

The Datooga of Tanzania



The most general name for this widely dispersed ethnic group is Datooga. The best known and most numerous sub-tribe of the Datooga peoples are the pastoral Barabaig, who reside chiefly in that part of the northern volcanic highlands dominated by Mount Hanang (3418m), whose scared nature makes it an important theme in Barabaig myth and song.

The Datooga keep goats, sheep, donkeys and a few chickens, but cattle are by far the most important domestic animal. The meat, fat, blood, milk, hide, horns, tendons and cow dung of every animal have either practical or ritual purposes. They were formerly nomadic, depending largely on milk products for their diet, and moving whenever the needs of their cattle dictated. Now, however, many farm a plot of maize and sometimes beans and millet.

The Datooga themselves blend in with their environment, their dress being the color of the reddish brown soil. Only on closer inspection will they appear colorful with their reddish, patched leather dresses, bead work, and brass bracelets and necklaces.

The Datooga are a proud people, with a reputation as fierce warriors. Traditionally, young men had to prove themselves by killing an "enemy of the people", defined as any human being not a Datooga, or one of the dangerous wild animals, such as elephant, lion or buffalo.

They are resistant to cultural change, including belief in Christianity, maintaining a strong adherence to traditional animist beliefs and practices. Since most Datooga do not speak Swahili, the national language of Tanzania, and very few are literate, communication of the gospel must be in their own language, using the traditional media of story-telling and songs. Like animists the world over, the good news of Jesus Christ is very relevant to their needs, once communication can be established.

Primary Religion:

Animism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

1%

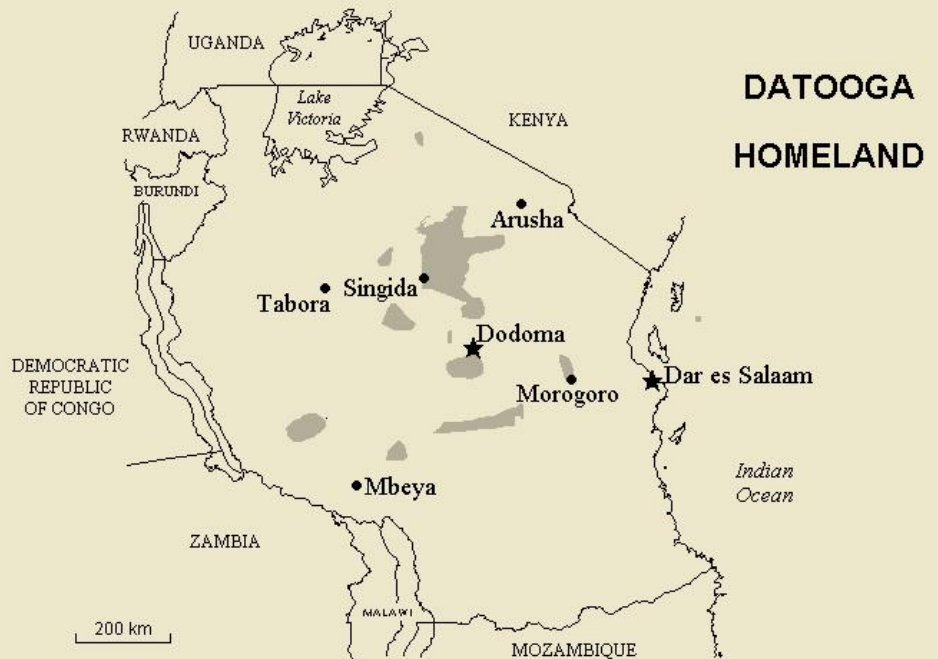
Churches:

20

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Population (date):

150,000 (1993)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	1	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	1%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	99	
Number Of Pastors	10	
Number Of Missionaries Working	17	
Number Of Churches	20	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	A translation project has been underway since 1990, but is currently on hold. An agency expects to place another translation team in the area in mid 1994, but it will be some years before any scripture portions are available to the people	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	An audio tape recorded in 1956 and a copy of Luther's catechism	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Yes, to assist in the translation of the Bible into Datooga, and to assist the church in developing forms of evangelism and development that will reach the Datooga for Jesus. Despite over 50 years of Christian activity in the Datooga area, there are very few Datooga Christians.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	150000	
World Population (Date)	1993	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Tanzania	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Country	Tanzania	
Ecosystem Type	Scrub Forest	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	5000ft	
Climate	Semi-arid country, rainfall seasonal (Dec-Apr), app 20" per annum	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Alternate Language Names	Datoga, Datog, Tatoga, Tatog, Mang'ati, Taturu	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Somewhat resistant	
Second Languages	20	
Second Languages	5	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	IRAQW	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	IRAQW	
Linguistically Related Languages	SABAOT	
Linguistically Related Languages	SABAOT	
Neighboring Languages	NILAMBA	
Neighboring Languages	NYATURU	
Neighboring Languages	HADZA	
Neighboring Languages	IRAQW	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	2	
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat resistant	
Active Literacy Program	No	

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Item Name

Comment (Literacy)

Item Note

Corrections to Ethnologue entry: population total is too high- I estimate 100,000, and can produce the literature research from which I derive this figure. Missions should include NLM, Anglican Church of Tanganyika (Central Diocese). The language name listed should read DATOOGA (words only begin with voiced positives; final vowel is voiceless when said in isolation; long and short vowels are significant).

Economics

Subsistence Type

Pastoralists

Occupation

Herders of cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.

Income Sources

Selling cattle at cattle markets.

Products / Crafts

Beadwork; gourds; spears

Trade Partners

Trade cattle with surrounding peoples for maize

Modernization / Utilities

Some water boreholes by aid agencies for watering cattle.

Group Description

Community Development

Health Care (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Health Care)

Traditional healers; some church hospitals (good); the Tanzanian village health care infrastructure (drugs are scarce)

Diet (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Diet)

Different forms of milk (their basic food), corn, beans, honey beer

Water (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Water)

Women often walk miles to get water. Natural water sources are dams, man-made wells, and rivers in rainy season. In all these, water quality is poor.

Shelter Description

Houses low (4.5 feet), made of local materials (logs, sticks, grass, mud); rectangular shape, flat roof

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

None

Comment (Energy)

Wood and charcoal locally obtained.

Clothing

Men a red-ocra dyed "toga" wrapped around the body (like Maasai). Women leather tasseled skirt.

Transportation

Mainly by foot, donkeys used for carrying goods.

Group Description

Society & Culture

Family Structures

Polygamy is the ideal, marriage exogamous to clan, wives ranked in order of marriage

Neighbor Relations

Datooga are generally feared, but have good relations with the Iraqw. The men still carry spears

Authority / Rule

Power resides with the elders in the neighborhood council, which can impose fines and other sanctions (death curses). Group pressure is strong.

Social Habits/Groupings

Women play a big role in religious life, especially in singing and prayer. Funerals display the clan structures of Datooga life, as different sections of the clan participate in the funeral ceremonies, lasting up to a year.

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Distinct

Self Image

Threatened

Judicial / Punishment System

Local councils of elders and women impose various sanctions on the people if tribal rules are broken.

Celebrations

Men drink honey beer, a sacred drink, on ritual occasions such as funerals and circumcisions.

Recreations

Young men and women dance on ritual occasions.

Art Forms

Tattooing of circular patterns around the eyes. Extensive beadwork on ceremonial dresses of women, girls; bangles on arms, brass coils around the neck. Warriors wear headdresses of animals they have killed.

Media

Access to films in village centers (Swahili) occasional evangelistic slide shows, tapes (1958, not in use currently)

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Group Description

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Item Name	Item Note	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Collecting firewood, fetching water, herding cattle, caring for younger brothers and sisters.	
Youth Problems (Teens)	Tension between education and traditional ways of life. High infant mortality rate.	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Not researched	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	20	
Primary School Enrollment	500	
Teacher To Pupil Ratio	50	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	English	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	Swahili (specific)	
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	Swahili (specific)	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Status	Selected	
Total Baptized	400	
Lay Leaders	20	
Bible Schools	1	
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	2	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery, diviners are active, spirit mediums. Spirits of ancestors are alive and interact with living society. Protective charms are worn.	
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat resistant	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat resistant	
Resistance / Receptivity	The Gospel is a foreign religion with foreign forms, communicated in a language, Swahili, foreign to the vast majority of the Datooga people.	
Recommended Approaches	Evangelism must be in datooga, within the Datooga communities (not based in Churches). Try to use religious forms that are already familiar to Datooga - storytelling, religious singing, prayer forms. Oral communication is very important at first. Evangelism should respect authority patterns, aiming at elders of the community.	
Current Needs	Relevant evangelism, including Scripture translation, security of land tenure, better medical care, good water facilities, literacy.	
Items For Prayer	Local churches will formulate and put into practice and evangelistic program that makes Good News of Jesus relevant and understandable to Datooga needs, as they perceive them.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Year Began	1965	
By Whom	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	
Significant Events	Founding of school and clinic at Balang'da Lealu near Katesh in 1965	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	In Progress	
Comment (Scripture)	(Imported: Literature/Media: Literature: Luther's catechism Recordings: Gospel Recordings, 1 tape recorded 1956, in Barabaig) (Imported: Summary: Other forms of gospel: An audio tape recorded in 1956 and a copy of Luther's catechism)	
Missions and Churches		Status of Christianity

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Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Pentecostal
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Main Ministry	Evangelism
Number Of Adherents	200
Number Of National Workers	20
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Organization Name	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1935
Number Of Adherents	200
Number Of National Workers	10

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Literature Available	Luther's catechism
Audio Recordings Available	Gospel Recordings, 1 tape recorded 1956, in Barabaig