



Languages: 10

Speakers: 16,000



Dates: 2001-Undetermined

This Year's Need: \$195,000

Project Goals: Bible Translation, Training, Literacy, Language Development

AITAPE WEST

PACIFIC – PAPUA NEW GUINEA

THE PEOPLE

In 1998, a tsunami killed nearly 3,000 people along the coast of Papua New Guinea, west of Aitape. In the aftermath, the team of Arop men who had been translating Scripture into their own language felt a sense of urgency to help other language groups in this area have access to God's Word — sooner rather than later.

The Aitape area is remote, and most people are small-scale farmers, growing their own food on their own land. The coastal groups are also known for their beautifully carved canoes.

For typical rural Papua New Guineans, life is dominated by fear of ancestral spirits. The gospel has been preached, but it isn't well understood, even by church leaders. The majority of professing Christians continue to rely on rituals — to ensure success in gardening, to woo a potential marriage partner or to heal the sick.

Without God's Word in their languages, syncretism is the norm.

THE PLAN

Out of tragedy was born a new way for language teams in the Aitape region to work and train together. Nine other language groups joined the Arop, and now the 10 teams are collaborating to translate God's Word into their heart languages!

"When one of us is stuck, we can help each other to translate better and this makes me really happy," says one of the local translators.

The Gospel of Luke was the first portion of Scripture published in most Aitape West languages, and it was welcomed enthusiastically by communities who were ready to commit themselves to furthering the work.

The Aitape West Translation Project is taking advantage of this momentum and focusing on building capacity for the Bible translation movement through relationships with churches, language communities, and other organizations in the region.

By working together, the teams can continue to equip local citizens to translate God's Word, promote literacy, facilitate Scripture engagement, and multiply the translation process with other language communities in the surrounding regions.

THE IMPACT

"As a police commander, I can only go so far to bring peace to our communities. But what is happening by translating the Word of God into the local languages — that has the power to change people's stomachs, and their behavior, and bring peace that lasts forever."

— Aitape district
police commander

Even before the translation work is completed, the Word of God is already transforming lives and communities!

By working together across ethnic boundaries, the translators and others in this project have the opportunity to experience and model the unity of God's people, showing the power of the gospel to break down barriers of hostility.

Several have commented that being involved in the project has transformed their spiritual lives.

Your prayers and investment will help the people of the Aitape region have access to God's Word in their heart languages!