

Western Baloch of Iran



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The Western Baloch live primarily in the dry, resource-poor Sistan-Baluchestan Province in the southeast of Iran. This region of the country - far from the opportunities that major cities provide - is the poorest area of Iran, with the lowest literacy rate and the highest unemployment rate of Iran's 31 provinces. The Western Baloch are a disadvantaged people.

The Baloch are guided by a code of honor referred to as the *Balochmayar*, the "Baloch way." This way of life puts a heavy emphasis on values and practices that have guided the Baloch for centuries. Balochmayar teaches that its people should be modest (*laj*) and should live with honour (*ghairat*), including being reliable to fulfill a promise (*qal*) made. They are to pay attention to reputation (*izzat*) as they show lavish hospitality to guests and offer protection to those seeking refuge (*bahot*). In the tight-knit clans that form the social fabric of Baloch life, disputes are sometimes resolved by a gathering of tribal elders called a *jirga*. At the same time, blood-feuds can persist for generations and it is thought that maintaining honour requires one to take revenge when wronged. These values and practices are taught to young children both by instruction and example. Envision a day when the conservative, tribal Baloch way of life is both preserved and transformed by the power of the gospel of Christ!



Quick Facts

Population in Iran = 1 million

Progress: Unengaged

**Language: Western Balochi,
Farsi**

**Gospel Resources:
Complete NT available in
print and audio by end of
2024**



Engage

Persevering prayer is key to reaching the Western Baloch of Iran! Not only are they situated in a remote part of the country, but it's also highly likely that the government and security services will view efforts to live and work in Sistan-Baluchestan Province with suspicion. And then there is the strongly independent spirit that marks the Western Baloch, which for many might be paired with a wariness toward outsiders. This is a spiritual battle that will require the whole armor of God.

With a God who makes all things possible, what are some of the needs among the Western Baloch that a team could meet so as to build relationships of trust and declare the good news of God's kingdom?

First, there might be opportunities in education. With the lowest levels of literacy in a country where education is valued highly, those who can train teachers or teach a foreign language may be granted access to instructors or students in the school systems. The University of Sistan and Baluchestan, located in Zahedan but with campuses in two other cities in the province, is the second largest university in the entire country!

Southeastern Iran experiences significant environmental and ecological problems. Annual rainfall amounts are down significantly over the past 40 years, and disputes with the governments of Afghanistan over water rights from the Helmand River have left Iranian authorities with few choices but to deliver water in tankers to the people of the region. Those with expertise in water management or water-scarce agricultural practices may have access to the Western Baloch.

Balochistan University in Quetta, Pakistan, offers a course of study in Balochi folklore, poetry and literature. This might be an inroads that people from some countries can take advantage of to develop a deep understanding of the Baloch.



Pray

- **Ask God to put into the hearts of some the desire and perseverance to reach the Western Baloch, whatever it takes.**
- **Ask the Lord to raise up key Western Balochi door openers who will advocate for outsiders to come into Iran to serve their people through education, environmental issues or other means that will bless their people.**

**Is God calling you to take the gospel to the Western Baloch of Iran?
Contact us. We would love to help you get there!**