trade on a small scale. The main custom that distinguishes them from other tribes is their tradition of male circumcision. They see this rite as their defining feature as a tribe. They also have different naming rituals and worship a different local god than their neighbors although the majority belongs to one of the many Christian churches in the area. The problem they face is the dense population and minimal land; a father's land is inherited by all of his sons, so the land is being divided further and further into very small plots.

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

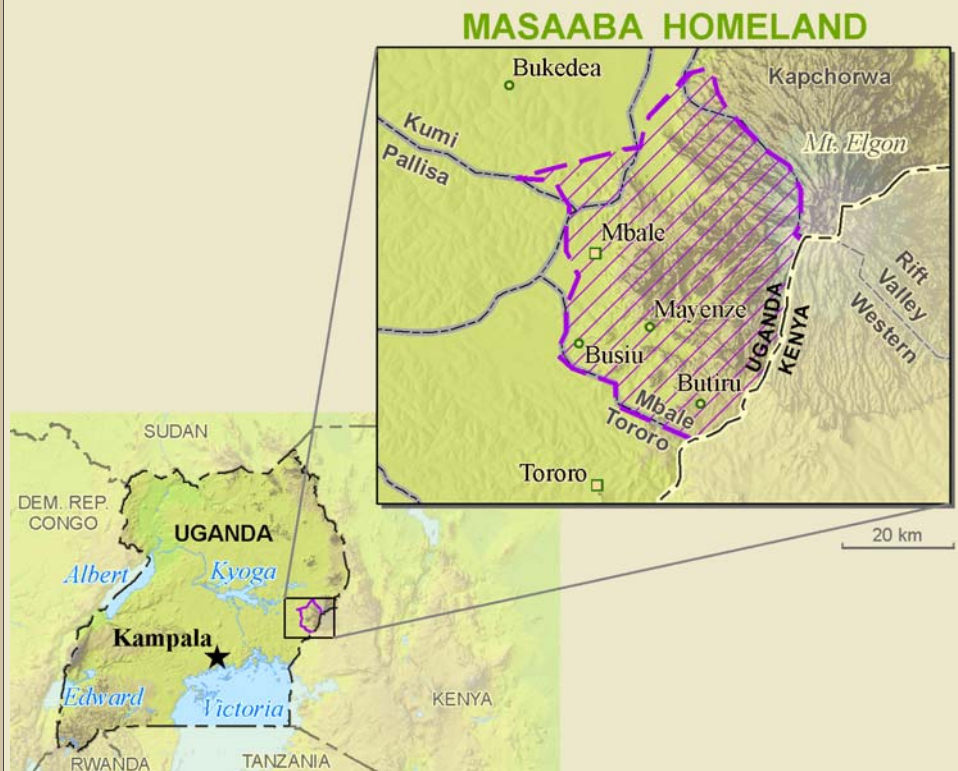
Many

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

NT and parts of OT

Population (date):

1,117,661 (2004)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	>90%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	more than about 20%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	10%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	few	
Comment (Pastors)	there is a need for pastor training	
Response To The Gospel	rapid church growth but largely nominal and syncretistic	
Number Of Communities	in each community there are several denominations present	
Comment (Number Communities)	Church of Uganda, Roman Catholic Church, PAG (Pentecostal Assemblies of God), Presbyterian Church, SDA (Seventh Day Adventists), Church of God, Full Gospel, LAM (Life Assurance Ministry), Church of Christ, Baptist Church, Living Faith Fellowship, Good News, United Methodists, Salvation Army and Assembly of God. Fruitful, Revival, Covenant, New Apostolic and Friends and a multitude of other small denominations which came recently to this area.	
Number Of Churches	Many	
Comment (Churches)	in each community there is at least one christian church	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	New Testament and parts of Old Testament in Lumasaaba, Gospel recordings (Living Word) in Lumasaaba	
Translation Medium	Printed and Audio	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Because of dialectal differences, orthography difficulties, and low mother tongue literacy rate the Lumasaaba New Testament is not widely used. LC5 education officials are working on a aplan to help with mother tongue education in the schools but there are no published teaching materials in Lumasaaba.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Gospel recordings, Literature, Radio	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	well developed area, but need for pastor training. The Bamasaba are receptive to Christianity	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Uganda	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	On the eastern border of Uganda, adjacent to Mount Elgon	
Country	Uganda	
Ecosystem Type	tropical and grassland savannah in the plains, tropical forest and alpine vegetation on the mountain	
Geological Type	Plains and mountain slopes	
Elevation	between 1,299 m and 4,300 m	
Longitude	34' E to 35' E	
Latitude	45' N to 150'N	
Climate	Sub-tropical. Temperatures range from high in the plains to low in the mountains and rainfall reaches up to 1,500 mm per annum (two rainy seasons)	
Map Features	Mt. Elgon	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	MASABA	
Alternate Language Names	GISU	
Comments (Dialect)	Lubuya, Ludadiri	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Second Languages	English, Luganda, some Swahili	
Linguistically Related Languages	NYOLE	
Linguistically Related Languages	BUKUSU	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Linguistically Related Languages	LUYIA	
Comments (Related Languages)	Also Lusamia_Lugwe and Syan	
Neighboring Languages	GWERE	
Neighboring Languages	KUPSABINY	
Neighboring Languages	KARAMOJONG	
Neighboring Languages	TESO	
Neighboring Languages	NYOLE	
Neighboring Languages	BUKUSU	
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	also Jopadhola	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	between 50 and 60 %	
Percent Literate For Men	about 64%	
Percent Literate For Women	about 49%	
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	
Active Literacy Program	Yes	
Comment (Active Literacy Program)	vernacular literacy is taught in some schools by teachers who take the initiative but there are no published teaching materials. LC5 Education Officer is working on a plan to help with vernacular education in schools. Lumasaaba Language Academy has started an adult literacy program but it came to a halt because of lack of funds.	
Publications In Vernacular	New Testament in Lumasaaba. Lumasaaba Language Academy published "The Standard Orthography of Lumasaaba", a pamphlet on children's rights and is working on a Lumasaaba primer. The Cultural Center is printing some pamphlets in Lumasaaba. Kumuumu Publishers published a Hymnbook in Lumasaaba.	
Comment (Literacy)	people see it as beneficial	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Occupation	subsistence farming	
Income Sources	cashcrops: coffee and cotton	
Trade Partners	some trading with neighboring groups and cross-border trading with Kenya	
Comment (Economy)	there are some industries: Manufacture of animal feeds, footwear, grain milling, pipes, garments, furniture, cotton ginning. Processing of milk, coffee, skins. Mbale district has also tourism potential because of Mt. Elgon National Park.	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Health Care)	2 hospitals, 28 health centers and 16 dispensaries in Mbale district; 24 health centers, 17 dispensaries and 12 sub-dispensaries in Sironko district (one health unit per sub county on average)	
Diet (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Diet)	millet, bananas, rice, sweet potatoes, little meat and vegetables	
Water (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Water)	urban supply more reliable and of better quality than in rural areas. Access to safe water: 52%, protected wells: 1,200, unprotected wells: 1,703, functional boreholes: 371, non-functional boreholes: 24, Gravity flow scheme: 4, Latrine coverage: 85%	
Shelter Description	about 55% of the housing units in rural areas are generally of poor quality, predominantly consisting of mud and wattle, with grass or banana fibre thatched roofs.	
Electricity	only in towns	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Energy)	wood fuel in rural areas, hydro-electric power and solar energy in towns	
Clothing	western style	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Transportation	mainly public transport or walking or bikes, few motorized vehicles	
Infant Mortality Rate	9%	
Comment (Community Development)	most of the health problems in the districts can be linked to poverty, poor nutrition, poor living conditions, malaria and AIDS	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Family Structures	patrilinear, extended family	
Neighbor Relations	good working and trading relationships with almost all neighbors	
Authority / Rule	government leaders at district, county, sub county, village levels	
Social Habits/Groupings	family and clans	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Integrated	
Self Image	Neutral	
Judicial / Punishment System	Ugandan government judicial system	
Celebrations	circumcision celebrations, public and christian holidays, family feasts	
Recreations	socializing, church meetings, group drinking	
Media	radio, TV, newspaper	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive	
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive	
History Of People Group	The Bamasaba originated from a man called Masaba. He came from Mt. Elgon and was the brother of Kintu, the first King of the Baganda. Masabas wife was Sarah and they had three children: Wanale-ancestor of the people in central Bugisu, Mubuya-ancestor of southern Bugisu and Mugisu-ancestor of north Bugisu. Clothes of men were hides of goats, antelopes and calves. They covered one shoulder and tied them on the left side with a knot. Men did always carry a spear. Clothes of women were out of banana stem material. They tied them around the waist and under the legs but with the sides free. They used small hides to cover the breasts.	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	babysitting of younger siblings, working in the fields, carrying water	
Youth Problems (Teens)	teenage pregnancy rate is 15.2 percent, alcoholism of parents, many children drop out of schools after P5 or P7	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	establishing of good christian homes	
Comment (Youth)	the orphan burden added to those created by the post-civil strife outcomes is ever increasing and the number of widows is also rising. As a result there is an increasing number of street children, sex workers, elderly-and child-headed households	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	351 Mbale district; 164 Sironko district	
Primary School Enrollment	242,321 Mbale district; 99,953 Sironko district	
Secondary Schools	64 Mbale district; 28 Sironko district	
Secondary School Enrollment	28,782 Mbale district; 5,775 Sironko district	
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	about 75%	
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	1 teacher for 60 students	
Comment (Teacher to Pupil Ratio)	primary school teachers in Mbale district: 4,016 and 1,682 in Sironko district; secondary school teachers in Mbale district: 1,444; 387 in Sironko district	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	MASABA	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	ENGLISH	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	ENGLISH	
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	ENGLISH	
Comment (Language Of Textbook)	there are only few english textbooks in english if there are textbooks at all in primary school	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Engaged	
Comment (Reached Status)	it is not quite reached because the Old Testament is not translated into mother tongue yet	
Reached Classification	Evangelized	
Bible Schools	1 Bible College in Mbale district	
Christian Literacy Centers	1 Anglican bookshop in Mbale	
Comment (Christian Literacy Center)	people very often do not know where they can buy a Bible	
Comment (Church Growth)	many small churches came to the area during the last 5 years	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	christian traditions: baptism, weddings, burials; circumcision ceremonies	
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive	
Resistance / Receptivity	receptive to the gospel	
Spiritual Climate And Openness	the people are open to accept God and Christ as savior but may be reluctant to change behaviors	
Items For Prayer	Pray for the Bamasaba that the Word of God will take more root in their lives and that God will transform people and the whole area. Pray also for unity among all the different organizations working on the development of th elanguage and the Bible translation into Lumasaaba. Also pray for development of mother tongue literacy programs in Lumasaaba so they can read and understand God's Word in their mother tongue	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Year Began	About 1900	
By Whom	Church of Uganda	
Comments (History of Christianity)	Anglican Church and Catholic church (came about 1914) are the main churches. During the last years many other churches appeared in the area	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	Revision	
Available Scripture	New Testament	
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed	
Scripture Published When	1904 first Gospels, 1977 New Testament in Lumasaaba	
Scripture Use	few pastors and mainly pastors in Catholic church	
Comment (Scripture)	The Anglican church uses the Bible in Luganda, most other churches use the Bible in English, only the Catholic church uses the Bible in Lumasaaba. Not all people however do understand Luganda or English	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	yes	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	yes	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	unknown	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	yes	
Missions and Churches		Status of Christianity
Organization Name	Bible Society of Uganda	
Organization Name	Church of Uganda	
Organization Name	Compassion International	
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church	
Christian Literature And Media Status		Status of Christianity

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Item Name

Literature Available

Item Note

New Testament and portions of Old Testament in Lumasaaba. Lumasaaba Language Academy published "The Standard Orthography of Lumasaaba, a pamphlet on children's rights and is working on a Lumasaaba primer. The Cultural Center is printing some pamphlets in Lumasaaba. Kumuumu Publishers published a Hymnbook in Lumasaaba

Audio Recordings Available

Gospel recordings (Living word)

Films Available

unknown

Radio Programs Available

yes