



## PROJECT PROFILE

# East Papua Bible Storytelling Cluster\*

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse nation on earth, boasting 830 languages. In the past 100 years Christianity has spread rapidly, even across multiple language barriers. In fact most New Guineans now call themselves Christians. Yet the gospel hasn't reached the heart-level for a majority. Many still practice traditional religion and fear the spirit world.

God has given these people a rich resource for communication: storytelling. And with all the penetrating stories of both the Old and New Testaments, surely He can speak directly to their hearts in a way they'll understand! Now it's up to local translators to craft accurate, compelling mother-tongue Bible stories, which they can retell in their communities. These will spark a renewed, strong interest in God's truth.



- **Location:** Papua New Guinea
- **Number of Speakers:** 40,160 from 8 language groups
- **Project Goal:** 25-50 oral Bible stories, totaling 1,500 verses in both Old and New Testaments
- **Year Project Began:** 2010
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2012

### THE PEOPLE

The people of Papua New Guinea have a rich love of storytelling. Wherever they are—in the garden, at the market, or beside a campfire—they take turns telling stories to each other. They might share a story of long, long ago, or they might tell of a recent experience. No matter what, their stories always have rich details and meaning. This is how they process life together and grow as people.

This project reaches a total of 40,000 New Guineans, from eight languages in Milne Bay Province.

### THE NEED

Missionaries began to evangelize this province about 100 years ago. Today, a strong majority of New Guineans claim to be Christians and many attend church. Yet their day-to-day lives appear largely unaffected by the good news of Jesus Christ. Many revert to traditional religion when dealing with tough issues like sickness, death and weather patterns that can wreak havoc on their crops. They also celebrate life's happier moments—through dance, song, and storytelling—using language that worships the spirit world.

Truly, the gospel must be delivered here in such a way that touches the deepest recesses of these people's hearts. When they can embrace the words as if directly spoken to them, radical transformation—on both personal and community levels—will ensue.



## East Papua Bible Storytelling Cluster

### THE PLAN

After recognizing the power of storytelling in New Guinean culture, in 2009 The Seed Company and Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea sponsored a pilot project to train local people to craft and retell Bible stories in their communities. It was a great success! Local churches witnessed the strength and relevance of Bible storytelling and enthusiastically asked for more training.

Now, starting in 2010 and ending in 2012, New Guineans from eight languages will join together in workshops. Here they will craft 35 to 50 accurate and compelling Bible stories to share with their communities. Stories are selected from both Old and New Testaments, totaling about 1,500 verses.

While this project lasts only three years, plans are in place to prepare local trainers, who can multiply the practice of Bible storytelling across Milne Bay Province and beyond.

### THE IMPACT

Hearing Bible stories in group settings may very well be the bridge needed to engage with Scriptures on a deeper level. Some translators already hope to translate the Old Testament after this project, foreseeing that their people will hunger for more of God's Word.

### JOINING THE TEAM

East Papua 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 [theseedcompany.org/projects](http://theseedcompany.org/projects) to commit to invest and pray for the East Papua translators.

3030 Matlock Road, Suite 104  
Arlington, Texas 76015  
Toll Free: (877) 593-7333  
[www.theseedcompany.org](http://www.theseedcompany.org)  
A Wycliffe Bible Translators affiliate

