



PROJECT PROFILE

Dagara

THE PEOPLE

About 80,000 Dagara (pronounced DAH-gah-rah) people reside in the southwest part of Burkina Faso and the northwest part of Ghana. They live in small villages scattered over a large area extending a distance of 118 miles from north to south, and 64 miles from east to west.

Most Dagara families grow millet, peanuts and corn to provide for their families. As everywhere in Burkina Faso, the year is divided into two distinct seasons: dry and rainy. Economic and cultural activities vary according to the season.

Many Dagara still follow their traditional animist religion. However, the Association of Evangelical Pentecostal Churches (AEEP) was planted in the area at the end of the 1940s. The denomination is partnering with the Burkina Faso Translation Association to carry out the project. In the southern part of the Dagara area, another mission has organized some churches with Dagara believers. A majority religion is practiced only by a few individuals. In general, few missionaries work in the area; the local church carries most of the responsibility for evangelism and the growth of believers.

BACKGROUND

The project has a good foundation for success. Using the official Dagara alphabet and primer developed by linguistic organizations, government agencies started Dagara literacy classes in a number of villages. Christians have demonstrated interest in literacy and the Christian AEEP denomination includes a number of literate people and even literacy teachers among its members. Many Christians enroll in literacy classes in the hope of one day having a translation in Dagara.

The local Catholic parishes have already translated their lectionary (the annual cycle of Scripture readings used in the services) into a dialect of Dagara. Local pastors have a vision for evangelism through translation and literacy. Many people have recently come to Christ, and a growing number of local churches are following up with these new believers.

THE PLAN

For this phase of the project, the team will focus on finishing the New Testament. Because of successful literacy campaigns in recent years, hundreds of people have learned to read. During the literacy focus in the early phases of the project, one of the primers used was based on Old Testament stories. As a result of the literacy initiative, many are now ready to use the Scriptures when they are finished.

A small team of Dagara translators will do the bulk of the work with the oversight of experienced linguistic consultants and the benefit of their training. Local community leaders will provide oversight and encouragement to the team. They will also help with the translation review process. SIL is providing the planning and consulting services required for the project as well as ongoing mentoring for the mother-tongue translators.



- **Location:** Burkina Faso
- **Number of Speakers:** 80,000
- **Project Goal:** New Testament plus Old Testament portions
- **Year Project Began:** 1997
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2012



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THE RESULT

The church is active in the Dagara community, but only educated people have access to significant portions of the Scriptures and many of those who can read it in French still struggle to grasp concepts foreign to their culture. The translation of Scripture into Dagara will enable the church to have a more effective impact among their neighbors as they engage in both community service ministries and evangelistic outreach.

Translation activities will give Dagara church leaders access to mother-tongue Scripture. As a result, churches will be strengthened, and pastors will be encouraged in their efforts to nurture believers. Dagara Christians will be able to develop a deeper, more personal relationship with God. The availability of Scriptures will intensify their individual evangelism efforts. Translation and literacy activities will also be used as platforms to present biblical truths to unbelievers. Appropriate materials, including Bible stories, will be produced for both adults and children.

JOINING THE TEAM

The Dagara 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 to commit to invest and pray for the Dagara team.