



Languages: Ikizu-Sizaki, Ikoma-Nata-Isenye, Jita, Kabwa, Kwaya, Suba-Simbiti, Zanaki, Zinza

Speakers: More than one million



Dates: 2016-2018

Total Project Cost: \$1,093,742

Project Goals: New Testament, Old Testament portions, “JESUS” film

MARA BANTU CLUSTER

(MAH-rah BAHN-too)

AFRICA — TANZANIA

THE PEOPLE

The eight language communities of the Mara Bantu Cluster are located near the shores of Lake Victoria, Africa’s largest lake.

Local people seek to meet their daily needs through fishing and farming. They grow maize, sorghum, millet, beans and other crops that are used in daily life or sold at the market. Cotton is also grown as a cash crop. Their local languages are central to their lives, and can be heard in markets, community gatherings and homes.

Although the church has been present here for over 100 years, these eight people groups haven’t had full access to the Word of God in their own languages. For many people in these communities, Scriptural truth has not taken root or had transformational impact.

The majority of people identify with Christianity, but many still adhere to traditional religion.

To grow spiritually, the people groups of the Mara Bantu Cluster need God’s Word in their mother tongue.

THE PLAN

Translation teams are producing more Scripture in the languages of the Mara Bantu Cluster!

All eight language groups are striving toward completing the New Testament. Working together in the cluster approach, the language teams are able to share their knowledge, solve common translation problems and encourage one another.

The translators are well trained, and are served by an experienced team of linguists, biblical experts and translation consultants. An advisory committee is also in place, consisting of local church leaders who represent many denominations.

Working in partnership with local churches helps ensure use of the translations, and even now there is a strong desire among congregations for the full New Testament. Scripture portions already translated — like the Gospel of Luke — have been well-received by the community.

The “JESUS” film has been completed for six of the languages and the other two are in the final stages. Showings of the film are already having an impact.

THE IMPACT

“Scripture translation work is needed in the region,” says a Tanzanian church leader. “Mara Region has numerous vernacular languages and is less reached than all areas in the country.”

The national language, Swahili, is highly esteemed in Tanzanian society, but in the remote areas of the Mara Cluster, people prefer to use their local languages. Although some would consider the Swahili Scriptures adequate for everyone, Mara church leaders know that translated Scripture is having a deeper impact.

Each of the cluster’s language communities intends to complete the full New Testament and distribute it in print and audio, accompanied by other materials like the “JESUS” film. People really enjoy using a Scripture app through which the teams are already distributing portions of God’s Word.

Your prayers and investment will help the eight language communities of the Mara Bantu Cluster access more of God’s Word in the languages they understand best!