



PROJECT PROFILE

Ayta New Testament Cluster

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Ayta families make bamboo homes in the Philippine hill country around Mt. Pinatubo. They cut gardens from jungles to cultivate vegetables. But their shared forest belongs to everyone. In recent years, highways allowed land-hungry outsiders to acquire Ayta homelands, as officials plan to move them from semi-nomadic forest lifestyles to a sedentary existence, raising fish in ponds. Families fear the future but feel helpless.

When outsiders arrive with gifts and medical services, crowds gather, but few Ayta are Christians. Most still call on spirit mediums during illness and appease forest spirits before planting or building. Local churches simply don't have the tools needed to reach Ayta hearts.

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

THE PEOPLE

Anthropologists believe the indigenous Ayta once lived in coastal areas of the northern Philippines. When more aggressive newcomers pushed the docile, peace-loving Ayta inland to hill country around Mt. Pinatubo, they learned to slash gardens from jungles, to cultivate root crops and other vegetables as staple foods. They also plant wild rice on hillsides, routinely rotating crops and moving families. Charcoal, made from local trees, fuels cooking fires and offers warmth on chilly nights. No one owns land.

In recent years, their lifestyle has conflicted with mainstream Filipino culture. The need for cash motivated families to sell charcoal, stripping hillsides bare and angering the government, as well as creating a toxic smoke health hazard. Now a proposed dam could uproot entire communities. Ayta families express opposition but feel helpless as they watch the modern world encroach.

BACKGROUND

The Ayta sense discrimination from the wider Filipino culture; their skin is darker than most Malay peoples, and their hair is curly. Education—not highly valued—has resulted in extremely low literacy.

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

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PHILIPPINES



- **Location:** Philippines
- **Number of Speakers:** 11,000 in three groups|
- **Project Goal:** Three full New Testaments
- **Year Project Began:** 2009
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2014



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a semblance of routine, few have come to the Savior. Among the Abellen, three villages have active churches, but less than 5% claim faith in Christ. For the Mag-Indi, the number is a little higher, but among the Ambala, only a handful of women believe in Jesus.

SIL Philippines started work among the Mag-Indi in 1984, publishing 10 chapters of Luke and drafting other gospel portions. The Abellen Translation Committee published a Mark draft in May, 2006 and finished in November, 2007.

THE NEED

Church services are generally conducted in Tagalog, Kapampangan or in English. And while evil spirits speak their heart language, the church does not.

THE TEAM

This team consists of three church leaders and one new believer. The Mag-Indi group has a committee of twenty, four as full-time translators. The Ambala group will choose up to four translators to train. The Translators Association of the Philippines and SIL Philippines will provide administrative support, training and consultant help for the project.

THE PLAN

Because Abellen is closely related to Botolan Sambal, they have already created a rough draft from the Sambal New Testament, using computer adaptation tools. The Ambala group will partner with them, due to language similarities. The Ayta Mag-Anchi New Testament, published in 2007, will also help the Mag-Indi translators, through computer-assisted adaptation. But for the Ambala, no translation has ever been attempted.

Bible storying is another 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 translators in this cluster project 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.

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