

The Wamey of Senegal and Guinea



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Primary Religion:

Ethnic Religion

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

2%

Churches:

11

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

Portions

Population (date):

23,670 (2007, 2001)



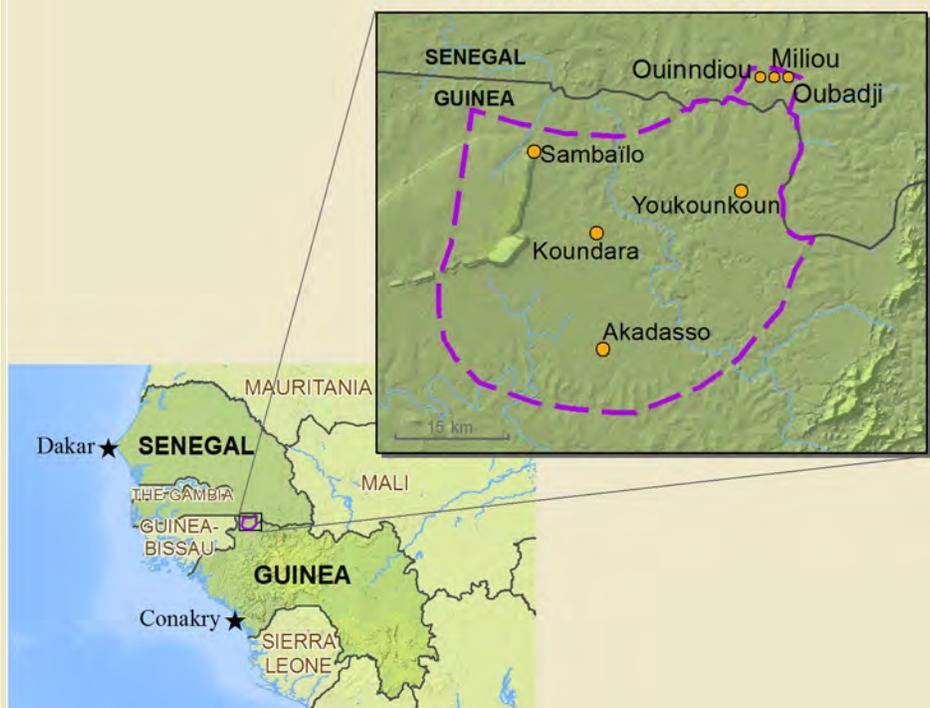
The Wamey, also known as the Konyagi, are natives of Guinea who migrated into Senegal and the Gambia to work in the bamboo belt, settling mainly along the major roads from Tamba to Dakar, and from Velingara to Kolda. There is a population of 18,000 living in Senegal and 5,000 that live in Guinea, on the southern border of Senegal.

They are hard workers and earn better than average wages. From May to December they farm millet, fonio, peanuts, rice, mango and keep cattle. They make and sell bamboo mats for use as house walls, roofs and beds. They also make and sell millet and palm wine, and a pure alcohol beverage called “soum soum”. Their greatest external resource is the Catholic Church which provides them with jobs, education, training in certain skills such as sewing. 90% of their time is devoted to work and 10% is play. Friday is usually their festival day.

The Wamey social structure is hierarchical where those belonging to an older age group are responsible for teaching and disciplining the group that is below them. Belonging and conforming to the group is very important. They are very proud of their way of life and they hold initiation rites as very important to them, so much so that they were banned by the government for a while. They still perform them now and they are very exclusively for the men only. Some are secret ceremonies that the women should not know about and the outsider should never hear about. They hold kinship very tightly and even if living apart, a kin has more importance than an outsider.

Education is considered a good thing as it leads to good jobs. The Konyagis are more apt to finish high school than the other neighboring ethnic groups. They are very open and are quick to learn, those who are involved in the Catholic Church have a greater appreciation for the need of literacy. They desire to learn French so that they can communicate with their relatives that are far away.

WAMEY HOMELAND



The Wamey-Konyagi of West Africa

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian (%)	5-15%
Believe in Jesus as God & Only Savior?	2%
Believe Jesus is a Prophet, but not God's Son (%)	10-15%
Believe in Their Traditional Religion	98%
Have not heard who Jesus is (%)	Unknown
Number of Pastors	6
Number of Missionaries Working	1 team
Number of Churches	11
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Yes, portions are translated. There are also portions that are translated into Wamey by the Catholics in the area. In some places the Catholics read Scriptures, sing, pray and make announcements in Konyagi. There is an SIL team working with them.
Translation Medium	Print
Other Forms of Gospel Presentation	Global Recordings Network has "Words of Life" audio recordings available in Konyagi, with short Bible stories and evangelistic messages.
Multilingualism	In Guinea, there is oral translation at meetings where outsiders are present and the Wamey have a majority. If even one Puel is present, the meeting will switch to Pular.

The Wamey-Konyagi of West Africa

Group Description

Population

World Population For This People	23,670
Senegal	18,400 (2007) (decreasing)
Guinea	5,270 (2001, G. Pruett)
Comment	The Wamey in Senegal migrated from Guinea in search of work and settled there.

Countries Where People Group Live

Country Names	Guinea & Senegal and a few in The Gambia
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Geography & Environment

Location	
Senegal	Kedougou region; a few in Tambacounda region; scattered along Guinea border.
Guinea	Boké region: Koundara prefecture, Youkounkoun-Koundara area, to Senegal border; small border area in Gaoual prefecture, south bank, Tamine river.
Ecosystem Type	Savanna
Geological Type	Plains
Elevation	60 - 480 meters
Longitude	13 W
Latitude	12 N

Language & Linguistics

Primary Language	Wamey
Alternate Language Names	Conhague, Coniagui, Cogniagui, Koniagi, Koniagui, Konyagi, Wamey, Wamay, Wey, Tenda
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	
Senegal	Positive attitudes among older people; more neutral attitudes among the young.
Guinea	Very positive attitudes.
Percent Monolingual (%)	None in Senegal
Second Languages	100 % in Senegal also use Pulaar [fuc]

The Wamey-Konyagi of West Africa

Linguistically Related Languages	Badyara [pbp], Biafada [bif], Ménik [tnr], Oniyan [bsc]
Neighboring Languages	Badyara [pbp]; Pulaar [fuc]; Oniyan [bsc]; Bassari [bsc]; Pular [fuf];
Language Status	
Senegal	Threatened
Guinea	Vigorous
Comment	Other ethnic groups consider Wamey too difficult to learn.
<u>Literacy</u>	
Adult Literacy Percentage	Many Wamey are literate in French, as it is the main language that is spoken.
Comment	Literacy in Wamey is less than 1%.
Publications in Vernacular	None known
<u>Community Development</u>	
Health Care (Quality)	Poor. Stomach and back problems are common. There are clinics in almost all the villages, but they do not have enough money to pay for the treatment and they resort to home remedies which do not always work. There is a basic lack of personal hygiene.
Diet (Quality)	Fair.
Water (Quality)	Poor.
<u>Economics</u>	
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Occupation	Farming and making bamboo mats.
Income Sources	They get their income from jobs provided by the Catholic Church there and also from the sale of mats and food stuff., beer and wine. The products are sold at markets.
Products / Crafts	In Senegal they make and sell bamboo mars for the use as house walls, they also make and sell millet and palm wine, and a pure alcohol beverage called “soumsoum”.
Comment	Their major forms of wealth are cattle, wives, bicycles and radios, in that order. Land speaks of security but not wealthy. Clothes and Kitchen utensils are also important as a symbol of wealth, so they each person has his own field and the proceeds from selling the crops goes into buying symbols of wealth.

The Wamey-Konyagi of West Africa

Society & Culture

Family Structures	The Wamey social structure is hierarchical where those belonging to an older age group are responsible for teaching and disciplining the group that is below them. They are more kinship group oriented and a kin has more importance than an outsider.
Neighbor Relations	The Bassari people place themselves under the Wamey protection thus becoming their self appointed slaves. The Wamey were known for their victories in war against other tribes and their ambush style warfare which saved them. They became renown for escaping the domination of the French when they attacked them with the bees thus they were granted the name Konya-gi meaning "bee". They were not liked in the past for they were blunt and tactless, but now they get along quite well with others.
Authority / Rule	The chief makes the village decisions and the priest makes all the church decisions. Decisions are enforced by the imposing of fines for infractions. There are no factions among the Wamey, there seems to always be consensus. There are small power groups but no rivals. The key contact person is the souprefect, prefect and the village chief. The chief is an authority figure that approves or disapproved decisions that are made.
Cultural Change Pace	Rapid
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	The chief makes decisions and the decisions are enforced by imposing a fines for infractions.
Celebrations	Initiations and fetes are very important. They have different ones for men and different ones for women. There are secret rites that women are not allowed to know about and which outsiders are not to know.
Recreations	Music, dance and story telling are very popular. They have specific dances for men and for women for the different celebrations. They love to sit around and tell stories for entertainment and have both serious and funny stories that have a moral at the end. The singers and Artist are usually men.

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