SALVADORAN SIGN LANGUAGE

In the country of El Salvador, Deaf people use Salvadoran Sign Language to communicate.

Most of the Salvadoran Deaf live in urban areas because of easier access to schools, health services and potential jobs. However, few Deaf achieve formal employment.

Culturally, Deaf people view themselves as members of a vibrant community with its own unique language and identity. However, as a minority group, they face challenges when communicating with the society around them.

The Deaf often feel frustrated, excluded and unimportant when efforts aren’t made to communicate with them in a language they naturally understand.

There are Deaf Christians in El Salvador, but most of the Salvadoran Deaf don’t identify with a religion because they haven’t had opportunities to learn about God.

In order to grow in their faith and knowledge of God, they need Scripture available in Salvadoran Sign Language — the language that communicates to their heart!

THE PLAN

We are working with local partners to translate Scripture portions for the Salvadoran Deaf community.

The team had previously translated 38 Bible stories — but they aren’t done yet!

During this project, they plan to translate John 1-6, stories about Jesus’ life from Peter’s perspective, and accounts of Christ’s miracles. They will also translate children’s Bible stories from Genesis and Exodus.

Since hand gestures, body language and facial expressions matter greatly in Salvadoran Sign Language, video is used to communicate God’s Word. Translation drafts are recorded, and once revisions are made, a final video is filmed.

The Scripture videos are then released on DVDs.

A local church is a strong partner in the endeavor — their entire congregation is committed to working in community with the Deaf. The translation team is also dedicated to the task. They feel that it is God’s calling on their lives to provide Scripture for the Salvadoran Deaf community.

THE IMPACT

“We didn’t know any of these things before!” said members of the Deaf community after viewing Scripture videos.

As people gain access to Scripture in Salvadoran Sign Language, they realize what Christ has done for them, and they respond to the message. Their faith grows as they understand God’s Word clearly.

“When faced with the pressures of daily life, … this faith strengthens them to continue trusting in God’s promises,” said a project adviser. “Many of them share their faith with friends or people in their community.”

When people understood the story of Lazarus and the rich man, for example, they were inspired to tell others about the Lord.

The sign language DVDs are also helpful for language learning — even the Deaf community outside of the church is interested in them.

Your prayers and investment will help the Salvadoran Deaf community gain access to God’s Word!