

Imagine the world's largest nomadic community, touching every other ethnic group across 20 countries in the African Sahel. Jesus is walking among the Fulani. Will you join him?

FULANI



“...I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them too, and they will listen to my voice, so that there will be one flock, one shepherd” — John 10:16 —



Cattle herders of the African Sahel, the Fulani are the world's largest traditionally nomadic people, numbering in excess of 40 million from Mauritania in the west to parts of Ethiopia in the east. Although many have now settled in cities and towns across the region, they are very often viewed as outsiders, foreigners. Meanwhile, their pastoral nomadic way of life necessarily keeps them on the fringe of society. Despite great diversity across this expanse their concept of *pulaaku* or “Fulani-ness” binds them together. *Pulaaku* is a social code that governs the worldview and the manner in which Fulani live in society, both with other Fulani and among other peoples. Some primary features of *pulaaku* are shame (reserve), courage (endurance), patience, and generosity. When acting in a way that is true to their culture and its values, Fulani are generally non-violent. Imagine Jesus at the center of Pulaaku identity.

Quick Facts

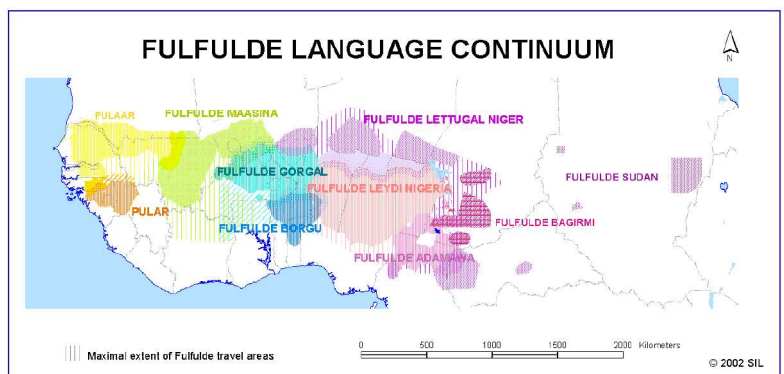
Population: ~40,000,000

Spread across around 20 countries

Progress: ~15 to 20,000 Christians

Language: **Fulfulde, Pulaar**

Bible Translation, Jesus Film, Gospel Recordings, Radio Broadcast



Opportunities to Engage

“Many say that the Fulani are a difficult people with which to work, but I have not found this to be the case. I believe some of this “hardness” may relate to the use of approaches that are anti-cultural to the Fulani. A Fulani community can be difficult to break into, but once one is ‘in’, he/she is truly ‘in’.” (Experienced missionary among the Fulani)

It is extremely rare for a non-Fulani to speak Fulfulde. It can be very tempting for workers among Fulani to use a regionally dominant language also spoken by the Fulani. Yet, when a non-Fulani makes the sacrifice of time and energy to learn Fulfulde, this speaks volumes to the Fulani. They recognize that one must care deeply for the Fulani to learn their language; it is a relatively difficult language to learn. Showing genuine interest in the people, and in their relationship to their animals, is a great way to engage with them.

Significant work and significant Christian communities already exist in Bénin, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria; but even in these countries the vast majority remain “un-invited” to the flock. Countries with limited or no culturally-relevant sound of Jesus voice calling include Chad, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, and others. Many African Christian communities are growing in their burden to share the Good News with Fulani, including a willingness to partner and learn together.

“I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

— Isaiah 43:19 —



Prayer Points

God is at work among the Fulani using a variety of means across the Sahel. The similarity and diversity across this vast population call for thoughtful strategies and flexibility, employing solid principles of cross-cultural ministry. Given the challenging realities of working with a nomadic, reserved, feared - sometimes violent - people, an utter dependence on God is critical.

God is choosing key Fulani leaders for Himself. These highly mature, wise leaders are scattered across the region. Engaging with, listening to, learning from, and collaborating with these men and women is absolutely essential to ensure longevity and sustainability. Many Fulani now live in the cities of the Sahel. Access may be easier than communities with more rural or nomadic lifestyles. Fulani maintain close family bonds even when they are geographically separate. So the Good News travels readily between urban and rural populations.

As more and more Fulani choose to follow Christ, they will develop their own Holy Spirit-inspired vision for what a Fulani Church can look like. As friends of the Fulani, we will do well to encourage and empower this vision and its development. This may mean we choose wisely, and in a limited way, our manners of investing in these communities. [With gratitude also to Jon Banke, Fulani Ministry Coordinator with SIM]

Is God calling you to live among the Muslim peoples of the Sahel/Sub-Saharan Africa?

Contact us.

We would love to help you get there!

