



The Suba of Kenya

Beginning in the mid-1700's, Suba people began coming from the region just West of Lake Victoria to settle the islands and shores of the northeastern side of the lake. Fishing and boat building have been their traditional occupations. The Suba were also renowned hippo hunters before it was against the law to kill wild animals. Today farming is growing as an occupation, and cattle are kept mainly to provide for the payment of bride price.

Ever since coming to this area the Suba have been overshadowed by other ethnic groups, particularly Luo to the east. The result has been a reliance on others for trade and survival. Intermarriage with the Luo is commonplace, but Luo customs are generally maintained when this happens. European influence, which penetrated Africa from the east, viewed the Suba as a sub-group of the Luo. This further caused the Suba minority to lose recognition of their distinct culture.

Because the Suba language is very different from other language in the area, it came to be viewed as inferior. Education was introduced in English and Luo, and some Suba people have lost the ability to speak their own language. Christianity too was brought to this area through the Luo people. In recent years the Suba people have developed a strong interest in preserving their culture and language. A vital step in this direction is to make Suba a written language. Suba Scriptures will greatly strengthen the existing church by making the Bible available to the people in the language they understand best.

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

Churches:

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

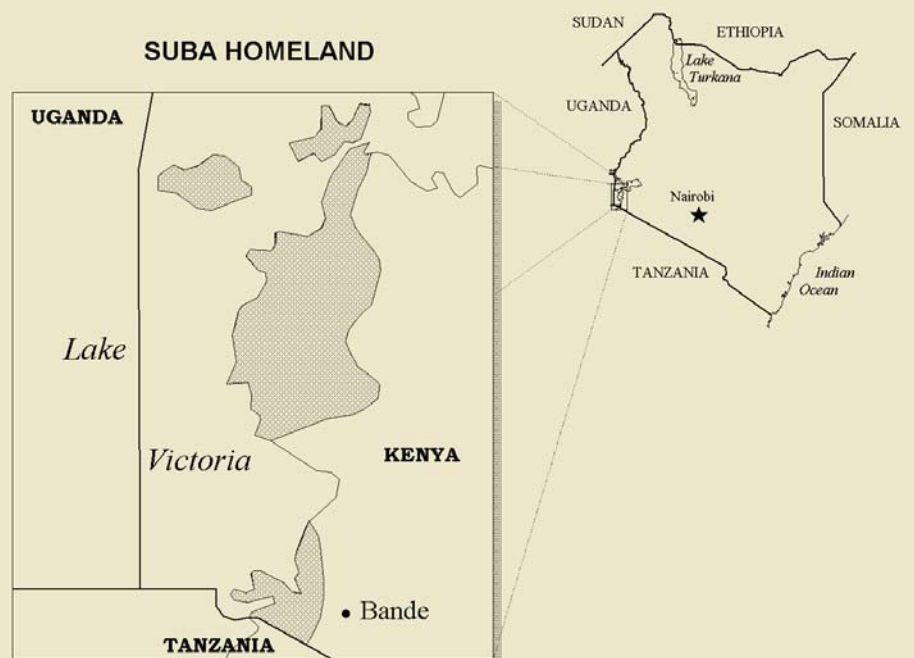
None in their language

Population (date):

90,000 (1992)



SUBA HOMELAND



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	90	
Comment (Jesus As God & Only Savior)	High percentage nominal	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	6	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	1	
Believe Jesus Is A Myth (%)	3	
Number Of Pastors	50	
Comment (Pastors)	50 pastors based on pastor ratio of 1:1,800 and population of 90,000	
Number Of Missionaries Working	18	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	18 missionaries based on missionary ratio of 1:4,900 and population of 90,000	
Number Of Communities	The Suba are a rural people and do not have defined villages	
Comment (Churches)	There are lots of Churches.	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No portions of Scripture are translated yet.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Lack of literacy may be a hindrance in the future, as education is carried out in Luo and English. There is no written form of Suba yet.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	None other than the spoken word from pastors, evangelists and believers.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Linguistic support is needed to write the Suba language and then develop written resources in the language, including the Bible. Theological training for Suba leaders is also needed.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	90000	
World Population (Date)	1992	
World Population (Urban Percent)	5	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Kenya	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Southwest Kenya, on shores of Lake Victoria.	
Country	Kenya	
Ecosystem Type	Deciduous Forest	
Geological Type	Mountain Valley	
Elevation	3,700ft	
Climate	Hot-wet.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Alternate Language Names	Abasuba	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	LUO	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	LUO	
Linguistically Related Languages	KURIA	
Linguistically Related Languages	LUYIA	
Linguistically Related Languages	KURIA	
Linguistically Related Languages	GUSII	
Linguistically Related Languages	LUYIA	
Linguistically Related Languages	GUSII	
Neighboring Languages	KURIA	
Neighboring Languages	GUSII	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Neighboring Languages	LUYIA	
Neighboring Languages	LUO	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	50	
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive	
Active Literacy Program	No	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Fishers	
Occupation	Fishing and boat building are the primary traditional occupations. Agricultural pursuits are practiced more and more today.	
Income Sources	Sale of fish, boats and some crops.	
Products / Crafts	Wood carving, basket making and pottery.	
Trade Partners	Luo.	
Modernization / Utilities	Wells and hand pumps, motors for boats, grinding machines and some telephones.	
Community Development		Group Description
Comment (Health Care)	Malaria and water borne diseases are major problems. People often cannot get to the few clinics in the area due to lack of water transportation.	
Diet (Quality)	Very good	
Comment (Diet)	Fish, millet, maize and cassava flour.	
Comment (Water)	Abundant water available from Lake Victoria. Some water is available from wells, but water purity is not good.	
Shelter Description	Homes are built with pole frames and grass thatched roofs. Walls are built of mud.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Energy)	Wood for cooking and kerosene lamps.	
Clothing	Mostly western style make of cloth.	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Family Structures	Extended families are led by the elders. Grandmothers play an important role in child rearing by providing most of the socialization experiences and training for the children in the extended family.	
Neighbor Relations	The Suba people get along well with neighbors. There is considerable intermarriage with Luos. Boats and fish are supplied to neighbors by the Suba people.	
Authority / Rule	Elders have total authority. A primary elder who is highly respected is informally appointed. His authority may be passed on if his son is also highly respected.	
Social Habits/Groupings	The extended family forms the primary social group. The living area (boma) of the family is made up of many houses depending on how many wives and children are in the family. Grandmothers oversee the raising of the children.	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Integrated	
Self Image	Depressed	
Judicial / Punishment System	The clan elders make decisions regarding violations of cultural norms. Payment to the offended party may be required. Banishment from the group or corporal punishment may also be employed.	
Celebrations	Harvest time is celebrated with dancing and beer drinking.	
Recreations	Social occasions are held periodically where beer drinking and dancing are enjoyed. Wrestling and a board game called Oluko is popular. Funerals are occasions for much social interaction.	
Art Forms	Pottery, baskets, mats, carved designs on furniture. Wall and floor designs are popular.	
Media	None	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Girls: cooking, collect and carry firewood, fetch water. Boys: Fishing, herding, work in fields.	
Youth Problems (Teens)	Lack of money to attend school. Employment opportunities are limited.	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Education and employment. Capital to start fishing industries. Medical care: There are 3 clinics but people have to go 50km to the hospital.	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	60	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Luo (Kenya and Tanzania)	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	Luo (Kenya and Tanzania)	
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	English	
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	20	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Engaged	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	There is much mixing of Christian ideas with traditional religion. Animal sacrificing is becoming more common.	
Attitude To Christianity	Very receptive	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive	
Resistance / Receptivity	Most of the Suba are nominal Christians already. The recent revival of interest in the Suba language and culture makes them receptive to the Scriptures being available in their own language.	
Spiritual Climate And Openness	The Suba are very open to Christianity. What they lack is good instruction in Christian doctrine.	
Recommended Approaches	Suba scriptures will greatly strengthen the existing church and open the way to reach younger Suba.	
Current Needs	Trained Suba Church leadership to provide instruction to those who have a minimal understanding of Christianity. Suba New Testament.	
Items For Prayer	Progress of the Suba Bible translation project. Training for church leadership.	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	In Progress	
Comment (Scripture)	(Imported: Literature/Media: Recordings: There is a beginning of recording Suba songs.) (Imported: Summary: Word of God translated: No portions of Scripture are translated yet. Other forms of gospel: None other than the spoken word from pastors, evangelists and believers.)	
Missions and Churches		Status of Christianity
Organization Name	Anglican	
Organization Name	Baptist	
Organization Name	Four Square Church	
Organization Name	Pentecostal	
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church	
Organization Name	Seventh Day Adventists	
Christian Literature And Media Status		Status of Christianity
Audio Recordings Available	There is a beginning of recording Suba songs.	