



PROJECT PROFILE

Chocó Initial Goal Cluster

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The people of the southern Chocóan language groups live primarily on the Pacific coast of South America. Rugged terrain and extensive river systems contribute to the relative isolation of these ethnic groups. Many people are enticed or pressured into illicit drug production, in areas where mosquitoes carry malaria and dengue fever.

The Chocó believe evil spirits have power; the dead often become demonic beings; and shamans are spirit intermediaries. The Catholic Church has had a small impact, but few believers are found.

Because the Chocó people live in an oral culture, this project will begin by helping partner groups produce accurate, oral retellings of Scripture stories. The second phase of work will build on this foundation and provide the community with the translated text of key Scriptures.



THE PEOPLE

Ethnic groups of the southern Chocóan languages live in South America's Pacific coast jungles, including: Southern, Mountain, Mid, Headwater, and Lower Chocó. People raise bananas, tubers, fruits, corn, rice, and the men hunt and fish.

Several generations live together, where parents arrange teenage marriages, and polygamy is common. At least two language groups require female circumcision.

These communities don't traditionally centralize political leadership. But for government funding, they built a village for each major population center. Some now have primary schools, but local governments don't provide other basic necessities, like education and health.

As a result, young men are recruited by subversive groups into the illicit drug trade, extortion and kidnapping. If they don't cooperate, many are displaced, held as insurrectionists, or killed.

In some areas entire families cultivate, harvest and process illicit drugs. And now through western contacts, they also have increased access to alcohol, prostitution and pornography.

BACKGROUND

Traditional Chocó religion teaches that evil spirits exercise power over their lives, and only Shamans are intermediaries. They also believe the dead can become demonic beings that haunt the living.

In most of the language areas, the Catholic Church has had a marginal influence. In the past ten years, other churches have also done sporadic evangelistic work—all in Spanish. Yet because of the Bible translation process, there are individual believers in each group.

- **Location:** South America
- **Number of Speakers:** 56,000 in five language groups
- **Project Goal: Phase 1:** Chronological Bible storying Scripture
Phase 2: Old Testament and New Testament portions
- **Year Project Began:** 2004, Seed Company involvement in 2008
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2012



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Today, two independent churches in the regional capital have started churches in two Chocó towns. Three other agencies and a few independent churches also have missions outreach.

THE PLAN

The Chocó community needs a quick, clear voice of God's truth! In their first year, this team will translate oral stories for a chronological Bible storying program. Partner organizations will use these to equip Chocó evangelists.

Following these target passages, they will translate key Bible books, as a solid foundation for future translations of the entire New and Old Testaments.

The team will also train mother-tongue translators through one-on-one mentoring, on-the-job training and workshops. A computer specialist will tutor them in computer use, especially for the Paratext program, used to speed the Bible translation process.

One of the cluster of languages, for which a good deal of translation is already done, will be used as a source-text for the other four. Then translators will work with other local and international partner organizations to provide Scripture for all five language groups.

THE TEAM

Because of the tenuous political situation in this country, consultants will reside elsewhere, periodically visiting the provincial capital to mentor and teach workshops.

In cooperation with a national ministry organization, twelve young men are completing their high school education and advanced training. Project organizers hope to cultivate more translator-trainees from these individuals.

Currently, there are four mother tongue translators from the five language groups. One has fifteen years experience. Three are graduates of the scholarship program mentioned, and one teaches in a language area, who was recommended to the team.

JOIN THE TEAM

Chocó translators need your help to complete this phase of work. Your financial gifts will support national Bible translators by providing computers, training, travel costs for consultants and project supplies. Prayerfully consider how God might use your investment to bring His Word to these 56,000 Chocó people.

The mother tongue translators also need faithful intercession partners, committed to praying regularly for every aspect of the project. Translators and their families will depend on your prayers as they sacrifice to see the Scriptures in their language.

Commit today to pray for this translation work in Latin America and the Chocó speakers who are waiting to hear about the love of Christ. Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 to let us know of your commitment.