



PROJECT PROFILE

Helong

THE PEOPLE

The Helong people live on the island of Timor and on the smaller island of Semau in the Timor region of Indonesia. Their village communities remain fairly isolated. Although no longer ruled by a king, in many other ways the Helong still follow their traditional practices. Clans, rather than individuals, maintain ownership of the land, and farmers depend on the short rainy season to raise subsistence crops of corn, cassava and legumes. Helong women continue to be known for their traditional weaving.

Because of their isolation, the Helong people have retained their language and a pride in their identity. They regard the national language of Indonesian as a formal or second language, and those who know it speak it only with guests or in interactions with government agencies.

THE BACKGROUND

When the Helong people were introduced to Christianity about 300 years ago, the King and many of his subjects were baptized, but Helong Christians have never had God's Word in their language. Since the Bible has been translated into the national language of Indonesian, those Scriptures have traditionally been used in church services. But because the national language doesn't communicate clearly to the people, the pastors orally translate the Scriptures into Helong during services.

THE NEED

Helong churches and Christians remain weak, and local leaders feel it is very important to translate the Bible into Helong so that the people can clearly understand the Scriptures and read them for themselves. In addition to local church leaders, the head of the largest Protestant denomination in the region has also requested Scripture translation.

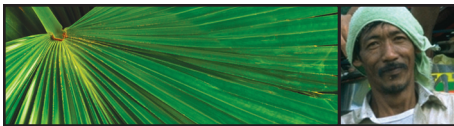
THE PLAN

The translation of the New Testament and Genesis into Helong is expected to take 7½ years. The basic linguistic and anthropological work has already been done, and the team has started translation.

The Protestant denomination has formed a special department to manage a number of translation projects. This department has made Bible translation into local languages a major goal. They are responsible for training and supervising translators, for providing consultants and advisors to check the materials and to conduct community testing and for training pastors to use the vernacular Scriptures. Wycliffe will ensure the high quality of the translation and will also maintain financial accountability through regular reports and an annual audit.



- **Location:** Timor, Indonesia
- **Number of Speakers:** 20,000
- **Project Goal:** New Testament plus Old Testament portions
- **Year Project Began:** 1998
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2011



Helong

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The basic translation is being done by a small group of mother-tongue translators. God has called farmers and local people as well as a university professor to work on the translation team.

Local churches will make a significant contribution to the project by releasing some pastors from their normal full-time responsibilities to translate on a part-time basis. An added benefit of their participation will be that the pastors can use the translated materials immediately in their ministry to Helong speakers.

THE RESULT

This project will provide the New Testament and Genesis for Helong speaking people in their heart language, the language they understand best. For the first time, children and older adults will be able to understand the gospel and Bible stories. Transitional literacy activities will enable the people who can already read the national language to use these translated materials effectively. As a result, the church will be strengthened and individual believers will be encouraged to develop a deeper, more personal, walk with the Lord.

JOINING THE TEAM

Funding from Seed Company partners is providing a computer, salaries, training, travel costs for consultants and translators, and project supplies and materials.

All of the organizations and people are in place, and the Helong people are interested in having the Word in their own language. Please take time to prayerfully consider your part in meeting this need. Your prayer and financial partnership with the Helong team will enable the translation of the New Testament.