The Wiwa people have an integrated system of beliefs and rituals centered around efforts to keep the universe in balance. Wiwas who choose to practice other religions are forced out, lose their land and are separated from family.

The Wiwa live in small communities scattered around the base of a mountain range and are engaged mostly in small-scale farming. As contact with the outside world becomes more common, Wiwas are concerned that they are in danger of losing their language, Damana.

There are no published Scriptures in Damana, but God has not forgotten the Wiwa people.

A small group of Wiwa Christians exists, including two men who have courageously refused to participate in the culture’s initiation rites and other traditional religious practices. They face persecution and pressure to conform, but God has given them strength to remain faithful in serving him. Their desire is for the Wiwa people to know Christ.

Ismael and Julian, two Wiwa believers with seminary training, are taking the lead to see their people transformed by the power of God’s Word.

They will each form a team with another Wiwa believer, discipling them as they work together. The two teams will translate the same portions of Scripture and come together monthly to review and revise.

The translated portions will be made available in a regional “Wiwa house” — a culturally appropriate environment for sharing knowledge. Community members are welcome to gather and discuss what God’s Word has to say and its relevance in their culture. It’s also an important way to gather translation feedback and promote reading in Damana.

The main focus of this project is to translate the Gospel of Luke into Damana. Producing it in audio format will make God’s Word accessible for those who don’t read. The teams will also produce a Luke video.

The “Wiwa house” concept is already having an impact. One man said, “We learned to share what we know with one another and take away something good that we never had before.”

Inviting the community to interact with God’s Word in the environment of a Wiwa house will provide needed feedback on the translation — and encourage hunger for more.

Ismael and Julian, the two lead translators, are committed to the plan because they believe that God’s Word in Damana will lead to transformation of the Wiwa people.

As they translate Luke, they will simultaneously be mentoring two carefully selected Wiwa believers, training them in Bible translation principles and laying a foundation for further translation work.

This project will produce the first published Scripture in the Damana language!

Your prayers and investment will help give the Wiwa people access to God’s Word in the language that touches their hearts!