



## The Migaama of Chad

The Migaami live in an area surrounding the impressive Abu Telfane mountain range, in the Guera region of central Chad. The long dry season and conditions of life have had an impact on the Migaami people who work the land and trade the surplus to provide for their families. Of those who have the benefit of schooling, a number also work in professional jobs such as teaching, public offices, and nursing.

Less than a century ago, the Migaama believed in the Margay spirits who are their intermediaries between men and the supreme Creator God, "Mella". For a long time, they resisted Islam which tried to force its system on them. Once the Arabs had conquered the valleys, it was more difficult to resist. Finally the French colonialists put pressure on them to abandon their mountain dwellings. Then, Islam forced them to abandon their animistic practices. Today, most of them call themselves Muslims. Though there are some remnants of the 'Margi' practices, the majority have become Muslims, consulting the marabou or imam in situations of need. The use of amulets and following the teachings of Islam has somewhat replaced the traditional 'Margi' practices.

Some of the Migaami have shown great interest in the Christian message, but many of these people are becoming Muslim also. Though the current Chadian constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the social pressure is great to become Muslims.

Today 'Margi' worshippers, Muslims and Christians live peaceably together. Cultural identity seems to be more important than 'religious' beliefs. Their openness is key at this time.

Pray a strong church movement would be established among the Migaami, and the neighboring Daju and Bidiyo peoples. They have yet to have the Bible translated into their language, a helpful foundation for evangelism and church planting. Their society shows signs of major change in the next two or three generations. Will the Good News of Jesus be part of the transformation of this society?

**Primary Religion:**

Islam

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

1%

**Churches:**

2

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

Bible translation started

**Population (date):**

23,000 (1993)



**MIGAAMI HOMELAND**



# The Migaama of Chad

Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	1%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	1%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	90%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	9%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Missionaries Working	3	
Number Of Communities	37 villages	
Number Of Churches	2	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	There may have been a draft of the Gospel of Mark done by untrained Migaami people, but there is nothing in print. A translation team started with language learning in 1997.	
Translation Medium	Printed	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	They need an established team for literacy and Scripture in use.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	A youth ministry may strengthen young believers in their faith. Many leave Christian beginnings to go back to Islam. Funding for nationals to do Bible translation, literacy, evangelism and church planting is needed to help those who are willing and capable.	
<b>Population All Countries</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
World Population For This People	23,000	
World Population (Date)	1993	
World Population (Urban Percent)	3,910	
Comment (World Population)	Statistics SIL estimate (1996); Living outside Chad: Sudan, Nigeria, Libia (not numerous)	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Chad	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Location	Central, Guera region, Mongo sub-sub-region, east of Mongo. Centered in Baro, around Abou Telfane mountain range. 550 km east of Ndjamená.	
Country	Chad	
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs	
Geological Type	Mountain Slopes	
Longitude	19 N	
Latitude	12 E	
Climate	Dry season: Oct-May; Rainy season: June - September	
<b>Language &amp; Linguistics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comment (Language)	Most speak Arabic to a certain degree, mainly for communicating at the market.	
Alternate Language Names	Migama, Jongor, Djongor, Dionkor, Dyongor, Djonkor Abou Telfane	
Dialects	Migaama, Doga, Gamiya	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Somewhat receptive	
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Linguistically Related Languages	DAJU, DAR DAJU	
Linguistically Related Languages	BIDIYO	
Linguistically Related Languages	BIDIYO	
Linguistically Related Languages	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Neighboring Languages	ARABIC, SHUWA	
Neighboring Languages	BIDIYO	

# The Migaama of Chad

Item Name	Item Note	
Neighboring Languages	DAJU, DAR DAJU	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Adult Literacy Percentage	6% in French or Arabic	
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive	
Active Literacy Program	Yes	
Publications In Vernacular	4	
<b>Economics</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Average Annual Income	Less than 450 US per year	
Occupation	Agriculture, livestock, educated work as teachers, work in government in health and agriculture, small business in towns	
Products / Crafts	Millet, sorghum, mangoes, okra, sesame, sesame butter, peanuts, peanut butter, cucumbers, mats, guava, mango, tomato, weaving - basketware, tobacco, cloth	
Trade Partners	Arabs mainly (Yalnas) and other neighboring peoples: Dadjo (North), Bidiyo (South), Dangaleat (West)	
Modernization / Utilities	No electricity in the area; No telephone	
<b>Community Development</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Health Care (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Health Care)	<p>Infant Mortality Rate: 13.7%</p> <p>Child Mortality Rate: 23.1%</p> <p>Life Expectancy Rate: 62.3 years</p> <p>102,084 patients/per Medical doctor (Guar Region)</p> <p>No doctor among the Minami. There are a couple of Doctors in Mono the provincial capital. Patients usually arrive too late to be helped.</p> <p>Mortality, Life Expectancy, information is based on the regional average (1993). There is one dispensary in the area. However, there is often a lack of supplies. The closest hospital is in Mono.</p>	
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Comment (Diet)	The main staple is 'bouille' a thick porridge made of millet or sorghum. This is eaten with sauce: a peanut, sesame or green leaf sauce; dried tomato, dried fish, dried meat, okra. On special occasions they will eat goat, chicken or sheep meat.	
Water (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Water)	There are many wells. Water quality varies. Water collected from wells in clay pots or leather bags. Water supply may be good after rainy season, but with the onset of dry season, the water table drops and water is not good quality.	
Shelter Description	Dwellings are round, mud houses with grass, thatch roofs and dirt floors. Houses are usually surrounded by mud or grass fencing.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Poor	
Comment (Energy)	Wood is the main source of fuel. Sometimes cow droppings. Cooking is usually done in clay or iron pots over open fires. Not many vehicles; no petroleum for vehicles in the villages. Petroleum is available in Mongo, the closest sizable market town. No kerosene is available. There is no electricity.	
Clothing	<p>Men: have a mixture of western and 'Arab' style clothing (long robes called jalabiyas, and occasionally a white turban or skull cap); 'pandamen' suits.</p> <p>Women: wear a 'lafai' for market and other occasions, which is a 5 meter long piece of material wrapped around the body and over the head; dresses; head scarves; pagñes (a piece of material wrapped around as a skirt or dress); and short scarves may be worn as a type of veil.</p>	
Transportation	Vehicles are weekly market trucks or NGO's from Mongo. Roads are virtually impassable during rainy season. Roads are unsealed. Transport is commonly by donkey, on foot, ox drawn carts, the market trucks (no bush taxis as such), and camels.	
Infant Mortality Rate	I 13.7%, C 23.1	
Life Expectancy	62.3 years	
Leading Cause Of Death	102,084 patients per doctor	

# The Migaama of Chad

## Item Name

Comment (Community Development)

## Item Note

Open to development work, especially technical assistance from outside, particularly in the Bidiyo (Gamiye) and Migaami communities. They appear to be cut off from development. Poor access to the region probably contributes to this.

## Society & Culture

## Group Description

### Family Structures

Extended family, patriarchal. Polygamy common - up to 6 wives (according to person interviewed). Nuclear household - live with clan, but each family has their own concession, shared occasionally with other family members. Village women don't have much authority in matters, but in towns, women contribute more to decisions.

### Neighbor Relations

Very good. Will intermarry with other groups. Very close to Bidiyo and Dangaleat culturally and linguistically.

Historically there were tensions between the Dajo and the Migaami over land, but these are long finished. They were animists, and Muslims forced them to convert, but they hid and resisted Islam for a long time. Once the Arabs had conquered the valleys, it was more difficult to resist. The Arabs called them 'Jongor', which means 'pagans' or 'people who don't pray'. When the French arrived to colonize the area, they forced people out of their mountain homes, and they acculturated to the religion of the 'valleys'.

### Authority / Rule

The sultan is the main figurehead and key authority for the Migaami. The sultan is elected by the people. Though a hereditary role within a family, the eldest son is not necessarily elected sultan. The sultan has final authority on matters delegated by the Chadian Government. He listens to disputes and judges them. He is the "chef de canton" (District head) dealing with all local disputes, including those with Arabs, except for land disputes which are dealt with by the Chef de terre', (Chief of the earth) who is the key authority on land disputes.

There is also the 'Chef de la montagne' (Chief of the mountain), which is an inherited position associated with the traditional religion, as is 'Chef de la terre'. Other significant authorities are the Village head, 'chef de quartier' (neighborhood head), and 'chef de race' (a leader for their ethnic group) who deals with disputes in urban areas. These are selected by the sultan.

The man is dominant in the household.

### Social Habits/Groupings

Women and men eat separately.

### Cultural Change Pace

Slow

### Identification With National Culture

Integrated

### Self Image

Prestigious

### Judicial / Punishment System

The sultan presides over cases and resides in Baro.

### Celebrations

Zoora - traditional festival of the Margay

The sultan organizes a celebration after the harvest, the Bourbourang, where there is drinking of millet beer, music and dancing.

In the month of August there is a great celebration organized by the chef de terre. It takes place in two villages at the foot of the two mountain ranges, Gurbiti and Fourra. Sacrifices are made associated with the Margai. There is dancing and drinking of millet beer. In spite of being in the height of the rainy season and access not being easy to the places, most of the Migaami people make the pilgrimage to attend this festival for three days.

### Recreations

Rock games; children make toys from millet cane; children love to sing and dance

### Art Forms

Make cotton garments, small instruments, Iron figurines, wood furniture, and clay jars

### Media

None

### Local Language Broadcasting

None

### Attitude To Outsiders

Somewhat receptive

### Attitude To Change

Very receptive

### Comment (Culture)

There are big changes going on in the society today. The Migaami are open people for improvement, especially in technical things. Young people are adopting a different lifestyle as a result of schooling.

### Comment (Culture)

Correlation between openness to development and successful literacy project. Those closed to the outside don't have success. Change taking place as youth are getting education and many are leaving, though some return to teach.

## Youth

## Group Description

# The Migaama of Chad

## Item Name

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)

## Item Note

Girls work a lot in the home at an early age - from 9-10 years of age have lots of responsibility in the home.

Youth Greatest Needs (teens)

Youth focused work would be very helpful. Older youth need educational opportunities as few can afford to attend high school in towns further away. There is interest in further education because that offers work and better salaries.

Comment (Youth)

Younger people are adopting a different lifestyle to their parents. This is perceived positively. The difference is made by the impact of schooling. Many youth are leaving for study and job opportunities elsewhere.

## Education

Primary Schools

25

Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled

7

Language Of Instruction Early Years

French

Language Of Textbooks Early Years

French

Comment (Education)

6.9% Gueraprefecture. (Chadian average 31%) Figure is expected to be lower for villages.

Koran schools in the villages, run by the local imam.

Language of Instructions at Schools & Textbooks: French

Varying quality of education in the region . 25 schools in the area, 10 officially. A teacher in each official school is assisted by 3-4 volunteers. In the Baro area, some excellent schooling is available, but it is poor in other villages.

## Group Description

## Church Growth

Reached Status

Engaged

Reached Classification

Unreached

Lay Leaders

2

Comment (Church Growth)

One roman Catholic church, where average attendance is 100; one evangelical group.

## Status of Christianity

## Religion & Response

Religious Practices & Ceremonies

The Migaami have a traditional religious system built on belief in the 'Margai' who is an intermediary between their people and a supreme, creator God named "Mella". The 'margai' is represented corporately by priests and individual families and clans also have altars where sacrifices are made to please and appease the 'margai'. These sacrifices are given an important role in seeking protection from famine and sickness. Sacrifices are made at the beginning of the agricultural sowing season, during and afterwards. These sacrifices have been less revered with the onset of Islam. The Migaami feast of Zaïb (Aka:zâayum) is associated with these beliefs.

Islam has been present only more recently in the twentieth century. There has been some pressure to discontinue Animistic practices. With the onset of famine and sickness, there has been some continuance in practicing sacrifices to the Margai. Islam has to some degree adapted to include aspects of the traditional pre-Islamic belief system.

Folk Islam is practiced, especially among Muslims ("Gris gris" is a French term commonly used to describe this). The local marabou/imam, makes amulets with Koranic verses written inside. These are put in pouches made from animal skin and worn around the neck or underneath clothing. At other times, for example in case of illness, a paper with a Koranic verse written on it is immersed in a beverage which is drunk. These practices are commonly looked to as a remedy for sickness, and protection from evil, including evil spirits. Also Koranic verses are written on a wooden slate with charcoal. The charcoal is washed off into a bowl and drunk.

The Christian message has been introduced and accepted by some. Particularly noticeable are the results of catechism taught at the school in Baro. However, many are not strong in their faith, and there have been a number who became Muslims in recent years.

Attitude To Christianity

Indifferent

Attitude To Religious Change

Very resistant

Resistance / Receptivity

They are rather resistant to religious change and indifferent to Christianity. They may have reservations because of Islamic teaching. At the moment Muslims, Christians and local religion adherents live peacefully side by side.

Religious Analogies & Bridges

Sacrifices (practiced by Traditional Margai religion and by Muslims) have redemptive analogies - the sacrifice of Jesus has accomplished completely the needs expressed.

Spiritual Climate And Openness

Varies, but many are open to talk about spiritual matters.

## Status of Christianity

## The Migaama of Chad

### Item Name

Recommended Approaches

### Item Note

Community Development, Literacy; Strong identification with the language and cultural identity is encouraged. Take time to build relationships and trust, then follow developments from there.

Current Needs

Bible translation, evangelism and church planting teams; funding for nationals to be supported in this work (Chadian church planters and evangelists could begin working in this area if financial means were available); development water resources, health/dispensaries, and agricultural assistance; children/youth ministry may strengthen young believers in their faith (several are abandoning Christian beliefs for Islam)

Items For Prayer

>>> Pray for youth who have been exposed to Christian teaching, that they will be encouraged to follow Jesus. Some have abandoned Christian beliefs and taken to Islam and traditional religious practices.  
>>> Pray for workers for youth, discipleship, evangelism and potential church planting.  
>>> Wisdom for effective Christian witness to take place  
>>> For Bible translation  
>>> For an evangelist to come and focus efforts among the Migaami people  
>>> Pray that the Holy Spirit will move among the Migaami.

### History Of Christianity In Group

### Status of Christianity

Year Began

1945

By Whom

Roman Catholic Church

Comments (History of Christianity)

Roman Catholic mission set up schools which have had a considerable impact in the village of Baro.

Recently an evangelical fellowship group was discovered which has been meeting in a remote Migaami village since the 1970s.

### Scripture

### Status of Christianity

Translation Status

In Progress

Available Scripture

Portions

Form Of Scripture Available

Printed

Comment (Scripture)

There may have been a draft of the Gospel of Mark done by untrained Migaami people, but there is nothing in print. A translation team started language learning in 1997.

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature

Yes

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos

No

Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio

No

### Missions and Churches

### Status of Christianity

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Main Ministry

Other

Year Started

1945

Number Of Adherents

60

Number Of Expatriate Workers

1

Number Of National Workers

2

### Christian Literature And Media Status

### Status of Christianity

Literature Available

Some dictionaries

Audio Recordings Available

Films, Radio, Audio/Visual: None in Migaama known of in Chad; the Gospel Recordings Network catalog, 1996, lists availability of recordings in Doga, Gamiya and Migaama.

Films Available

none

Radio Programs Available

none

Videos Available

none

Audio Visual Available

none