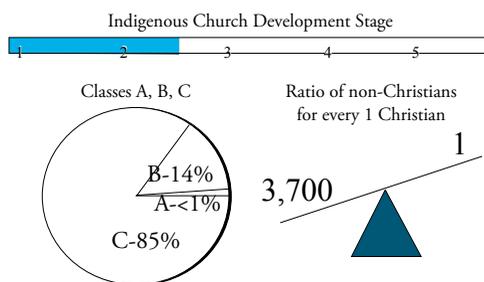


# Wolof



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 4,500,000  
 Senegal: 4,000,000  
 Mauritania: 200,000  
 Gambia: 160,000  
 Mali: 40,000  
**Religion:** Sunni Islam  
**Believers:** 0.02%  
**Scriptures:** NT  
**Ministry Tools:** JRT  
**Church Status:** 2  
**Mission Status:** 2  
**MS Subgroups:** 5+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church  
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined  
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

**Identity:** The Wolof are a West Atlantic people related to the Fulani, inhabiting the Senegambian region (between the Senegal and Gambia rivers). They make up about 42% of Senegal’s population, and are socially stratified in a hierarchy of endogamous castes and descent groups.

**Lifestyle:** The Wolof are about 65% rural, though there is a steady drift to the cities due to drought in the Sahel and global price fluctuations on export crops. Many farmers grow peanuts as a cash crop, and millet, sorghum and maize as food crops. They raise small numbers of sheep and goats, though the care of their cattle is entrusted to Fulani herdsman. In every village there will be low-caste families who serve the farming community as blacksmiths, pottery-makers and weavers.

**Customs:** Wolof villages consist of fenced off compounds surrounding the village square, which is reserved for

dancing, wrestling, and public meetings. Here professional storytellers called *griots* will entertain with legends and songs of epic battles and heroic adventures. Depending on the village, the *griot* will adapt the narrative to suit his sponsors.

**Religion:** Widespread conversion of Wolofs to Islam took place in the last 200 years. The first wave took place under the early 19th century jihad of El Hadj Omar, a Tukulor tribesman who rallied the Moors and the Fulani to forceably convert non-Muslim tribal peoples in the Sahel. The Muslim Brotherhood he established, the Tijani, encompasses 60% of the Wolof today. The second wave took place under the French, who provided the stability needed for various Muslim missionary orders to operate, resulting in two other large brotherhoods, the Mouridi (30% of the Wolof) and the Qadiri (10%).

**Christian Outreach:** There is significant progress being made among the Wolof

after many years of disappointing labor. Missionaries have witnessed a change in reception among the Wolof that has enabled them to shift their strategies to more direct evangelistic approaches. Particularly responsive have been the Wolof in Gambia, which has the majority of the total number of believers.

## How to Pray:

✞ Praise God for the completion of the Wolof New Testament in 1987, the release of which corresponded to a dramatic increase of believers among the Wolof. Pray for its continued distribution in every Wolof village and family compound.

✞ There is a sense among missionaries that a large breakthrough among them Wolof is on the horizon. Pray for continued openness among the Wolof and for wisdom among missionary teams about how to partner with one another to bring in the harvest.

✞ The coming of Islam has resulted in a reduced status of women among the Wolof. Many are quietly attracted to Christianity’s egalitarianism. Pray that they may know the One in whom there is no “Jew or Greek, male or female.”

**Every year 40,000  
 Wolof die  
 without Christ.**