



Language: Nateni

Speakers: 98,000



Dates: 2019-2022

Project Goal: Old Testament portions

NATENI (nah-TEH-nee)

AFRICA — BENIN

THE PEOPLE

Traveling to visit the Natemba people isn't easy. They live in a rural part of northwest Benin where paved, pothole-free roads are scarce. Moreover, only dirt roads connect their communities.

But those who make this bumpy journey find a welcoming people. The Natemba, who speak the Nateni language, get along well with neighboring groups and regularly participate in communal markets.

Raising livestock is important in their society. Most people keep some cattle, mainly a short-horned, hump-less variety. Cattle are used for everything from marriage payments to religious rituals, but almost never for milk.

About 95% of the Natemba follow traditional beliefs. The dead are thought to influence the living, so efforts are made to gain their favor.

Local Christians want to see their communities radically changed by the gospel message. Today they invite you to join them in their efforts to translate God's Word into Nateni, a language that speaks to their hearts.

THE PLAN

We're partnering with Natemba Christians to make more Scripture available in the Nateni language!

Since the publication of the New Testament with Genesis and Exodus in 2018, local church leaders have been working with translation staff to determine what to produce next.

To help deepen people's awareness of biblical values, six Old Testament books have been selected.

In this three-year project, team members will translate Deuteronomy, Ruth, 1 Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Jonah, publishing the books in print and audio formats.

The team also plans to draft 2 Samuel and selected Psalms. In addition, they'll work on the "JESUS" film and translate the script for a film about the Creation story.

Another high priority is the development of a Scripture app for smartphones. While most Natemba prefer written copies for use in church assemblies, the app will allow people to access God's Word on their phones — anywhere, at any time.

THE IMPACT

When the Nateni New Testament was first published, 2,000 copies were printed. More than half were sold right away during a Scripture celebration. Today only about 100 books remain.

"We can truly say that this group has been moved by the Word of God in their heart language," a project coordinator said. "People are thrilled with the Nateni Scriptures that are being read during church services and used in Bible study and prayer groups."

Local Christians are also using the translated texts for their personal devotions. And as believers grow in their faith, they're reaching out to others. Despite the strong hold traditional beliefs have in Natemba communities, there are already reports of how Scripture is impacting this people group.

"The primary purpose of the translation work," the coordinator explained, "is transformed lives."

Your prayers and gifts will help Nateni speakers engage with the truths of Scripture — in a language they clearly understand!