



# MA LI



## **CHURCH PLANTER**

Kepran Ezéchiél Diarra


## **PEOPLE GROUP**

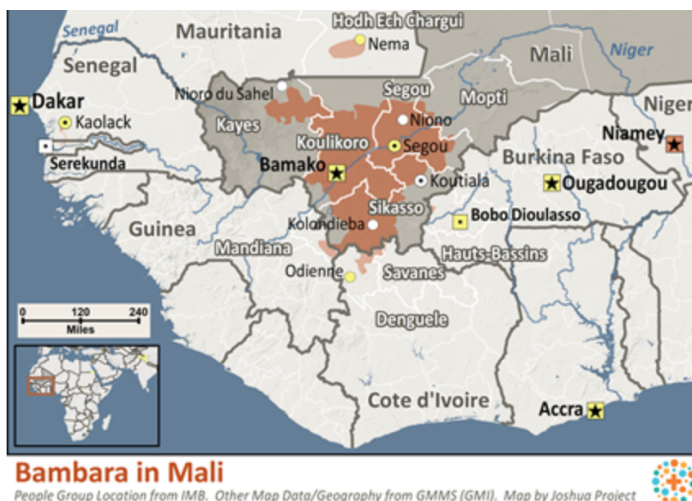
Bambara

## **TESTIMONY & EXPERIENCE**

Kepran Ezéchiél Diarra from the Boua people group was born in 1987 in Bouanie. He received Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior while working with a pioneer church planter and missionary. Kepran Ezéchiél Diarra attended bible school in Bamanan and has worked in ministry for two years. His goal is to preach, teach, disciple, and plant churches among the Bambara in the region of San Cercle de Tominian. Ezechiél is married to Marie Coulibaly and they have two children- Charité and Nataniel.

## BAMBARA IN MALI

Population 6,026,000	Main Language Bamanankan
Largest Religion Islam (91.00%)	Christian 4.00%
Evangelical 1.10%	Progress 



The Bambara are among the most powerful and influential groups in Mali. They are also the largest ethnic group in the country. The Bambara live in the middle valley of the Niger River. They speak Bamana, which is one of the Manding languages.

Most of the Bambara are farmers. Both men and women share the farming duties. However, the wives usually arrive in the fields later and leave earlier than the men. This gives them time to prepare the morning and evening meals. Children between the ages of 12 and 14 also help with the family's work, leading the oxen as they plow and guarding them during rest periods.

Every household, or gwa, is responsible to provide for all of its members, as well as to help them with their farming duties. Bambara homes are typically larger than the homes of most other West African groups. Some of the houses contain as many as 60 or more family members. The members of each gwa work together every day except for Mondays. Monday is market day and the traditional day of rest.

Islamic schools have been set up in some of the Bambara villages. However, many of the non-Muslim villages have failed to establish schools simply because the children are needed to stay home and help with the farming. For this reason, some village populations are entirely illiterate.

Marriage is very important to the Bambara. Although the cost of marriage is high, it is viewed as a type of "investment." The main purpose for marriage is to have children, which provide the family's labor force and ensure the future of the family lineage. The average Bambara woman has eight children. All adults are married. Even elderly widows in their 70s or 80s have suitors because the Bambara believe that a wife increases a man's prestige.

Although most Bambara claim to be Muslim, many still follow their traditional beliefs such as ancestor worship (praying to deceased ancestors for guidance). The Bambara believe that the ancestral spirits may take on the forms of animals or even vegetables. In special ceremonies, the spirits are worshipped and presented with offerings of flour and water. The eldest member of a lineage acts as the "mediator" between the living and the dead.

Prayer is the key to tearing down the many remaining strongholds that are keeping them from knowing the Truth. Jesus said "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"