The Argobba of Ethiopia

The Argobba are a Muslim people group that is spread out through isolated village networks and towns in the northeast and east of Ethiopia. Historically, they have been an oppressed people group, suffering from land incursions and economic pressures from neighboring people groups on one hand, and natural famine pressures on the other. The Argobba have typically been astute traders and merchants, and have adjusted to the economic trends in their area. These factors have led to the overall suppression of the Argobba language. In some places it has homogenized with Amharic. In other places the people have shifted to neighboring languages for economic reasons. At this time there are only a few areas left where the Argobba are not at least bilingual in Amharic, Oromo or Afar. All of these languages have literature that can be used to serve the Argobba, even though the current literacy rate in any language is low for the Argobba. The number of Argobba that cannot be served by another language is uncertain.
## The Argobba of Ethiopia

### Item Name | Item Note
---|---
### Have They Heard The Gospel? | 
- Call Themselves Christian (%) | 0
- Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%) | 0
- Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%) | 100
- Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%) | >50

#### Profile Summary

**Comment (Pastors)**

It is probable that there are no pastors or evangelists among the Argobba.

**Comment (Number Of Missionaries)**

There are no missionaries that work specifically with the Argobba.

**Response To The Gospel**

They have responded with some antagonism toward Christianity in general as they have primarily been exposed to Christianity through a large, Orthodox Christian people group, the Amhara, with whom they have also had considerable disagreements concerning land, business and religion. The understanding of evangelical Christianity is probably very low among the Argobba.

**Comment (Number Communities)**

Perhaps 30 different “heartlands,” each made up of a number of towns and villages more or less populated by Argobba people.

**Number Of Churches**

0

**Is The Word Of God Translated?**

None in their language

**Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?**

There is no literature or literacy in the Argobba language. Also, the Argobba may be resistant to receiving Christian literature.

**Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)**

Recordings: yes  
Literature: yes  
Films/videos: yes  
Radio: yes

The Argobba, where they are bilingual in Oromo, Afar or Amharic, could have all the above provided to them in one of these languages. The areas where Argobba people are bilingual in one or more of these languages may be defined geographically.

**What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?**

Medical and veterinary assistance would likely be appreciated, though it would probably not be accepted if it were provided by a Christian organization.

### Population All Countries

- **World Population For This People** | 62,800
- **World Population (Date)** | 1989
- **World Population (Urban Percent)** | 17.5%

### Countries Where People Group Lives

- **Country Name** | Ethiopia

### Geography & Environment

- **Location** | Along the eastern escarpment of the Rift Valley in Ethiopia, from Garfa and Ch’allaqqa rivers in the north to the Kasam river in the south. There is also a large Argobba settlement below the city of Harer.
- **Ecosystem Type** | Tropical
- **Geological Type** | Mountain, Slope
- **Climate** | warm

### Language & Linguistics

- **Comment (Language)**

The primary language for Argobba people switches in different areas. The first language of Argobba people can be Argobba, Oromo, Afar or Amharic. The attitude toward Argobba is more receptive in some areas than others.

- **Comments (Dialect)**

There are some dialect variations, but they have not been pinpointed. It is said that the “purest” Argobba is spoken in the northern most Argobba heartlands, near Shonke and T’olaha.

- **Percent Monolingual (%)** | 70
- **Comment (Second Language)**

The 70% who are monolingual are monolingual in Argobba, Oromo, Afar or Amharic.

- **Comments (Related Languages)**

Argobba is very similar to Amharic.

### Literacy

- **Adult Literacy Percentage** | 16.4%
- **Comment (Attitude to literacy)**

Would like to learn how to read one or more of the languages they speak.
### Item Name | Item Note
--- | ---
**Economics** |  
Comment (Subsistence Type) | craftsmen (weavers), farmers, merchants, traders  
Average Annual Income | Varies widely between different occupations, from relatively wealthy businessmen to subsistence farmers.  
Occupation | Lenders, store/cafe owners, traders, weavers, and farmers.  
Products / Crafts | weaving (cotton cloth)  
Trade Partners | Neighboring peoples – Afar, Oromo, and Amhara  
Modernization / Utilities | Some Argobba people have recently undergone an economic change, from mainly weavers and farmers to trading and owning businesses

### Community Development

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<tr>
<th>Group Description</th>
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| Health Care (Quality) | Poor  
Diet (Quality) | Fair  
Water (Quality) | Fair  
Shelter Description | poor-good  
Electricity | available for some  
Clothing | poor-good  
Infant Mortality Rate | 18%  
Life Expectancy | about 50

### Society & Culture

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| Family Structures | Family members who move from the country to do business in towns are often linked with their home village by maintaining a support network with family members there. In many places it is expected that an Argobba marry another Argobba in order for them and their children to remain Argobba. It is more important in some places for the mother to be Argobba, as she dictates the culture of the children.  
Neighbor Relations | The Argobba relate very well with their neighbors, practically assimilating. They learn their languages and cultures, and act accordingly where it is beneficial.  
Authority / Rule | Consistent with Muslim cultures.  
Social Habits/Groupings | Where it is beneficial for the Argobba, they associate with other Argobba, but where there are not many Argobba or where their business depends on interaction with other cultures, they associate freely with those other cultures.  
Cultural Change Pace | Medium  
Identification With National Culture | Distinct  
Self Image | Threatened  
Judicial / Punishment System | Sharia law  
Celebrations | Muslim celebrations and holidays  
Comment (Attitude To Outsiders) | somewhat receptive in certain contexts like business, but very resistant to certain aspects of outsiders' cultures (particularly religion)  
Comment (Attitude To Change) | Again, some changes are seen as necessary, while others, like in religion, are not tolerated.

### Education

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| Comment (Primary Schools) | Some Argobba people attend Koranic schools.

### Church Growth

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<tr>
<th>Status of Christianity</th>
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| Reached Status | Evaluated  
Reached Classification | Unreached  
Total Baptized | 0  
Lay Leaders | 0  
Bible Schools | 0  
Christian Clinics/Hospitals | 0
## The Argobba of Ethiopia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Literacy Centers</td>
<td>0</td>
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### Religion & Response

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude To Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude To Religious Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Analogies &amp; Bridges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Climate And Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment (Religion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Items For Prayer</td>
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### History Of Christianity In Group

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments (History of Christianity)</td>
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### Scripture

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Christianity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available Scripture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment (Form of Scripture Available)</td>
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