



PROJECT PROFILE

Central African Republic LP

THE PEOPLE

Most of the people of these nine language groups live in remote villages, where they practice subsistence farming. Some also work in diamond or gold mines. Although the mines offer lucrative commodities, the local workers seldom reap much benefit from their labor there.

The people of this region within the Central African Republic struggle with inadequate health facilities and poor hygiene. About 30 percent of people in the CAR can read; the average rate of literacy drops among those who live in rural areas.

BACKGROUND

The Central African Republic is described in the missions strategy book *Operation World* as one of the most evangelized countries in the world. Protestant mission work started in the country in the years after World War I. Currently, about 80 percent of the population consider themselves to be Christians, but many people mix their Christian faith with ancestral rites. Catholic, Apostolic, Brethren and several Baptist groups are active in the communities represented in this project.

THE NEED

The local churches' use of the national language called Sango, however, has created serious misunderstandings. For example, after listening to a pastor read the Sango translation of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17 in which He states, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law..." a congregation of new believers reasoned that Jesus did not intend to put an end to their ancestors' traditions—some of which are clearly evil. Their erroneous interpretation resulted from language that wasn't clear. The key is to translate the Bible into the language they understand best, so that they can have full access to the truth.

One of the translators, Pastor Etienne, said, "I used to preach sometimes in Sango, sometimes in French, but one day I preached in my mother tongue. When I saw the people's reaction that they really understood, I finally realized that it is through the mother tongue that God touches the heart."

THE TEAMS

The teams will join the workshop series at the appropriate time. For the first workshop in late 2008, six translators were involved: Alfred, Clarence and Isidore from Banda-Linda and Edouard, Celestin and Etienne from Bokoto. Alfred, Clarence



- **Location:** Central African Republic
- **Number of Speakers:** 854,000 in nine language groups
- **Project Goal:** Luke and the JESUS Film
- **Year Project Began:** 2008
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2012



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and Edouard graduated from the seminary called the Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de Bangui (FATEB) in 2008. Celestin comes to the Bokoto project with valuable experience from assisting the Sango Old Testament translation project.

Each of the nine projects has three members participating in translation, literacy and related activities. They are receiving training through the workshop series and through personal mentoring. The training includes use of the computer and orientation to various kinds of translation software.

THE PLAN

The goals for each of the languages in the cluster are publication of the Gospel of Luke and production of the *JESUS* film. Because some of the groups are further along in the process than others, only two groups are beginning in the first phase. Both Banda-Linda and Bokoto have started with establishing a written form of their languages. Then they can begin translating Luke. At that point, Mpyemo and Nzakara translators will join the project. These languages already have a written form in place. Together they will work as a cluster in workshops. The teams plan to complete the work in three years, at which point four additional language groups (for whom the Book of Luke is already available) will be included in the process.

The *JESUS* Film Project will spearhead the production of the film in each language, working closely with the actors and the script, which is based on Luke. At the end of this project, all nine language teams plan to continue on by producing the entire New Testament.

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.

Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 or visit www.theseedcompany.org/projects to commit to invest and pray for the teams involved.