



## The Isanzu of Tanzania

The Isanzu live in a hilly area scattered with large boulders and rock formations in the north of Tanzania. They are primarily farmers of maize, millet, and sorghum. The rivers in the area are seasonal, so they have difficulty procuring enough water during the dry season.

Education is something the people strongly value, and most children go to school.

The Lutheran Church is the dominant Christian presence in the area. Their missionaries first arrived in 1930. Currently the Lutheran Church in the area is run totally by local pastors. There are also small numbers of Pentecostal, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Christians. Although about 50% of the Isanzu claim affiliation with the church, it is estimated that at least half of them are nominal believers only. The local traditional religion still is adhered to by about half the population. A very small percentage of the Isanzu are Muslim.

**Primary Religion:**

Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

50%

**Churches:**

17

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

None in their language

**Population (date):**

32,000 (1996)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	50%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	50%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	1	
Number Of Pastors	12	
Number Of Churches	17	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No, but a few church materials were once translated.	
Translation Medium	A printed copy of the Swahili Bible	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There are only a few remaining Isanzu liturgies, songbooks, and catechisms. They seem to be all but lost. People say that they are not able to read the Isanzu writing. Most seem to be very comfortable with Swahili being the language of religion.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Jesus film in Swahili	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
World Population For This People	32000	
World Population (Date)	1996	
Comment (World Population)	This is an estimated total	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Tanzania	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Location	In northern Tanzania-- Iramba District of the Singida Region. South of Lake Eyasi; west of Haydom; north of Singida.	
Country	Tanzania	
Ecosystem Type	Scrub Forest	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	5000 feet (1524 meters)	
Longitude	W 35	
Latitude	S 04	
Climate	600-800 millimeters of rain per year. Seasonal rivers.	
Comments (Geography & Environment)	Mixture of plains and hills with giant boulders and unusual rock formations.	
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comment (Language)	Many of the older women could not speak Swahili.	
Alternate Language Names	nyisanzu nyihanzu	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Somewhat receptive	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	SWAHILI	
Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	It is the standard language for primary education, and most of the people go to school. It is generally the old women or the very young children who do not know it.	
Linguistically Related Languages	NILAMBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	NYATURU	
Linguistically Related Languages	NILAMBA	
Linguistically Related Languages	NYATURU	
Comments (Related Languages)	The people say that Nyaturu is the language which is most closely related to Isanzu. Nurse & Philippon 1980 also group Nyaturu in the same subgroup with Isanzu.	
Neighboring Languages	NILAMBA	
Neighboring Languages	IRAQW	

## The Isanzu of Tanzania

Item Name	Item Note	
Neighboring Languages	NYATURU	
Neighboring Languages	HADZA	
Neighboring Languages	SUKUMA	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat resistant	
Active Literacy Program	No	
Comment (Literacy)	Many can already read Swahili. For mother tongue literacy, however, there is not a strong felt need. Further, some have seen materials written in their language before, and they think that it would be too difficult to read. It is not known whether this might be due to a poor orthography or the lack of a strong literacy program.	
<b>Economics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Occupation	Most are farmers. Principal food crops are maize, sorghum, and millet.	
Income Sources	Their cash crop is the sunflower.	
Trade Partners	They sell the sunflower oil as far away as Haydom.	
Modernization / Utilities	In Matongo, there is a sunflower oil extraction press, which is a group cooperative project. The machines are powered manually. There is also a community store for protecting cotton.	
Comment (Economy)	Diesel engine powered projects in the past have not endured. A women's grinding cooperative, for example, and water tanks powered by diesel pumps could not continue.	
<b>Community Development</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Health Care (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Health Care)	There are several clinics in the Isanzu area established by the Lutheran church. A need was expressed at a more out-lying village to get a new clinic. There is a good hospital at Haydom to the West.	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Diet)	Maize, sorghum, millet, mango trees, chickens, and eggs are available.	
Water (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Water)	This is a strong felt need during the dry season. The rivers run dry, so the people are left to scoop water from shallow, murky wells. There are a few windmills in the area that may still work, but they do not service most of the people. Sinking the wells deeper or harvesting the rain seem like appropriate ways to help in this area.	
Shelter Description	Mud houses with thatched roofs (some have corrugated iron roofs). Almost all were fenced in by hedges.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Energy)	No electricity. Diesel gasoline can be purchased in Haydom and Singida.	
Clothing	Western	
Transportation	Bicycles are common. There is a bus from Singida that passes through the area once a week.	
Infant Mortality Rate	4.3%	
<b>Society &amp; Culture</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Neighbor Relations	Some intermarrying. 5 of the 8 villages are mixed with other people groups.	
Cultural Change Pace	Medium	
Identification With National Culture	Similar	
Self Image	Neutral	
Recreations	Pombe drinking. Every day after 3pm, many gather together in special areas to drink the local millet beer.	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive	

## The Isanzu of Tanzania

### Item Name

Attitude To Change

Comment (Culture)

### Item Note

Somewhat receptive

The attitude towards change appears to be positive--i.e. new clinics, improved water, etc. It was noted by an anthropologist, however, that traditionally the Isanzu are quite resistant to change. If an individual were to get ahead of the community in some manner, it is said that they would use witch craft against that person.

### Youth

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

School work, fetching water, tending goats, etc.

The schools all have work projects that the students participate in--sweeping the grounds, learning how to build an outhouse, or working in a garden.

### Group Description

### Education

Primary Schools

10

Primary School Enrollment

1200

Teacher To Pupil Ratio

63

Language Of Instruction Early Years

Swahili (specific)

Language Of Textbooks Early Years

Swahili (specific)

Comment (Education)

It is estimated that there is at least one school in every Isanzu village. Teachers were interviewed at three schools. Approximately 89% of the enrolled students attend daily. At these schools there was a combined total of 1204 students enrolled with 19 teachers among them. Most students walk 1 to 3 kilometers to reach school. Education seems to be a high priority. In Matongo, the cultural center, there was even a preschool so that the children could learn Kiswahili before starting school. Out of the schools we interviewed, only one reported that 1 to 3 students go on past Standard 7 each year. A reported 154 students complete Standard 7. 170 students are reported to complete Standard 4 each year.

### Group Description

### Church Growth

Reached Status

Evaluated

Lay Leaders

7

Christian Clinics/Hospitals

2

Comment (Church Growth)

There are two hospitals a bit further away in Haydom and Iambi. We saw only two clinics in our travels. There could be more.

### Status of Christianity

### Religion & Response

Attitude To Christianity

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Religious Change

Indifferent

Spiritual Climate And Openness

It is hard to gauge how many are practicing Christians, and how many are nominal. The survey team suspects a large portion of the adherents to be nominal.

Current Needs

Year round water supply  
more clinics/ teachers/ and schools.

Items For Prayer

1) That the nominal believers would be convicted by the Holy Spirit and would actively seek the Lord. 2) That the church would focus on the "unreached" among them--the older women who cannot understand Swahili adequately. 3) That the Isanzu believers would reach out to the large portion of Isanzu people involved in traditional religion.

### Status of Christianity

### History Of Christianity In Group

Year Began

1930

By Whom

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Significant Events

In the 1960's some Christian materials were translated. Later, these efforts were abandoned as the Lutheran Church wanted to standardize the liturgy for the area into Swahili.

Comments (History of Christianity)

Currently there are no expatriate missionaries in Isanzu. There were several, however, who came between 1930 and the late 1960's.

### Status of Christianity

### Scripture

Translation Status

Unlikely

### Status of Christianity

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Item Name	Item Note
Available Scripture	Portions
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed
Scripture Use	Hardly at all
Scripture Use	2
Comment (Scripture)	All the churches depend mainly upon Swahili for their ministry. The Isanzu Scripture portions were apparently not widely used and are no longer in circulation.

### Missions and Churches

### Status of Christianity

Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Organization Name	Pentecostal
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1978
Number Of Local Workers	2
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)
Organization Name	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Main Ministry	Church Planting
Year Started	1930
Number Of Adherents	16000
Number Of Local Workers	9
Language Used By Workers	Swahili (specific)

### Christian Literature And Media Status

### Status of Christianity

Literature Available	Literature is in Swahili. Only a few manuscripts remain in the Isanzu tongue.
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