

Karo of Ethiopia

Alternate names:

Kerre, Ganjule, Kara

Population: About 2,000**Language:** Karo**Location:** Only in Ethiopia south of the Mursi on the left bank of the Omo River in the south Omo region**Religion:** Ethnic religion**% Christian:** 4.3%**% Evangelical:** .7%**Christian resources available:** none

The Karo are subsistence farmers, using the hoe to cultivate the land. They grow maize, sorghum and beans. They rely on the Omo River and its annual flooding for water. In times of scarcity, they also fish. They also do bee-keeping. There is a dam being built near their homeland, which will threaten their livelihood. Cattle, goats and sheep are vital to their livelihood, producing blood, milk, meat and hides. Cattle are highly valued and used for bride payments.



When the Karo were rich in cattle, they were known for their magnificent houses. After losing their wealth, they adopted much lighter conical huts.

Each family owns two houses - the Ono, the family living room and the Gappa, the center of household activities.

The Karo have a ceremony similar to that of the Hamar, which involves young men jumping over a line of cattle. He who is able to jump over a large number of cattle proves that he is able to marry. A man may have as many wives as he can afford, but usually has two or three.

Infants born out of wedlock are considered an abomination and a shame to one's family and are abandoned.

Men and women use red ochre and white chalk to create intricate circle, spiral and cross-hatched designs on their faces and bodies to be more attractive, yet intimidating to rivals. Scars are cut into their skin and ash is rubbed to produce a raised welt.

A typical settlement has an open meeting space and dancing area, as they enjoy dancing. There are shelters called shuppa, where they go during the hottest part of the day and play a Karo board game called Warre. The language of the Karo, an Omotic language, is related to the Hamer-Banna language and has 81% lexical similarity.

The Karo live upstream from the Daasanach and have settlements near the Hamer-Banna. They exist peacefully with most of their neighbors, though sometimes have conflict with the Mursi. They are a friendly people.

The Karo follow an ethnic religion and worship nature spirits.

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Prayer Points

- Pray for the Ethiopian churches in the diaspora and in Ethiopia to mobilize their people and resources to reach the Karo for Christ.
- Ask God to provide for their need for land.
- Pray for God to send intercessors and laborers for the Karo.
- Ask God to open the hearts of the Karo to hear and receive the gospel.
- Pray for God to provide evangelistic resources in their language.
- Ask God for a disciple making movement among the Karo.



Information from The Joshua Project at www.joshuaproject.net; <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/index.php/issue/day/2013/01/06>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>; <http://www.beforethey.com/tribe/karo>; <http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com>

**"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?
And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent?
As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"**
Romans 10: 14 - 15



For information on adopting the Karo of Ethiopia

www.hornofafrica.org

www.engagers.org



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