

The Laka of Chad

The Laka people live in southwestern Chad, not far from both the borders of Cameroon and the Central African Republic. Most Laka live in villages where little notice is taken of events outside their own region. Even though the Laka can understand their populous neighbors, the Ngambay, they are a separate ethnic group with their own traditions and history.

The Laka area is an area of Chad that is known for agriculture, and many Laka plant cotton for cash crops in addition to millet which is for making their staple 'boule', which is a half round ball of millet cooked into a thick paste which is dipped in a sauce. They also grow corn, manioc and other vegetables, along with beef cattle.

The Laka people understand the Ngambay language, but very few know how to read, therefore the Bible which is available to them in an understandable form, is not accessible, simply because many cannot read. There are churches in many villages but only a few people are able to read the Word of God. Pray that a literacy program would begin targeting the Laka people so they may have access to the life-changing Word of God, applying it daily to their personal lives.

Image
Unavailable

Primary Religion:

Christianity, Tradition

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

10%

Churches:

150

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Bible in related language

Population (date):

85,000



Map Unavailable

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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	>50%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	10%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	1%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	20%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	very few if any	
Believe Jesus Is A Myth (%)	0%	
Antagonistic To Hearing About Jesus (%)	very few	
Know Of Jesus, But Reject Him (%)	?	
Number Of Pastors	50	
Number Of Missionaries Working	10	
Number Of Communities	300+	
Number Of Churches	150	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Not in Laka. But Laka is so close to Ngambay it could be listed as a dialect.	
Translation Medium	None	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	Illiteracy. It is a mix of Kaba and Laka.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Jesus film in Ngambay and French	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Pastoral leadership training	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	85,000	
World Population (Date)	2000	
World Population (Urban Percent)	10%	
Comment (World Population)	Not certain if there are Laka speakers in CAR or not. If so, they are about 2,000.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Chad	
Country Name	Rep of Central Africa	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	In the Logone Oriental prefecture, in the Baibokoum sub-prefecture	
Country	Chad	
Ecosystem Type	Scrub Forest	
Geological Type	Plains	
Elevation	500m	
Longitude	8 degrees N	
Latitude	16 degrees E	
Climate	Hot and dry, rainy season comes earlier than most of Chad and stays longer	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	LAKA	
Comment (Language)	Laka is very close linguistically to Ngambay	
Alternate Language Names	KABBA LAKA	
Dialects	GOULA	
Dialects	PAÏ	
Dialects	MANG	
Dialects	BÉMOUR	

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Item Name	Item Note
Dialects	MAÏNGAO
Comments (Dialect)	These dialects are very similar
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Percent Monolingual (%)	60%
Second Languages	Ngambay, French, limited Sango, limited Chadian Arabic
Linguistically Related Languages	KABA
Linguistically Related Languages	NGAMBAY
Comments (Related Languages)	These are almost completely intelligible by Laka
Neighboring Languages	KUO
Neighboring Languages	NZAKMBAY
Neighboring Languages	GOR
Neighboring Languages	KARANG
Neighboring Languages	BEDJOND
Comments (Neighbor Languages)	Kuo, Karang, and Nzakambay are from a different language family
Active Language Programs	No
Language Stability	Stable

Literacy

Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	10%
Percent Literate For Men	20%
Percent Literate For Women	1%
Literacy Attitude	Very receptive
Active Literacy Program	No
Publications In Vernacular	Alphabet chart
Comment (Literacy)	There is a Ngambay literacy program going on, but not within the Laka area. The Laka Language Committee would like to push for Laka literacy opposed to Ngambay literacy. The Laka Language Committee has started work on an orthography quite different from Ngambay.

Economics

Group Description

Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Average Annual Income	<\$450
Occupation	farming and livestock tending, cotton growers
Income Sources	cotton revenues, sale of beef
Trade Partners	locally in the village, or in the large regional center of Moundou.
Modernization / Utilities	There are some cooperatives in the area, informal community banks. No electricity or running water.
Comment (Economy)	The average income referred to is the national average (1994).

Community Development

Group Description

Health Care (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Health Care)	are some dispensaries in their area, but they are poorly stocked.
Diet (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Diet)	People of the area millet, manioc and some meat, tomatoes, onions, green leafy vegetables, honey, and sugary tea.
Water (Quality)	Poor
Comment (Water)	The water is visually cloudy and difficult to obtain some places.
Shelter Description	Huts are made of mud bricks and have straw roofs. Some have zinc roofs.
Electricity	None.

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Item Name	Item Note
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair
Comment (Energy)	Most use wood to cook with.
Clothing	Men wear western style clothes. Women wear wrap-around skirts (pagne) or dresses made from the same fabric.
Transportation	People may be able to catch a market truck or cotton truck to get to a larger center on market days.
Infant Mortality Rate	12.3%
Life Expectancy	47 years
Leading Cause Of Death	intestinal infections
Comment (Community Development)	Child Mortality, Life Expectancy, and Leading Cause of Death information is based on the national average (1994). Intestinal and other infections are due largely to lack of sanitation and clean water.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures	extended family
Neighbor Relations	Apparently good relations with neighboring peoples.
Authority / Rule	Each village has its local chief who relates to a Canton chief, who in turn relates to the government appointed sub-prefect.
Social Habits/Groupings	no caste system
Cultural Change Pace	Slow
Identification With National Culture	Integrated
Self Image	Neutral
Judicial / Punishment System	Technically they are be under the governance of the local canton chief and the local subprefect.
Celebrations	Christian celebrations. Traditional celebrations in decline.
Recreations	socializing, listening to the radio, drinking tea (men).
Art Forms	songs, dance.
Media	Only short wave radio stations can be received.
Local Language Broadcasting	None
Attitude To Outsiders	Somewhat receptive
Attitude To Change	Very receptive
History Of People Group	Laka have a distinct culture from Ngambay, but it is not known how this difference came about or the history of the people

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	helping with farming, fishing, girls also help cook and take care of younger siblings and cousins.
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Education

Group Description

Primary Schools	unknown
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	80%
Language Of Instruction Early Years	French
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	French
Language Of Instruction Later Years	French
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	French
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	<50%

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Evaluated
Reached Classification	Unevangelized
Lay Leaders	300

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Item Name	Item Note
Bible Schools	0
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	0
Christian Literacy Centers	0
Comment (Church Growth)	These are all estimates/guesses.

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Christian ceremonies. Some traditional rites of passage happen, but are generally in decline.
Attitude To Christianity	Very receptive
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat receptive
Resistance / Receptivity	I think many Laka would respond well to evangelical Christian teaching. Church leaders, however may be less receptive to change since their current position gives them power over their flocks.
Recommended Approaches	Evangelism and discipleship, using the Ngambay scripture available, literacy, training of Pastors and lay leaders.
Current Needs	Literacy and pastoral training and discipleship training.
Items For Prayer	Pray that the division created by a small minority would be resolved and Christians would come together in unity in favor of using the Ngambay Bible which they understand well. (Some churches have banned use of Ngambay in church because they say they are Laka and not Ngambay. But this is an ethnic distinction, the linguistic distinction being minimal).

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began	1926
By Whom	Victor and Florence VEARY
Significant Events	Translation of the New Testament in 1963 and the whole Bible in 1993 (in Ngambay)

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status	Revision
Available Scripture	New Testament
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed
Scripture Published When	1960
Scripture Use	Hardly at all
Uncertain Need Explained	The scripture translated into a language called Kabba Laka, which in fact was a mix of Kaba and Laka. This is no longer in print, unavailable and not used. It is further not considered to be good Laka. In addition to all this, the Laka can use Ngambay Scripture which they have been doing for many years already.
Comment (Scripture)	Part of the reason the Laka may not like the Ngambay Bible is that it is written in an orthography that is hard to read and write. It could be also because the Bible was not translated with any Laka people on the committee or that the theological persuasion of the translators was deemed incompatible by some Laka.

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name	Assemblées Chrétiennes du Tchad
Comment (Organization)	ACT is historically linked to the Brethren missionary work in Chad.
Mission Agency Type Of Organization?	No
Denominational Type Of Organization?	Yes
Organization Name	Brethren
Comment (Organization)	In the Laka area, the church is called "Eglise Evangelique des Freres au Tchad". There is also a recent split from this group which call themselves the "Eglise des Freres Independants au Tchad"
Denominational Type Of Organization?	Yes

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Item Name

Item Note

Organization Name

Baptist

Comment (Organization)

Not much known about the Baptist church in the Laka area.

Denominational Type Of Organization?

Yes

Organization Name

Assemblies of God

Organization Name

Roman Catholic Church

Comment (Organization)

They have a center in the village of Bam with several expatriate priests.

Denominational Type Of Organization?

Yes

Christian Literature And Media Status

Status of Christianity

Films Available

Jesus Film in Ngambay exists and could be well used.