



# PEOPLE GROUP: THE KANGO OF DRC

The Kango people, numbering less than 50,000, dwell on the banks and islands of the Uele River in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). They are primarily fishermen. According to lore, their ancestor, Kango was a talented fisherman. He gave his sons areas of the river to rule over, but the whites expelled the people and imposed new leaders.

A love for the water sets the Kango apart from the other tribes in the area, many of whom are fearful of the large Uele River. Also unusual is that Kango women are engaged in fishing and paddling the canoes along with the men. The Kango have a habit of smoking and drinking to be better focused before going out on the water.

Along with the confidence on the water comes belief in a water spirit that causes people to drown. When eight nurses drowned while crossing the river, the consensus was that the Kango man with them died because he warned them of the danger.

In the past, the Kango were animists, but now many identify as Catholic although syncretism is an insidious problem with the use of fetishes and witchcraft alongside Christian

symbols. Children are sent to be treated by witchdoctors instead of medical professionals. Some families have taken their children mid-treatment and sent them to witchdoctors.

Malaria is endemic and causes great suffering. The remoteness of the Kango villages means medical care is hard to get, but women try to reach clinics to give birth. Wise women in the villages help with emergencies.

The few children who attend school must walk through the forest more than 10 km each way. Literacy is therefore very low. No electricity is available, and often no cell phone service either.

The Kango speak their own language, but have adopted the languages of groups around them, such as Pazande and Lingala, which have Scripture and Gospel resources. A Scripture translation project has started, and one or two audio recordings in the Kango language are available.

The Zande, a nearby people group who have been well-Christianized for almost 100 years, made little effort to reach their neighbours. However, three Zande missionaries are now working among the Kango, who are incredibly open to the Gospel.

## AT A GLANCE

- In northern DRC, it is difficult to get Bibles.
- The Kango honour their dead with graves made of stone, which is used only for tombs.
- In the two villages where churches have been, the Zande missionaries were the first to share the Gospel.

## PRAY FOR

- Faithfulness and discipleship; the Kango may convert easily but abandon Jesus easily too.
- The Zande missionaries working in remote areas: for good health, for wisdom, and for spiritual strength.
- Kango disciples to rise up and begin to reach out to their own people.

Sources: AIM missionaries and Zande missionaries • BAS-UELE Pouvoirs locaux et économie agricole : héritages d'un passé brouillé » (Tshonda et al., Pgs. 82-84).  
• <https://www.peoplegroups.org/explore/GroupDetails.aspx?peid=14577>



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