



## The Marfa of Chad

The Marfa are a Muslim people who live in the Ouaddai (Waddai) region of Eastern Chad, where they live in numerous villages around the Marfa mountains from which they derive their name.

They share a similar culture to the other Ouaddai people groups, such as the Karanga, Kashmere and Maba, but they have their own distinct language which distinguishes them from others.

Many of the Marfa work in the millet fields around the villages in the rainy season (June to September) When the harvest is threshed many of the men head for larger cities and towns of Chad and farther afield to find work, while others work on gardens along the beds of the wadis. Wadis are dry river beds for most of the year, with ample water sources underground that are replenished during the rainy season.

Their area in the Ouaddai is remote - around 150 kilometers from the major town of Abéché. With no medical facilities in the area, those who are seriously ill often die in their villages or on the way to hospital two to three days away by donkey or camel.

Some medical work may be a key to living alongside the people of the Marfa community and sharing the Good News of Jesus in word and deed. Pray God will send laborers to this harvest field.

**Primary Religion:**

Muslim

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

**Churches:**

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

None in their language

**Population (date):**

188,000 (1993)



### MARFA HOMELAND



## The Marfa of Chad

### Item Name

### Item Note

#### Have They Heard The Gospel?

#### Profile Summary

Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	100
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	?
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	No Scripture in Marfa
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	None
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Yes. Interviews suggest they are in need of development work, teachers, literacy workers, and medical missions.

#### Population All Countries

#### Group Description

World Population For This People	188000
World Population (Date)	1993

#### Countries Where People Group Lives

#### Group Description

Country Name	Chad
--------------	------

#### Geography & Environment

#### Group Description

Location	East ouaddai prefecture, south of Abeche
Country	Chad
Ecosystem Type	Savannahs
Geological Type	Interfluvial
Longitude	13
Latitude	21
Climate	Dry and hot, wet season June to September

#### Language & Linguistics

#### Group Description

Alternate Language Names	None
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive
Percent Monolingual (%)	5
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	ARABIC, SHUWA
Other Mother Tongues Of This Group	MABA
Linguistically Related Languages	MABA
Comments (Related Languages)	The survey showed, that they might profit from literacy in the Maba language.
Comments (Related Languages)	Also Chadian Arabic, Karanga and Kashmere
Neighboring Languages	KARANGA

#### Literacy

#### Group Description

Adult Literacy Percentage	8
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive
Active Literacy Program	Yes
Comment (Literacy)	Male 14.5%, female 2.6% in 1996 and may be lower in the villages

#### Economics

#### Group Description

Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
Average Annual Income	<450\$ per year
Occupation	In villages it is agriculture and animal husbandry, in the towns a variety of occupations.
Income Sources	Produce from farms

## The Marfa of Chad

### Item Name

Products / Crafts

### Item Note

Beans, millet, mango, okra, sesame, peanuts, maize, doura (sorghum) onions, garlic, peppers(chili) tomatoes, lemons, guava, cotton weaving (dying out somewhat) basketwork.

Trade Partners

Maba, Karanga and Arabs

Modernization / Utilities

Abeche has electricity, telephone and piped water, but the villages have none of them.

Comment (Economy)

Most men travel in the dry season to find work and return in the following rainy season to do farming.

### Community Development

### Group Description

Health Care (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Health Care)

Nonexistent in the villages, 108,373 patients per doctor, Child mortality 19.4%, infant mortality 11.6%

Diet (Quality)

Fair

Comment (Diet)

Produce from their gardens and farms

Water (Quality)

Good

Comment (Water)

especially in the wadi,s

Shelter Description

ordinary straw huts with straw roofs, those with more means have mud walls, and the well to do have rectangular mud brick dwellings with mud roofs

Energy/Fuel (Quality)

Poor

Comment (Energy)

wood and charcoal are mostly used

Clothing

Men wear long robes and sometimes a turban,  
Women wear a wrap around or dress, often nothing on the top half of the body, but in town they wear a lafai, a long piece of a veil like cloth, wrapped around the body and over the head.

Transportation

Donkey, horse, camel, foot market lorry on market days, Market day on Sundays in Hogoune.

Infant Mortality Rate

19.4%

Life Expectancy

63.4

Comment (Community Development)

Access to this area is difficult.

### Society & Culture

### Group Description

Family Structures

Extended patriarchal family, polygamy up to 4 wives, who take responsibility over things, when men travel

Neighbor Relations

Good, will marry with other groups even Arabs, but not with the southern people and the blacksmiths and to those who make the stands in which the millet is ground in.

Authority / Rule

In Abeche is the Marfa melik, the king who is responsible to collect the taxes and to settle disputes. The sultan of Ouaddai an inherited position, and the chef de canton, a political assignement. Imams are local authorities involved in some practical details.

Social Habits/Groupings

Market days and full moon (3 days of dancing and drum music)

Cultural Change Pace

Slow

Identification With National Culture

Similar

Self Image

Prestigious

Judicial / Punishment System

Sultan of the Ouaddai, the Malik listens to and settles disputes.

Celebrations

Muslim feasts and circumcision of boys and girls

Recreations

Talking and visiting

Art Forms

Basket work

Media

none

Local Language Broadcasting

None

Attitude To Outsiders

Somewhat receptive

Attitude To Change

Somewhat resistant

Comment (Culture)

Changes take place when the people come in contact with city living.

### Youth

### Group Description

## The Marfa of Chad

Item Name	Item Note	
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	domestic work and making baskets from an early age on, boys go to the fields and gardens in the wadis	
Youth Problems (Teens)	Health care	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Health care and schooling	
Comment (Youth)	village children study the Koran much more than those in the towns	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	1	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	French	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	French	
Language Of Instruction Later Years	Aruá	
Language Of Textbooks Later Years	Aruá	
Comment (Education)	children go to Koran schools in the villages, for higher education they have to go to Abeche	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Classification	World A	
Comment (Church Growth)	No Christian work going on	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	<p>Islamic practices and ceremonies. " Gris Gris" is commonly used. This is the use of charms and amulets to protect from harm, evil spirits, fetishes, sickness. There are numerous 'faki's' - Islamic teachers who are the local Islamic community leaders.</p> <p>Sacred places: Revere the holy grave of 'Mabrook a Malik', an ancestor, whose grave is visited at time of need. People call on the name of the spirit of this place "abzana" for protection. No sacrifices are needed. This is a holy place around which the mosque is built. As a token of thanks people may make extra food and give it to children. This site is very important. It is believed that is the town burned down, this would stay standing. It has great significance in the Marfa community.</p>	
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat resistant	
Attitude To Religious Change	Very resistant	
Resistance / Receptivity	They are a Muslim people group, so there would be some apprehension regarding accepting teaching different to that in Islam. On Receptivity scale - -4--2 A Muslim people and who have not heard the Gospel yet.	
Religious Analogies & Bridges	As for Muslims	
Spiritual Climate And Openness	Fear of ostracism	
Comment (Religion)	Workers would have to go and find out	
Current Needs	Schools Medical work, possibilities to work in education development, literacy workers/translators. Evangelism, Discipleship, Church planting.	
Items For Prayer	Ask for the release of workers and resources for a specific work to reach the Marfa people. For hearts of the Marfa people to be prepared and open to receive the Lord.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Comments (History of Christianity)	No activity	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	Possible	
Available Scripture	None	
Christian Literature And Media Status		Status of Christianity
Literature Available	none	
Audio Recordings Available	none	
Films Available	no	
Radio Programs Available	no	

## The Marfa of Chad

Item Name	Item Note
Videos Available	no
Audio Visual Available	no