



# Abellen

## PROJECT SUMMARY:

In recent years, the Ayta people's traditional lifestyle has come into conflict with mainstream Filipino culture. New highways make it easy for land-hungry outsiders to acquire Ayta homelands, and officials plan to change the resettled Aytas' livelihood from their semi-nomadic forest lifestyle to a sedentary existence of raising fish in ponds. Though Ayta families express opposition and fear about their future, they feel helpless as they watch the modern world encroach on their way of life.

When missionaries arrive with gifts, medical services or entertainment, a large crowd always gathers, creating the illusion that many Ayta are Christians. But most still call on spirit mediums when family members are ill and appease forest spirits before planting gardens or building homes. Local churches simply don't have the tools they need to reach Ayta hearts.

## THE PEOPLE

Anthropologists believe the Ayta once lived in the coastal areas of the northern Philippines. But more aggressive newcomers pushed the docile, peace-loving Ayta inland to the hill country around Mt. Pinatubo, where families now make their homes of bamboo and thatch.

They cut garden areas out of the jungles to cultivate root crops and other vegetables as staples. On the hillsides they also plant wild rice, moving their crops and their families to new locations periodically. Charcoal, made from local trees, fuels cooking fires and offers warmth on chilly nights. The Ayta live in shared forest that belongs to everyone; no one owns land.

## BACKGROUND

Ayta today sense discrimination from the wider Filipino culture; their skin is darker than that of most Malay peoples and their hair is curly. Education has not generally been highly valued among them, so literacy levels are extremely low.

Protestant groups began consistent outreach to these Ayta communities, in the aftermath of Mt. Pinatubo's eruption in 1991. Although most people affected by the eruption have re-established a semblance of routine, few have come to the Savior. Among the Ayta Abellen, three villages have active churches, but less than 5% claim faith in Christ.

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## PHILIPPINES



- **Location:** Philippines
- **Number of Speakers:** 6,850
- **Project Goal:** New Testament
- **Year Project Began:** 2009
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2014



## Abellen

The Ayta Abellen Translation Committee first published the book of Mark in May 2006 and totally finished it in November, 2007. Using a computer-adaptation program with the completed Botolan Sambal New Testament, Abellen now has a rough draft of the entire New Testament.

### THE NEED

Christian ministries here don't have the tools they need to reach Ayta hearts. Church services are generally conducted in Tagalog, Kapampangan or in English. The local animistic spirits speak Ayta; the church does not.

Mother-tongue Scripture translation can offer them real hope—the One who never changes—in the midst of fear and uncertainty. The Ayta people need to understand God's love for them, even in the face of ridicule and discrimination.

### THE TEAM

The Abellen mother-tongue translation team consists of three church leaders and one new believer. The Translators Association of the Philippines and SIL Philippines will provide training, administrative support and consultant help for this project.

### THE PLAN

Because Abellen is closely related to the neighboring Botolan Sambal language, they have already created a rough draft from the Sambal New Testament using computer adaptation tools. This translation will be a source document for other related Ayta language groups.

Bible storying is also a very important component of Scripture use among these predominantly oral groups. Radio programming may also offer another outlet for Scripture use through a local station.

### JOINING THE TEAM

The Ayta Abellen translators cannot complete their goals without your financial investment and prayer. Your financial investment makes translation possible, providing training, adequate computer equipment, translation supplies and living expenses for the translators' families.

Your prayer helps translators and their families face problems like sickness, conflict and spiritual opposition that can threaten their work.

Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 or visit [www.theseedcompany.org/projects](http://www.theseedcompany.org/projects) to commit to invest and pray for the Ayta Abellen team.

AYTA NT CLUSTER-ABELLEN PROJECT PROFILE—2

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