

## Partnership Indonesia

For more than 30 years there has been a lively partnership of the smallest Indonesian Batak church, the GKPA (Christian Protestant Angkola-Batak Church) with our church district.

The original tribal area of the Angkola-Batak is in the south of North Sumatra (Tapanuli), where most of the inhabitants are Muslims. Nevertheless, there are also purely Christian villages in South Tapanuli. However, GKPA communities can also be found wherever larger groups of Angkola live, e.g. in Medan or Jakarta.

The GKPA strives to maintain a good relationship with the Muslim majority by inviting state and municipal representatives such as the regent and the mayor to its own festivals and gatherings. In addition, members of the GKPA are involved in interreligious dialogue. People talk to each other. This is the custom among the Batak.

The GKPA owns an elementary school, an orphanage and a health clinic. The church provides financial support to families with schoolchildren who have difficulty meeting the costs of school attendance (books, exercise books, school uniforms).

Regularly relaunched programs for children and youth, women's and men's work involve many members of the church in the activities.

Church services are well attended not only on important Christian holidays. They are often celebrated by the presbyters of the congregations, because one of about 50 pastors of the GKPA is usually responsible for four to five congregations. Because of the exceptionally bad roads in South Tapanuli, the pastor can only visit one congregation on a Sunday. In this way, many parishioners always feel responsible for their parish.

In the past almost 40 years there have been many contacts. Visitor groups from Indonesia have visited the Braunfels church district. Delegations from Germany have been guests in Indonesia. A few examples:

- A group of young Indonesian women who participated in a confirmation trip and a youth trip of the church district on Föhr, among others.
  - Ephorus Adolv Bastian Marpaung and General Secretary Togar Simatupang celebrated a church service with us in Ehringshausen on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the partnership.
  - A group from the church district of Braunfels celebrated "150 years of Christianity" on Sumatra with their partners on Sumatra.
  - The Indonesian jazz band "Terangapi" from Jakarta played concerts in Wetzlar and Katzenfurt.
- In 2023, the 40th anniversary of the partnership in Sumatra will be celebrated.

Pastor Ulrich Ries, Katzenfurt, chairman of the partnership committee

### Caption

Picture 1: Guests and hosts after the concert of the band Terangapi in Wetzlar (Photo Ulrich Ries)

Picture 2: Visitors of a church service in Padangsidempuan (Photo Alice Kahn)

Picture 3: Representatives of the district church partnership visiting children and young people in the orphanage Deborah in Silangge (Photo: Partnership Indonesia)