



PROJECT PROFILE

Tharaka Old Testament

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Since the Tharaka first heard of Jesus in the 1930s, they've grown to understand the importance of following Him. And the creation of their written language and translated New Testament in 2001 were giant steps for these Kenyans.

Seed Company partners have a unique opportunity to help the same team complete their Bible. The Old Testament (OT) will give context to the New Testament and serve to encourage these people, who also face drought, famine and the harsh farming conditions.



THE PEOPLE

Tharaka are hard-working, dedicated to their trades and families. Men cultivate the land, but the lack of adequate rain on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya results in low crop yields. Women maintain the household, and the entire family helps farm. Men often work into the night, to avoid being labeled as lazy. Many also raise livestock.

Some Tharaka are traders, although others look down upon town dwellers, because they believe it changes traditions and culture. And as more Tharaka are exposed to outside contact, many cultural aspects like polygamy and traditional dress have changed. Young people often quickly accept modern ideas or products, while elders resist change.

Outsiders are well-liked, because people want to learn from them, to raise their living standard. The popular proverb, "*Gutiri mbiji itari mbiire (No one knows without being told)*," illustrates their positive attitude to learn.

But a close family and respect for elders remain unchanged. Sons or grandsons who marry stay within the same compound as their immediate family. The most respected community people are Mukuru (elders, or old men), who make the decisions. Every boy has the potential to achieve this position by completing several life stages.

THE BACKGROUND

In the 1930s, African Inland Mission introduced Jesus, resulting in many significant life changes. Today the Tharaka worship in various denominations including Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Anglican and the Church of God. >>>

- **Location:** Kenya, Africa
- **Number of Speakers:** 112,000
- **Project Goal:** Old Testament
- **Year Project Began:** 2006
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2013



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In 1987, the Kenyan translation organization BTL (Bible Translation and Literacy Association) surveyed the region. They saw a clear need for a Tharaka translation. In 1993, founding members of The Seed Company also saw this potential and shared the need with financial partners who began support. Though difficult, this NT translation was a great success, and many people embraced it. They see God's love with fresh understanding, and church unity, attendance and social issues are improving and bringing believers together.

“Formerly, different denominations could not sit together and share spiritual matters as they do today,” one pastor said.

Another unexpected blessing is some congregations realize dangerous cultural practices like female circumcision are not required by God, who cares more about their hearts.

THE PLAN

Since the completed NT in 2001, two veteran translators volunteered to work full-time to complete the OT. This important next step will give people the full context of NT passages that build on the OT.

Two others will join the team, after finishing university degrees. Although OT translation may come more easily after the NT, a significant amount of skill and experience is required, because of multiple genres of literature in the OT.

Partnering organizations like BTL and the internationally-funded Commonwealth Education Fund will also encourage the use of translated materials by organizing literacy programs.

Churches will continue to make important contributions, using the existing Tharaka NT and translated OT portions, in Sunday school programs and gatherings. And believers are composing songs and other materials in their mother tongue, based on new translated texts.

JOINING THE TEAM

Tharaka 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 to commit to invest and pray for the Tharaka team.

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