

# Preview of Kugama's socio-cultural practices

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# Overview

- Research context
- General information
- Social structure
- Occupation
- Traditional and modern housing
- Traditional ceremonies and cultural events
- Performing arts



# Research context



# Previous research on Kugama

- First field trip conducted in Yola, capital of the Adamawa State, in January 2014 as part of research for my BA and later for my MA theses at St. Petersburg State University, Russia;
- Four subsequent field trips to Kugama communities (Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, Nigeria) as part of my PhD project from Labex EFL (project LC2 “Areal phenomena in northern sub-Saharan Africa”). Over the four years of this project I have done seven months of fieldwork on Kugama.

03/2017 – 06/2017 Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, Nigeria

04/2018 – 05/2018 Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, Nigeria

11/2018 – 12/2018 Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, Nigeria

01/2020 – 02/2020 Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, Nigeria

# Data collection

**Language documentation** was done in the Government Lodge (Mayo-Belwa), where I was working with many speakers of Kugama.

**Anthropological and geographical data** was mostly collected in different Kugama villages and in the town of Mayo-Belwa during 2017-2020.

THE SCHEDULE OF VISITATION FOR RESEARCH PROJECT ON KUGAMA LANGUAGE BY LORA LIVINOVA FROM FRANCE (PARIS) TO THE CATCHMENT AREA OF KUGAMA COMMUNITY MAYO-BELWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE NIGERIA.

S/N	DATE	CATCHMENT AREA	VENUE	PROGRAMME OFFICERS
1	Day 1 14/3/2017	Kugama Kpatiyere Kugama Kuri Kugama Manga Kugama Kpayona Kugama Kpawana Kugama Tukuba	Kugama Primary School	Edwin Somange
2	Day 2 16/03/2017	Kugama Arnado Kugama W/Jibir Kugama Kwaba Kugama Diyamdadi	Kugama- Arnado	Yunusa Filgonah
3	Day 3 18/03/2017	Kugama Namjo. Kugama S/ Gari Kugama Jalingo Kugama Yolde Kugama Kumba	Kugama Namzo	Yakubu Kadiri
4	Day 4 20/03/2017	Sindigawo Sakawa Mararaban M/Billa Labbare Kugama Kugama Ibbare	Sindigawo	Adiel B. Bitrus
5	Day 5 23/03/2017	Ndikong Wuro Lamdo Lande Kugama Bajjagu Mayo-Jafa	Ndikong Kugama	Linus P. Sambo
5	Day 6 25/03/2017	Legal Bardu Rumde Beti Bukkaji Boman W/Hausa	Legal Bardu	Andrew Yallo
	Day 7 27/03/2017	Summary of research work	Mayo-Belwa Metropolitan	Lora Livinova

# Corpus of anthropological data

The corpus includes **naturalistic** data and “**illustrative**” data, in the form of pictures, audio and video recordings of different socio-cultural activities of the Kugama.





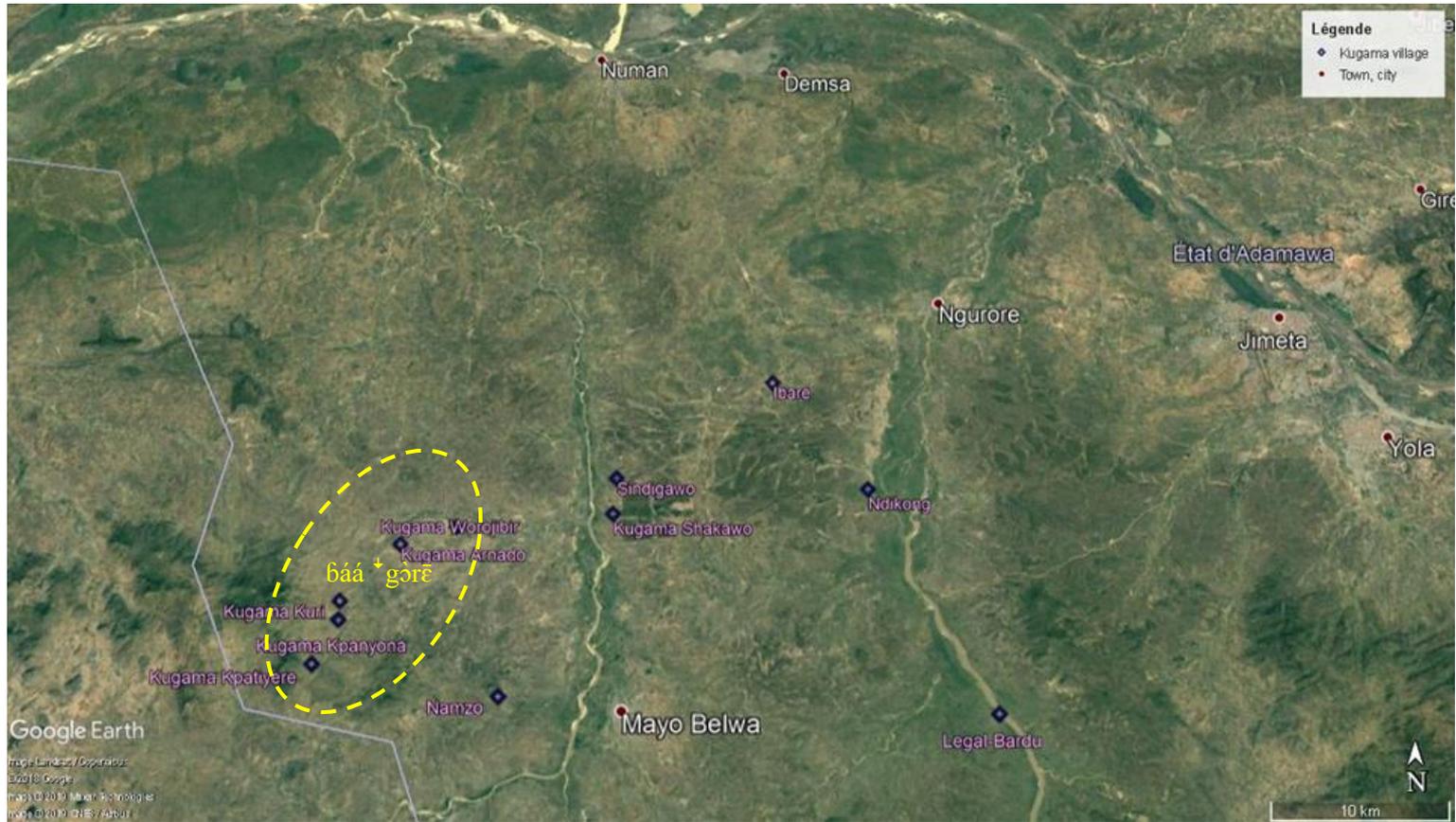
# General information on Kugama



# General information



- The Kugama speak *ná: wā̃m* ‘the Wam language’.
- The language is classified within the Yendang group of the Adamawa language family.
- 5000 speakers (Ethnologue)
- They live in a number of villages in Mayo-Belwa LGA and Fufore LGA of Adamawa State, including the town of Mayo-Belwa (administrative center), and in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State.
- *ḥáá* <sup>↓</sup>*gòrē* (lit. ‘in the mountain(s)’) is an area located in Mayo-Belwa LGA which is believed to be a place of origin of the Kugama.



GPS coordinates of some Kugama villages (Mayo-Belwa and Fufore LGAs, Adamawa State, Nigeria, 2017)



Kugama Kpanyona, 14/03/2017

# Religion

- The Kugama community practice two religions:  
Christianity and traditional religion.
- Syncretism



Prayer in Namzo village, 30/03/2017



Chicken sacrifice in Kugama Arnado village, 16/03/2017

# Family and marriage

Polygamy is part of traditional Kugama culture. A man can marry as many women as he wants. Polygamy is widespread in rural areas.

A man needs to pay a bride price to the bride's family before the wedding takes place. Sometimes it can take years to save the full sum.



A wife lives in the house of her husband. During the wedding, the bride's family and other women bring her dowry to the groom's house.



Bringing a dowry to the husband's house (Legal-Bardu village, 25/03/2017)



# Social structure



# Kugama leaders

- Traditional chief - *kpàm wǎm*
- Chairman and Representative of the Kugama community



Zaphania Baleri, Representative of the Kugama community  
(Kugama Arnado village, 16/03/2017)

# Clan system

## ᵐá¹wǎnà

ᵐá¹wǎnà báá¹gǎā  
ᵐá¹wǎnà bòtóó¹tāā  
ᵐá¹wǎnà ᵐáá¹mōōkū  
ᵐá¹wǎnà púrí¹gāᵐ  
ᵐá¹wǎnà púrí¹zólú  
ᵐá¹wǎnà tààsì

## ᵐá¹gónǎ

ᵐá¹gónǎ ¹ᵐá¹dìgízā  
ᵐá¹gónǎ ¹ᵐá¹kpànī

## ᵐá¹ᵐòòná

ᵐá¹ᵐòòná ¹ᵐóó¹né  
ᵐá¹ᵐòòná ¹báá¹héērī  
ᵐá¹ᵐòòná ¹kpá¹úré  
ᵐá¹ᵐòòná ¹kpá¹syê

## ᵐá¹pōrē

ᵐá¹pōrē víí¹pí  
ᵐá¹pōrē ᵐóó¹né  
ᵐá¹pōrē ᵐá¹bó¹tōy

## ᵐá¹dààrí

ᵐá¹dààrí ¹bāᵐzēm  
ᵐá¹dààrí ¹bāᵐkísā

## ᵐá¹tíyé¹ré

ᵐá¹tíyéré ¹ᵐá¹tikpààrī  
ᵐá¹tíyéré ¹ᵐá¹màlèkē  
ᵐá¹tíyéré ¹ᵐá¹ká¹syê  
ᵐá¹tíyéré ¹ᵐá¹gósòlō  
ᵐá¹tíyéré ¹ᵐáá¹gērē



# Occupation



# Farming and hunting

Kugama people are mostly farmers and hunters (depending on the season).

Hunting commonly takes place during the months of January-April.

Farming is done in accordance with the rainy season and it lasts until November-December.





Traditional grinding with Hebata Manti (Kugama Kpanyona village, 09/02/2020)

# Hunters

- Traditional hunters
- Vigilantes: *'yan baka* (Hausa). They protect and secure Kugama villages



Head of hunters in Sindigawo village, 21/03/2017



Vigilante in Namzo village, 30/03/2017

# Calendar of huntings

bèkì lāṅ	first hunting (in January)
bèkì ʔúú <sup>+</sup> kópē	second hunting (in February)
bèkì míí <sup>+</sup> sàpé	third hunting (in March)
bèkì sāāmì	forth hunting (beginning of April)
bèkì gáfúkà	fifth hunting (end of April)



Kugama hunter in Sindigawo village,  
21/03/2017



# Traditional and modern housing

Traditional houses are round huts made out of mud with a peaked grass roof.



Visiting Kugama Shakawo village with Comfort Yakubu,  
21/03/2017

Modern buildings are squared structures, with cement-brick walls, and zinc-sheets roofing.



Church in Kugama Kpanyona village, 14/03/2017



Mathias Nemfas is netting a fence (Kugama Kpanyona village, 09/02/2020)



# Traditional ceremonies and cultural events



## Traditional ceremonies and cultural events

- Circumcision
- Traditional funerals
- Wekuh festival



Dances in Mayo-Belwa, 26/11/2018

# Circumcision

- Only male participants from 7 years old (before 15-16).
- Only other male can attend the procedure.
- It takes place every three years during December-January.
- Different Kugama villages.



Visiting Kugama Arnado village, 16/03/2017

Boys learn how to dance, blow horns, and live in the bush/without parents up to one year before the celebration.

Traditional outfit: skirt, helmet/cap, horns, and rattles on their ankles.



Dances in Kugama Arnado village, 16/03/2017



Circumcision ceremony in January, 2019

# Traditional funerals

Traditional funerals are usually reserved for older members of the community while a more modern solemnization is performed for others.



Visiting Ndikong village, 23/03/2017

A corpse is wrapped in a long piece of fabric, and it is carried to a grave.



A grave is carved as an underground tunnel with a round-shape entrance. Once the body is placed inside (legs outwards), the round entrance is covered with wooden sticks, followed by a clay basin, and some leaves. Only then the grave is covered with soil.

## Wekuh Community Development Association (WECODA)

- The WECODA includes three communities: Kugama (kow), Gengle (geg) and Sate/Satte (ksm).
- It is run by one leader, National Chairman of the Wekuh Community Development Association.
- These three groups come together during the Wekuh festival to celebrate their traditions.



Satte women (Wekuh festival, Mayo-Belwa, 28/04/2018)

# Wekuh festival

The *Wekuh* festival is an important cultural event held in the town of Mayo-Belwa during the months of April or May.

Kugama, Satte and Gengle perform some of their cultural traditions for residents and visitors of Mayo-Belwa, including a number of political leaders and administrative workers from different parts of the region.

Fundraising is also an important part of the festival.



Wekuh festival in Mayo-Belwa, 28/04/2018

# Kugama, Gengle and Satte

Despite the fact that I did not have a chance to work closely with Gengle and Satte, I noticed a number of cultural similarities that are shared among Kugama, Gengle and Satte.



Gengle dancers (Wekuh festival, Mayo-Belwa, 13/05/2017)



Satte dancers (Wekuh festival, Mayo-Belwa, 28/04/2018)



Kugama dancers (Wekuh festival, Mayo-Belwa, 13/05/2017)



# Performing arts



# Performing arts

- Music
  - Traditional instruments
  - Songs
- Circle dance
- Hunters performances



Kugama dancer (Wekuh festival, Mayo-Belwa, 28/04/2018)

# Traditional instruments

Traditional instruments include drums (big, small, and hourglass), flutes, horns, and rattles *gūnā*.

A musical ensemble can include drums, flutes, *gūnā*, and vocals.

Horns are commonly played by boys.



## Rattle *gūnā*

The *gūnā* is used as a percussion instrument. It is placed on a wooden stick or on people's ankles.





Kugama women singing (Legal-Bardu village, 25/03/2017)

## Songs

One traditional singing genre is characterized by a leading singing woman and the accompanying choral vocals.



Dancing and singing on the roof during a wedding (Legal-Bardu village, 25/03/2017)

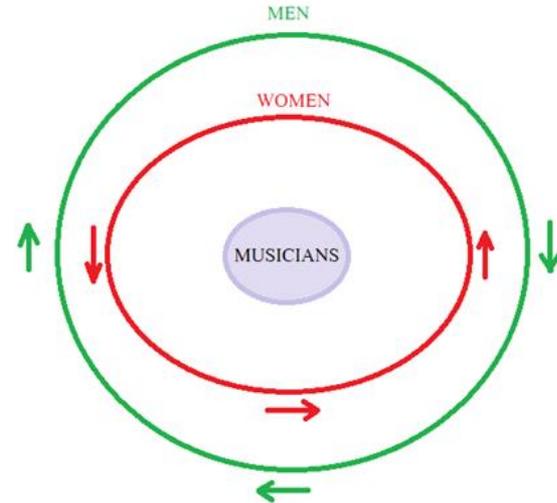
# Circle dance

Kugama circle dances consist in concentric movement from the performers around musicians.

The internal circles are reserved to women, while the external are for men.

Women's circle moves from left to right while men's circle shifts from right to left.

Kugama circle dances are accompanied by traditional instruments and singing.



Women usually dance with a calabash and/or a hoe.

Men often dance with bow and arrows, or any other tools attributed to traditional hunters (even with a simple stick).



Wekuh festival in Mayo-Belwa, 13/05/2019



Wekuh festival in Mayo-Belwa, 28/04/2018

# Hunters performances

During festivals or other cultural events, traditional hunters put on a theatrical performance for guests. They act out their hunting techniques by sneaking and attacking an imaginary prey. They also chase away ghosts of dead people and they interact with guests by trying to scare them.

Musicians and women can also be involved in their performance.



Performance of traditional hunters in Ndikong village, 23/03/2017

# Thank you !



I am very grateful to Andrew Christopher, Linus Pana Sambo, Benjamin Bavere and Eveling Villa for their help in collection of anthropological data. Thanks to Geoffrey Pana Linus for posting some pictures and videos from the Kugama circumcision ceremony (January, 2019) on Facebook.

I thank Kugama, Gengle and Satte communities, residents of Mayo-Belwa and Fufore LGAs, and local administration for their support and interest in my research.