



## The Upper Asaro of PNG

The 30,000 Upper Asaro people live in the Eastern Highlands Province in the Goroka District of Papua New Guinea. Their mother tongue is Dano (Ethnologue code ASO), and many of the people also speak Tok Pisin, one of the national languages of PNG. The Upper Asaro live above the Asaro River Valley at an elevation of 1500-2300 meters (5000-7500 ft) on a mountain slope grassland with scattered trees. Their home is within a few hours' travel of Goroka, a major urban area, and they have easy road access by public transportation into this town. Marriage partners are chosen from among non-relative Dano speakers or from neighboring language groups. The Upper Asaro are welcoming to those that marry in, speaking Tok Pisin with those that have not learned Dano. They are for the most part subsistence farmers, raising animals and crops with occasional hunting and gathering. Some of the people are wage-earners in Goroka and others raise coffee as a cash crop or produce to sell in the Goroka market. Weather is cool in the mornings and intensely hot in the afternoons, when the men gather to play cards together and others go to Goroka to sell. They live in houses with roofs thatched from Kunai grass. There are no wells in the area; they access water from springs, streams, and the Asaro River. They have had a strong Christian influence in the area for over 50 years, and 80-90% of them claim Christianity as their religion. The New Testament was completed in Dano in 1989 and is being used in some of the churches. Portions of the Old Testament have also been translated. Some traditional religion still exists among the older generation. Their needs include further strengthening and equipping of church leaders, literacy development, preschools, and community development, such as clean drinking water, better roads and bridges, better nutrition for children (especially 2-4 year old children), and more economic opportunity to pay for schooling and medical care.

**Primary Religion:**

Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

25 - 30%

**Churches:**

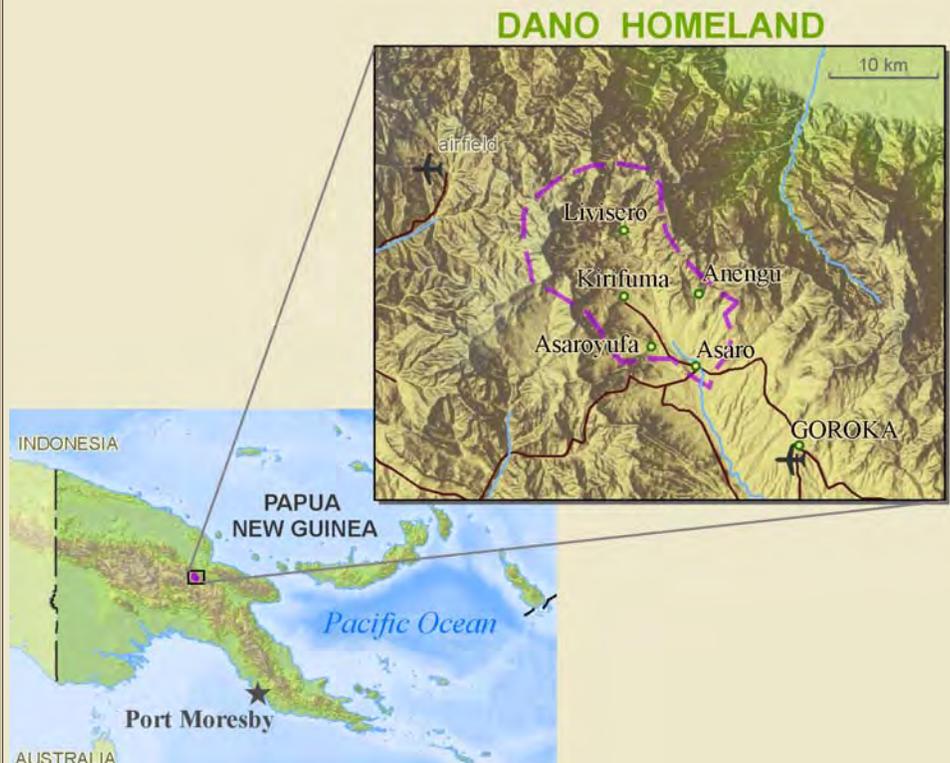
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**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

New Testament, Psalms

**Population (date):**

30,000 (1987)



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Item Name	Item Note	Profile Summary
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		
Call Themselves Christian (%)	80-90%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	25 - 30%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	10%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	5%	
Number Of Pastors	150	
Comment (Pastors)	Pastors, priests, and catechists (the catechists teach Sunday School and some go on to Bible school to become pastors)	
Number Of Missionaries Working	37	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	37, based on missionary ratio of 1:800 and population of 30,000	
Response To The Gospel	<p>The Catholic and Lutheran missionaries first penetrated the area more than 50 years ago and were well-received. Today many other denominations have vibrant churches in the area and this has met with some resentment and antagonism from the Catholic and Lutheran "old-school, mainline" churches. About 25-30% of the Upper Asaro people have received the Gospel with a positive spirit, have taken their relationship with Jesus seriously, and have experienced great joy over the forgiveness of sins. They have a changed life! Their traditional fighting with other language groups has significantly lessened and some have become much more responsible in the handling of money. They are more truthful and there is much less wife-beating and more respect for women. One of the leaders of the intertribal fighting was greatly grieved over the enormity of his sin and felt that he could not be forgiven. But when the good news of Jesus Christ was presented to him, he embraced it whole-heartedly. He has now passed on to be a worshipper in Heaven. Another 50-60% of the people are nominal Christians; they faithfully go to church and obey the rules imposed on them by the church but do not have a changed life or a personal relationship with Jesus. With the entire "Christian in name" population, hygiene has significantly improved with the coming of the Gospel and the building of the churches, since the church required its attendees to wash and put on clean clothes before coming to church.</p>	
Number Of Churches	55	
Comment (Churches)	There are 5 Catholic churches, 15 Lutheran, 15 EBC (the Evangelical Brotherhood Church has a real hunger for reading and memorizing the Bible in the mother tongue, holds weekly Bible studies, and has a good Bible training school for its pastors in the cit	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	yes	
Translation Medium	Printed and Visual	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	<p>Poor literacy in the mother tongue (people tend to be satisfied with the way things are going and don't see literacy as being necessary to living a good life and getting their needs met)</p> <p>Churches do not emphasize Dano Scripture use (they tend to read and preach in Tok Pisin with someone translating into Dano; pastor training is conducted in Tok Pisin)</p> <p>They do not see the Scriptures as being relevant to their daily lives. The Bible is viewed as a church book.</p> <p>Many people don't invest in Scripture because their limited cash goes to pay for food and fees for school, medical care, bride price, compensation claims, and ceremonies of various kinds. Some will purchase small booklets.</p>	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Recordings - yes; Literature - yes; Films/Video - yes; Radio - unknown	
	<p>Dano New Testament also has 16 8mm films on the gospel of Luke. Full Bible is available in Tok Pisin including the Apocrypha. Good News readers to help them learn to read bible verses (tapes accompanying them). Church readings booklet of church liturgy in Dano.</p>	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Pastor training and support and teachers for the Bible schools. Scripture Use specialists to give application to daily life.	

### Countries Where People Group Lives

Country Name Papua New Guinea

### Group Description

### Geography & Environment

Location Eastern Highlands Province, Goroka district

Country Papua New Guinea

### Group Description

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Item Name	Item Note
Ecosystem Type	Savannas
Geological Type	Mountain, Slope
Elevation	1500-2300m
Longitude	145E
Latitude	6S
Climate	Very pleasant tropical weather. Cool mornings and intense sun rays in the afternoons. Temp is rarely above 90F and never down to frost level. There is a wetter season distinguished from a drier season, but no great seasonal changes.
Comments (Geography & Environment)	Ecosystem Type is both Savannah and sparse tree cover.

### Language & Linguistics

### Group Description

Primary Language	DANO
Alternate Language Names	UPPER ASARO
Alternate Language Names	ASARO
Dialects	LUNUBE MADO
Dialects	UPPER ASARO
Dialects	BOHENA
Dialects	KONGI
Dialects	AMAIZUHO
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Percent Monolingual (%)	25-30%, most women over 45 years old are monolingual as well as many elderly men. The villages up in the mountains are probably more monolingual due to isolation. Very few teens and children are monolingual. The number of monolingual speakers is shrinking. Almost everyone knows at least a few words or phrases in Tok Pisin.
Second Languages	Tok Pisin, English
Linguistically Related Languages	TOKANO
Linguistically Related Languages	ALEKANO
Linguistically Related Languages	SIANE
Neighboring Languages	BENABENA
Neighboring Languages	ALEKANO
Neighboring Languages	TOKANO
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Tokano (Lower Asaro) is the most similar to Dano.

### Literacy

### Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	Less than 20% in Dano. In the Evangelical Brotherhood Church (EBC) 25% in Dano. 25-50% in Tok Pisin (per Ethnologue); 30% in Tok Pisin per Tiny & Ruth Ray. Some in English (no percentage)
Comment (Attitude to literacy)	The people are pretty satisfied with the way things are. Literacy is not viewed as necessary or particularly beneficial. Education is in English and pastor training is in Tok Pisin. Much literature exists in these languages, but little in their mother tongue. Many of the churches have been indifferent to literacy, but a few have higher literacy rates because of a desire to read the Bible.
Percent Literate For Men	10-15% functional literacy in Dano
Percent Literate For Women	10-15% functional literacy in Dano
Literacy Attitude	Indifferent
Active Literacy Program	Unknown; there may be mother tongue prep schools or elementary classes from first to third grade conducted in Dano.
Publications In Vernacular	There are over 20 publications in Dano, including folk stories, primers, hymn leaflets, Good News readers, children's stories, transfer reading textbook.

## The Upper Asaro of PNG

### Item Name

Comment (Literacy)

### Item Note

More women attended the Rays' literacy classes, but more men are literate in Tok Pisin, which made for easy transfer into literacy in Dano. There is very little reading and writing done in Dano. The most common usage for Dano literacy is among women and children who have Dano memory verse booklets. There are a lot of mixed marriages among the Upper Asaro, so these families tend to use Tok Pisin to communicate in the home. In order to get even the most basic job in Goroka, one has to know Tok Pisin or English.

### Economics

Subsistence Type

Agriculturalists

Average Annual Income

Many people are self-sustaining and some are employed in Goroka. Teachers in the community schools within the Dano region are paid employees. Most of the agriculturalists raise coffee as a cash crop and sell produce in town or local markets to earn cash. There is a wide range of annual incomes, from \$50 for produce-selling to much higher for paid wage-earners. An estimated average is \$200-300.

Occupation

They raise crops ,raise animals (pigs, cassowaries, some cows), coffee as a cash crop; some produce is sold in Goroka (carrots, cabbage, green onions, kaukau (sweet potatoes), Irish/English potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, capsukin (bell peppers), tomatoes, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, radishes, bananas, papaya, pineapple, peanuts, ginger, green beans, wing beans (these have edible leaves, blossoms, pods, and roots and are high in protein. They are legumes and thus build up the soil.)

Income Sources

They sell coffee, produce (carrots, cabbage, green onions, kaukau (sweet potatoes), Irish/English potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, capsukin (bell peppers), tomatoes, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, radishes, bananas, papaya, pineapple, peanuts, ginger, green beans, wing beans (these have edible leaves, blossoms, pods, and roots and are high in protein. They are legumes and thus build up the soil.). Community school teachers are paid. Some Upper Asaro are employed in Goroka.

Products / Crafts

The women make string bags (bilums) in their spare time. Most have 2 or 3 bags in progress at all times and they take their bag-making materials with them wherever they go. They often work on them in the intense heat times in the afternoons or while sitting in church. Some women also make homemade clothing, especially meri blouses (a kind of women's smock).

Trade Partners

Goroka

Modernization / Utilities

Some piped water and water tanks, but in disrepair or destroyed by tribal fighting.

### Community Development

Health Care (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Health Care)

Many, but not all villages, have nearby health posts. Typical visit costs 30 cents. Medical Research Institute in Goroka. For American standards, health care would be very poor. In rural areas, health care is between poor and non-existent. Near where the Rays lived was a good health post run by a Seventh Day Adventist. The posts did the best they could, but they could only give out the medicines they had available for any and all maladies. There used to be a hospital in the Asaro area run by the Salvation Army, but it was destroyed through tribal fighting. There is a hospital in Goroka which many women go to for giving birth, but the roads are in disrepair so many women just give birth at home with the help of an experienced mother. The sanitation is very poor. Due to smoky homes, many people suffer from asthma and other respiratory problems.

Diet (Quality)

Good

Comment (Diet)

Eat one major meal per day. Snack the rest of the day. Don't drink any milk. Once children have been weaned, they typically suffer malnutrition with protruding stomachs from age 2-5. They eat lots of greens and caucau. They get plenty of protein from peanuts and wing beans.

Water (Quality)

Good

Comment (Water)

The Asaro river is used for washing coffee beans, laundry, bathing, drinking. Drain-off into the river from pesticides, used on coffee trees poses a health risk. Springs and streams are also used as water sources, but there are no wells. There is a lot of water available, but in some areas it must be carried a distance. It is relatively clean water, but there have been typhoid outbreaks in the area.

### Group Description

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### Item Name

### Item Note

Shelter Description

The majority of the houses are round and low (sitting-space only). They are formed using posts and then bamboo is slit open and flattened and woven into a matting to form the walls. The walls are double-layer mats, which helps to keep the warmth inside the home. The outer layer is the newest. There is a fire in the center of the home and there is no chimney, so it is smoky inside. Some of the smoke filters out through the Kunai grass roof, which keeps the bugs away from the thatching. The Kunai grass has a long leaf and stem and is strong, coarse, and tough. Kunai grass is getting choked out of the area by other grasses, so they have to go further to find roofing. The fire is used to heat the house and for indoor cooking. Often the kaukau are placed in the hot ashes of the fire to cook. Soup is also cooked over the fire. Inside the house there is a sleeping platform. Under this platform, pigs are kept during the nights to prevent stealing of pigs. Every 3 years, a new house is needed since the Kunai grass rots and the posts begin to rot and break. Many homes have a dirt floor, though some use bamboo matting similar to the matting of the walls. People spend most of their time outside and are rarely in their houses. Some of the wealthy, including the community-school teachers, have rectangular homes with roofs of sheet iron and a cement floor. The frame is usually 2 x 4 boards and covered with woven bamboo. These have doors and windows.

Electricity

There is one power line that goes through the Asaro region up to a coffee plantation in the mountains but it does not provide power to the Asaros. Some villages have a limited-use generator and very few people have solar panels. For lighting at night, fires are used, as well as clusters of leaves that are lit (these are known as bomboms) and hurricane lanterns lit by kerosene. Some also use a bottle filled with kerosene and burned with a cloth wick for lighting. A very few have Coleman pressure lamps.

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

Poor

Clothing

Traditionally, the women wore grass skirts and went topless. Today the women often wear laplap skirts, which consist of a large piece of fabric that is wrapped around the waist and tied. They also wear meri blouses which are loose-fitting long smocks which are worn over the skirt. Men sometimes also wear laplaps. It is easy to purchase used clothing from Australia in Goroka. These are Western styles. Most men wear shorts and possibly a sweatshirt or T-shirt. The T-shirts always have some writing or a picture on them. Some of the men have neckties; in fact some of the churches require that the pastor wear a necktie to preach. There are very few shoes. Flipflops are the most common style of shoes, and they are a mark of prosperity. Sometimes the women go topless and wear only their laplap skirt as they work in their gardens. Today brides dress in the traditional, topless fashion.

Transportation

Walking and PMV's (public motor vehicles--vans & pickups)

### Society & Culture

### Group Description

Family Structures

Patrilineal: the bride moves away from her family and becomes a part of her husband's clan. Relatives are responsible for each other financially. There is rarely any husband-wife affection, except among the believers. Children are highly valued and loved. There is a great respect for life, and great mourning over death. A bride price is required for the groom's family to pay to the bride's family to compensate for the bride's family's loss of this valuable asset. This bride price can be stretched out and paid over many years. However, if the couple should divorce before the full bride price has been paid, there are complications over who gets to keep the children. A woman is a very valuable asset as a worker: she tends the garden, raises the pigs, and gives birth to and raises the children. During a wedding time, the groom's family pays the bride price (this is a money tree) and the bride's family provides feasts. Marriages between clans serve to unite family and clan lines. This makes travel throughout the area easier and safer and also facilitates further intermarriages.

Judicial / Punishment System

Weak discipline of children. The traditional authority system is breaking down (used to be uncle who disciplined)

Celebrations

Weddings : the bride's family provides a feast and the groom's family pays the bride price. The bride dresses in the traditional grass skirt and is accompanied as she walks from her family's home to the home of her groom's family. Often this was a sad time for the bride, since she had to leave her family and the life of a single teen girl is carefree but the life of a new wife is much more difficult.

Recreations

Weekly Bible study of the EBC. Playing cards/gambling. Video parlors.

Art Forms

Making meri-blouses; making bilums

Attitude To Outsiders

Very receptive

### Education

### Group Description

Primary Schools

6-8 government run schools

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Item Name	Item Note	
Secondary Schools	1 provincial high school. Near Goroka	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	English	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	English	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	English	
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	English	
Comment (Language Of Instruction)	After third grade, everything is in English. Many areas are adopting an elementary program of using the MT in the first 3 grades. These lower grades would not have textbooks in the MT, but they would use big books and story books, as well as a wordless math book to teach. Instruction is centered around thematic units. It is unknown whether this program is happening among the Dano.	
Comment (Language Of Textbook)	There are a fair number of textbooks (1 for about every 5 children)	
<b>Church Growth</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Reached Status	Reached	
Comment (Reached Status)	Old Testament is only available in Tok Pisin.	
Reached Classification	Evangelized	
Bible Schools	1 in Lae for the EBC. 1 in Goroka for Foursquare denomination.	
<b>Religion &amp; Response</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat receptive	
Comment (Attitude To Christianity)	The 20-30% who have changed lives have been very receptive to embracing the gospel, but the population as a whole has outwardly conformed, but not inwardly.	
Recommended Approaches	Scripture Use specialists are needed to provide training in using the scriptures for application to daily living in areas such as family life, business ethics, and disciplining children.	
Current Needs	Pastor training and support and teachers for the Bible schools. Scripture Use specialists to give application to daily life.	
Items For Prayer	Pray for real conversion in the churches. A greater respect for women. Further equipping of spiritual leadership. Deliverance from ancestor worship and fear of spirits.	
<b>History Of Christianity In Group</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Year Began	1950's	
By Whom	Lutheran	
By Whom	Roman Catholic Church	
<b>Scripture</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Translation Status	Scripture	
Available Scripture	New Testament	
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed and Visual	
Comment (Form of Scripture Available)	Portions are audio and audio-video. New Testament is written. Not sure either audio or visual are still available.	
Scripture Published When	N.T. Finished in 1989, dedicated in 1990.	
Scripture Use	Individuals & some churches	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	yes	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	yes, but maybe no longer usable. Equipment and tapes were borrowed from Ukarumpa and returned and technology is outdated.	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	yes, but maybe no longer usable. Equipment and tapes were borrowed from Ukarumpa and returned and technology is outdated.	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	uncertain	