



**Languages:** Bende, Pimbwe, Tongwe, (Rungwa, Rwila)

**Speakers:** About 100,000



**Dates:** 2011-2025

**This Year's Need:** \$114,815

**Project Goals:** Language development,  
translation, literacy, Scripture engagement

# KATAVI CLUSTER (kah-TAH-vee)

AFRICA — TANZANIA

## THE PEOPLE

Katavi Region, located in western Tanzania, embodies diversity on a number of levels.

Geographically, it includes lakeshores, mountains, forests and plains. Most people live off the land by farming a variety of crops including maize, beans, cassava, millet, rice and peanuts — many even raise bees and harvest the honey.

A plurality of religions also exists in Katavi Region. Large populations claim Christianity and another major religion. But many also follow traditional beliefs, which use local shamans and spiritual remedies to treat sickness and poverty — in fact, Katavi is known as a witchcraft center in Tanzania.

Linguistically, Katavi is also diverse, with many languages spoken from the Bantu language family. While some of the larger groups might have access to God's Word, many smaller communities in rural areas have never had translated Scriptures or any other written materials in their languages.

## THE PLAN

In 2010, together with our field partners, 23 leaders from 10 Katavi churches decided to move forward with Bible translation in Katavi Region!

The goal was to make God's Word accessible for five related languages through language development, translation, literacy and Scripture engagement. Work among the Rungwa and Rwila languages is waiting for more staffing and funding capacity. But exciting progress is happening in Pimbwe and Bende, and we are hopeful that Bende materials can also serve the Tongwe community.

Teams are establishing writing systems for these languages that have never had them before. Community-based literacy efforts are also a priority, training people to teach literacy classes and produce materials in their languages.

Bible translation is beginning! The books of Ruth and Jonah are ready for publication and recording in Bende and Pimbwe. Audio Scripture is important, so that those who don't read can also benefit from God's Word. In 2016, the teams will translate portions of Luke.

## THE IMPACT

"I never expected one day to learn to read and write Bende. It's like a dream," said a Bende speaker.

Since the languages in the Katavi cluster haven't been written before, excitement is growing among people reading their languages for the first time.

As Scripture is being translated, teams are giving community members the opportunity to hear it in their heart language.

At one checking session, the Bende team asked Bende speakers to review Jonah and Ruth — the first portions of God's Word in Bende — to see if the translation was clear and natural.

When the translator read the Scripture aloud and asked for feedback, there was silence. Then one man shook his head in delight and said, "When [the translator] read it, it was like he was talking straight to me."

**Your prayers and investment** will help people of the Katavi region have God's Word in their language!