

The Mundu of Zaire & Sudan



The Mundu believe they originated in West Africa and they migrated eastward during the dry seasons, in groups. As the first groups journeyed, the leaves of the mahogany trees around them fell and covered over their tracks so that the people behind them lost the route. In this way, some Mundu traveled only as far as Zaire while the leaders reached Sudan and settled there. Linguistically, Mundu is closely related to some West African languages, giving more evidence that they originated there.

The war in Sudan has forced some Mundu to move south, back into Zaire. However, the current instability in Zaire may mean further displacement. The Mundu have always lived under one foreign government or another. Consequently, they can feel threatened, but generally they have a good self-image and are proud of their culture and language.

In recent years it has become apparent to older Mundus that their traditional culture is not being taught as carefully to their children as it was in the past. Increased mobility and Western influence is slowly changing their traditional village lifestyle where elders would be the primary means, outside the family, of passing on customs and laws.

The ground is fertile and the rain is plentiful and so, despite dislocation and war, they are able to survive on the food they grow. However, they are subsistence farmers and lack utilities, clean water supplies, transport, schools and especially medical care. Infant mortality is high and basic medicines are not easily available.

Trade languages are used for education in both Zaire and Sudan. The first missionaries came to the Mundu in the 1920s, but only learned and used the trade language. Mundu is spoken in the home and remains the 'heart language' of the people. Consequently, the Mundu are happy to have their language written down and their culture strengthened. They are excited to have literature in their own language and Christians especially want a hymn book and Scripture.

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

15%

Churches:

30

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Only portions available

Population (date):

25,000 (1982)



The Mundu of Zaire & Sudan

Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	100	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	15%	
Number Of Pastors	14	
Number Of Missionaries Working	2	
Number Of Churches	30	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Portions	
Translation Medium	Printed: Mark, John and Genesis (1993)	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There are logistical problems in getting books into Zaire and the war in Sudan makes distribution very difficult. All books are printed in Nairobi.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Recordings and literature.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	For training national Christian leaders.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	25000	
World Population (Date)	1982	
World Population (Urban Percent)	1	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Congo (Kinshasa)	
Country Name	Sudan	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	On Sudan/Democratic Republic of Congo border, near towns of Maridi, Edi	
Country	Sudan	
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	1000m	
Climate	Wet season (April-end to Oct.) Dry season (Nov-Mar). Min-max temps typically 15-38°C.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Alternate Language Names	Mundo, Moun-ton, Mon-du, Mondo	
Second Languages	10	
Second Languages	20	
Second Languages	75	
Second Languages	99	
Second Languages	99	
Second Languages	25	
Second Languages	50	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ENGLISH	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ARABIC, SUDANESE CREOLE	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	BAKA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	FRENCH	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	BANGALA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	AVOKAYA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	BAKA	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	LOGO	

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Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	LOGO	
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Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ENGLISH	
Linguistically Related Languages	NDOGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	BELANDA VIRI	
Linguistically Related Languages	MAYOGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	NDOGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	BANGBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	MAYOGO	
Linguistically Related Languages	BANGBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	BELANDA VIRI	
Neighboring Languages	BAKA	
Neighboring Languages	ZANDE	
Neighboring Languages	AVOKAYA	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	25	
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	
Active Literacy Program	No	
Comment (Literacy)	Corrections to Ethnologue entry: The missions working among the Mundu in Zaire are the R.C.'s and AIM	
Economics		Group Description
Occupation	Agriculture: women and men farm, thought the men will do the heavier work or grow cash crops. Men also hunt, gather honey and build the houses. Women support their husband by performing the domestic jobs around the home, collecting water, gathering wood and grinding cereals. Women also make pots, mats and baskets. It is the women's responsibility to educate the girls, and the men's the boys.	
Income Sources	If there are any surplus crops these may be sold or bartered. Cash crops may also be grown.	
Products / Crafts	Pots, mats and baskets largely for personal use. Crops grown are: sorghum, millet, maize, cassava, peanuts, beans, sesame, rice; chicken and goats are kept.	
Trade Partners	None	
Modernization / Utilities	Economic instability and war has reduced trading possibilities. Likewise, utilities such as public transport are disintegrated	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Health Care)	The Aba hospital is costly. In Sudan relief workers provide emergency health care. The Mundu will consult witchdoctors or the traditional healer who provides medicines and poisons when a spiritual dimension is perceived to be involved. Home herbal cures are also used without consultation with the healer.	
Diet (Quality)	Good	
Comment (Diet)	So long as the crops can be harvested the diet is well balanced; the diet is protein rich even though meat is difficult to obtain	
Water (Quality)	Good	
Comment (Water)	Adequate supply from streams, though the water may be contaminated.	

The Mundu of Zaire & Sudan

Item Name

Item Note

Shelter Description

Traditional one room, round, mud houses with thatch roofs. The modern equivalent is square, still mud and thatch, but with several rooms. Men build the homes. Traditionally, the husband and wife/ wives will have separate huts. The male children will move to their own huts when they are of age. Daughters will have their own hut. The family lives on their homestead made up of their living huts and their grain store.

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

None

Comment (Energy)

Locally gathered wood provides the fuel source. This is usually gathered by the women.

Clothing

Western

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures

Each family identifies itself with its clan. Several clans may live in one village. A married man will live as the head of his family on their compound. His extended family will include his wife/wives, their children, his unmarried siblings, and living parents. A man may take a second wife, with his existing wife's agreement if she is barren. Childlessness is a shame on the wife who will suffer some social isolation from her sisters-in-law. Levirate marriage, which occurs among the Mundu in Sudan, is becoming less common. When a woman marries she will leave the paternal compound and live on the husband's family compound. If she is widowed, it is usual for her to return to her family. Marriages were traditionally arranged by the families though this is becoming less common. A bride price is still usually required.

Neighbor Relations

The Mundu have good relations with the Baka and Avokaya in Zaire. Their self-image is good, but they have always lived under one form of foreign rule or another and so they tend to feel threatened. New ideas are attractive to the Mundu; in Sudan they adopted customs from their neighbors, the Azande.

Authority / Rule

The husband is the head of his family. However, a respected older wife is included in clan discussions even though she is from a different clan. Decisions are made by each clan. Elders arbitrate, instruct the young on customs and laws and pass community decisions. A man may qualify to be an elder if he is old enough, has raised a family, is respected in the community as one who knows and follow the customs and laws, and is hospitable.

Social Habits/Groupings

Drinking parties and feasts.

Cultural Change Pace

Medium

Identification With National Culture

Distinct

Self Image

Threatened

Judicial / Punishment System

Elders act as judges. Compensation is paid, in part to the chief, and partly to the injured party.

Celebrations

March-Nov are the months for farming. Dec-Feb is the time for celebrating the harvest with offerings of the first-fruits to the spirits and with feasts, dancing and singing. It is the time for arranging marriages, for re-thatching roofs, gathering honey and hunting. An important event is the funeral. This will last 3 days for a man and 4 for a woman. A year after the funeral, a memorial feast is held. This marks the end of the mourning period.

Recreations

Women enjoy braiding one another's hair. Both men and women tell stories and sing, and men play instruments such as drums, lyres, harps and xylophones. They also enjoy dancing, though Mundu Christians do not normally dance.

Art Forms

There are few art forms, though the women enjoy jewelry when they can afford it, as do the men to a lesser extent. The women will wear beads, nose-pins and earrings.

Media

There is no TV, and newspapers are rare. Radios are used, but there is no broadcasting in Mundu. Video shows are becoming popular in towns.

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

Both boys and girls accompany their parents as they work. They also herd goats, collect water or wood, farm and care for the younger siblings.

Youth Problems (Teens)

War and economic instability disrupt education. Education is viewed as prestigious, but as the most widely used languages are not Mundu, learning to read and write Mundu is not considered to be a priority.

Youth Greatest Needs (teens)

Medical care (infant mortality rate is high). Primary health care is lacking and basic medicines are difficult to find.

Education

Group Description

The Mundu of Zaire & Sudan

Item Name	Item Note
Primary Schools	5
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	40
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	English
Language Of Instruction Later Years	Bangala
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	Bangala
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	2
Comment (Education)	Books may not be available

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Engaged
Reached Classification	Evangelized
Total Baptized	15000
Lay Leaders	26
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	1

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Male circumcision is still performed, but in hospital and is no longer part of an initiation ceremony. Ancestors are venerated. Charms are used to ward off malevolent spirits. Sickness and other misfortune may be attributed to the activity of a witch or to other supernatural causes. To discover the reasons for misfortune, or to see if a course of action (e.g. hunting) will be successful an oracle is consulted. One of the most popular is 'benge'. This is an oracle using poison administered to a chicken. A set formulation of questions is asked and the answer determined by whether the chicken lives or dies. Magic is used for protection of crops and prayers are offered for the health and safety of family and crops.
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive
Resistance / Receptivity	The Mundu are receptive to new ideas, but tend to retain old ones.
Religious Analogies & Bridges	The Mundu believe in a supreme being who is almighty. There is a reconciliation ceremony which involves an animal sacrifice being made and the offended and the offended sharing in the meal together. The offended may then daub blood on forehead and breast of the offender.
Spiritual Climate And Openness	The Mundu in Sudan are open. Until recently, the Mundu in Zaire were unresponsive but the availability of Mundu literature has reversed this.
Recommended Approaches	Using vernacular literature. The Mundu are delighted to see their language being taken seriously. Understanding of the local culture is important, or the Mundu will tend to label Christianity as Western.
Current Needs	Relief workers among refugees; primary health care, schools, cessation of war and reduction of the inflation rate. Instruction for church leaders.
Items For Prayer	An end to the war in Sudan and a solution to the economic problems in Zaire. The raising up and training of Mundu church leaders.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began	1920
By Whom	African Inland Mission
Significant Events	Rosemary Hayes pioneered AIM work in Aba, Zaire in the 1920's. She spoke Mundu and is still remembered for that by the people in Aba. CMS and R.C.'s started work about the same time. Other translation work began in 1978.

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status	In Progress
Available Scripture	Portions
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed
Scripture Use	Individuals & some churches

The Mundu of Zaire & Sudan

Item Name

Item Note

Scripture Use

4

Comment (Scripture)

Genesis, Mark and John are available. There is also a hymnbook, 2 Bible story books and a Bible study booklet on John: 1 & 2

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Episcopal Church of Sudan (ANG)

Main Ministry

Church Planting

Main Ministry

Church Planting

Organization Name

African Inland Mission

Country Of Origin

United States

Main Ministry

Church Planting

Year Started

1920

Number Of Expatriate Workers

2

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Main Ministry

Church Planting

Main Ministry

Church Planting

Number Of Expatriate Workers

3

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available

Hymnbook, Bible story books and Bible study notes on John chapters 1 and 2.

Audio Recordings Available

"Gospel Outreach" recorded sermons.