

FRONTLINES

SUMMER
2021

Helping Provide the Sweetest Treasure in Tanzania

In an open area of a central Tanzanian community, hundreds of Burunge people gathered from miles around. It was time to celebrate. A procession of people came singing and dancing, carrying a box into the center of the gathering.

As the crowd cheered, local church leaders and Bible translators opened the box to reveal the sweetest treasure the Burunge people could ever hope for — the New Testament in their language!

Now it's time for that treasure to reach the remaining 42 languages still needing Bible translation in Tanzania. The Lughu Zinazobaki project was launched in partnership with SIL Tanzania, a primary strategic partner. Lughu Zinazobaki is Swahili for “remaining languages.”

The project's goal over the next four years is to see work started among people groups that still need God's Word in their language. Achieving that God-sized goal requires community-owned Bible translation programs, local church mobilization and training and equipping Tanzanians for leadership roles.

“Tanzanian people bring deep knowledge and understanding of the local context and long-term presence necessary to ensure the success of Bible translation and Scripture engagement over the long haul,” a project adviser explained. “As these communities take ownership of initiatives in their languages, we hope to see people fully invested in the process of translation, and communities transformed by translated Scripture.”

Please join us in praying the promise of Isaiah 55:11 over this first phase of the Lughu Zinazobaki project: “It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it (NLT).”

Prayer Points

- » Successful meetings with local leaders.
- » Strong relationships with stakeholders and the local partner organization.
- » New connections in local communities.
- » Good health and strength for all staff members.

Laying the Foundation in Tanzania

Because of your prayers and giving, progress for the Lugha Zinazobaki project is underway!

STEP 1

SIL Tanzania identifies key stakeholders and initiates discussions.

STEP 2

Meetings are held with local church and community leaders.

STEP 3

Staff helps communities that demonstrate a need for Bible translation form local organizations that guide translation plans.

STEP 4

SIL Tanzania equips local organizations by providing training and mentoring.

STEP 5

Each participating people group develops a translation project that will meet community needs.

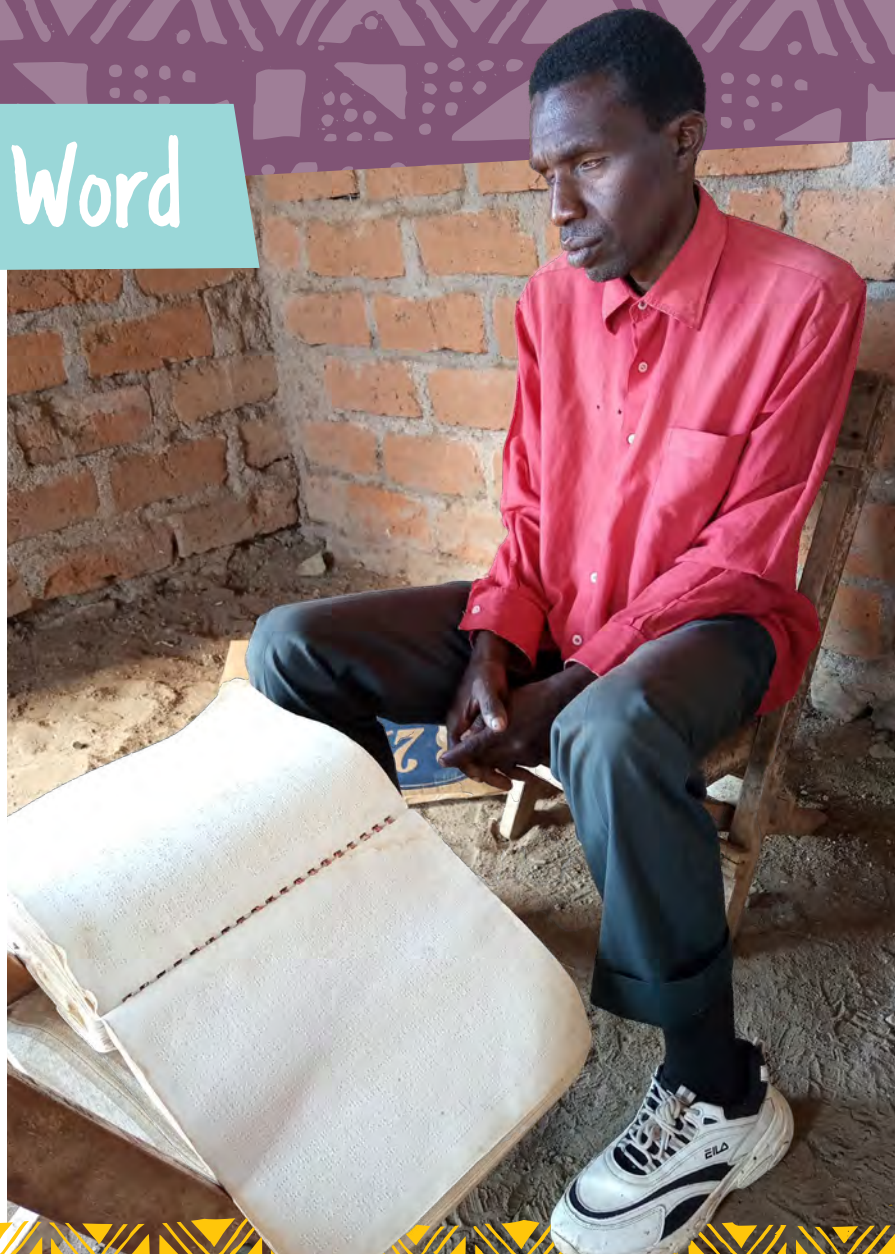
Inspired by the Word

Mutaki was impressed.

Seated in a literacy training session, he listened as people read Jita Scripture aloud. He was filled with joy and gratitude that his language was finally in written form. But he still felt a burden on his heart.

Mutaki is blind. Although he can read his Swahili Bible in Braille very well, there is no Scripture or materials in Braille for Jita. Recordings of some Bible books are available, but Mutaki is eager for the blind to have the opportunity to read God's Word too.

During the training session, he told the teachers and other participants about his longing: "Brethren, I am very relieved to hear God's Word in my language. But there are groups of other people in our community who [need to know] God and be transformed. I know and believe that the blind also have a great need for Jesus."



Closing in on Completion

Despite daunting obstacles, the team translating the Dinka Cam Bible can now see the finish line. It's been two decades in the making, but they're closing in on completing the entire Bible.

There are about one million Dinka Cam-speaking people in South Sudan who predominantly live in the savanna country surrounding the Nile basin. They adapt their livelihood based on the season: When it rains, they farm and raise grain crops like millet. During the dry season, they herd cattle.

South Sudan, since gaining its independence from Sudan in 2011, has experienced heartbreaking natural and man-made disasters, from drought and floods to civil unrest. Many South Sudanese have been displaced and fled violence, settling in refugee camps in neighboring Uganda. And like in the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has restricted travel and disrupted life.

These hardships have presented challenges for the translation team, but they have persevered and forged ahead. One Dinka Cam church leader displayed tremendous grit to ensure that people had access to God's Word. She knew the translation team was counting on her to distribute Scripture and literacy books to several communities, including refugee camps in northern Uganda. But the area had been locked down to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and all means of transportation were closed.

So how could she pick up the materials from the translation office? The answer was her own two feet. The resolute 75-year-old woman made several trips to and from the translation office — more than five miles each way!

"My aim is to have the Word of God in people's hands," she said, "and for them to communicate with God in their [language]."

More than half of the Dinka Cam follow traditional beliefs. When they encounter problems, some go to mediums. But when those fail, people seek help from God. Dinka Cam Christians are eager to have the Scriptures in their language so they can grow spiritually and reach out to others with the love of Jesus.

Team members recently finished translating the Old Testament and are now working to revise an older translation of the New Testament. They're also translating and printing children's Bible stories and a hymn book. And, aware that many South Sudanese people have faced devastating trauma, the team is also hosting workshops that use biblically based resources to foster hope and healing in their community.

The Dinka Cam team is praying that, by God's grace, they will complete their mission in 2023. That's when they expect to typeset and publish the Dinka Cam Bible and celebrate God's faithfulness and goodness.

Please pray for the team as they look forward to the day when the entire Dinka Cam Bible will be available.

Prayer Points

- » Peace and security in South Sudan.
- » The health and well-being of the translation team and their families, as well as the technical team supporting the project.
- » Good communication and endurance for the team as they complete a New Testament consultant check.



The Ripple Effect of the Gospel

Ruth grew up in the 1950s and was the baby in a family of eight children. Years before Ruth was born, a group of believers from a city church brought the gospel to her family's impoverished farming community along Vietnam's central coast. That day, Ruth's brother — still a young boy — listened intently and decided to follow Jesus. The ripple effects of God's Word would impact Ruth's parents and siblings, as each person committed their life to the Lord over time.

When Ruth was a teenager, she heard a visiting preacher's sermon on Isaiah 1 and it captured her heart. Though she had heard Bible stories growing up, had been baptized in a river and took communion, she hadn't yet grasped the meaning of having a personal relationship with Jesus. Everything changed that night. Though terribly shy, Ruth stood amid 300 people to publicly confess Christ as Lord. "God set me on a whole new journey," she said.

When fighting escalated between communist guerrillas and South Vietnamese troops, and their U.S. allies, Ruth's village was caught in the crosshairs. During that time, a letter arrived from Ruth's sister who was serving at SIL's* compound in the highlands. Ruth's sister urged her to take a job at the compound, teaching Vietnamese to the missionaries before they began translating the Bible for other local languages. For the next three years, Ruth thrived; she came alongside three Wycliffe missionary couples as they learned the national language. "Their exemplary life of Christian witness and service touched my heart and enriched my spiritual life in a powerful way," Ruth said.

While Ruth spoke only Vietnamese to the missionaries during the day, she practiced English lessons at night by listening to recordings that one of the missionaries had made for her. Despite only completing the fifth grade, Ruth said the English words and phrases helped set her on an educational and vocational path. Ultimately, God led Ruth to move to the U.S.

Now retired after a lifetime of service as a pastor, social worker and evangelist to refugees, Ruth still resonates with Wycliffe's commitment to translating God's Word; she generously partners with the ministry of Bible translation through a charitable gift annuity.

A charitable gift annuity is an agreement between a donor and a charity: in exchange for a charitable gift, the charity provides the donor lifetime annuity payments. The remainder of the gift goes to the cause at the time the donor passes away. "We prepare ahead for our later years," Ruth said. "But with the dollars left, [we can further] God's work."

"Wycliffe has been part of the beautiful tapestry God has woven in my life. I thank [God] for his Word, and I don't have enough words to express how I feel about Wycliffe's work around the world. I encourage more people to support its ministry."

To learn more about how a charitable gift annuity can be used to support the work of Bible translation, please contact Wycliffe Foundation at **877-493-3600** or visit wycliffefoundation.org.

* A primary strategic partner.



Sold Out!

The Nukna people of Papua New Guinea were so eager to receive 10 newly translated New Testament books in their language that the print copies and Scripture audio players sold out! People added their names to a waiting list so they could get their copies of these 10 epistles (Galatians through Philemon) as soon as possible.

The books and audio players were sold at a special event held to dedicate them. Even in the midst of COVID-19, the Nukna wanted to celebrate receiving more of God's Word! People came from villages all over the language area. A huge feast was prepared, special music and dance groups performed, a grandstand was erected and a pastor led the people in a service of thanksgiving.

When the books of Luke and Acts were dedicated three years ago, sales were low so the translation team wasn't sure what to expect. The Nukna translation team was encouraged to see the response and that God brought good things during the trials and difficulties of the pandemic.

Since the dedication, a second box of audio Scripture has been sold, and the people are asking for a third box. A reprint of the 10 epistles is also planned. Please pray that the Lord would use these newly translated New Testament books to mightily impact the hearts and lives of the Nukna people.

WORDSEARCH

Why Google Can't Translate the Bible

Google can do so many things: resolve dinner table arguments, magically change its logo on the daily and even anticipate what question you're going to ask next.

But one thing Google can't do is translate the Bible. There are more reasons for this than you can shake a stick at, but one example is the idioms, symbolism and metaphors which add an extra layer of complexity to translation work. These turns of phrase are often specific to individual languages and cultures and can alter the original intent of the message.

For example, if you tell someone to "break a leg," you're probably just wishing them good luck. But if you directly translate that into a different language, the meaning might be taken literally and a friendly farewell is suddenly turned into a violent threat.

These literary devices — especially symbolism — become an issue in Bible translation when you consider a word like "heart." In the context of Scripture, it rarely refers to

the organ that pumps blood. Instead, we reference the heart as the center of our thoughts and emotions. But the Awa of Papua New Guinea think of the liver as the center of their being. So while we may say that we love God with all of our heart, Awa believers love God with all of their liver.

Something as simple and common as the word "heart" can't be directly translated without considering the cultural context. But don't lose heart! Bible translators are up to the challenge.

And despite the difficulties for translation posed by the diversity of the world's over 7,000 languages, these differences also provide a stunning picture of what heaven is going to look like when people from every nation and language will worship before the throne of God. God is equipping Bible translators to help make this future reality possible by doing what Google can't — translating the Bible for every language.

News and Notes from the Field

Yearning for More in Cameroon

Simon's muscles ached from the three-hour trek. Several months prior, Simon had attended a training workshop where he learned to craft oral Bible stories in his language, Oshie.

Now he wanted to share those narratives in a nearby community. But due to civil unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic, most means of transportation weren't available. So Simon decided to make the long journey on foot.

Once he arrived, he went from house to house, inviting everyone to meet him at a local church. "The people gathered and I told them two Bible stories," Simon said later. "The love of God touched their hearts so much that they pleaded with me to stay overnight and share stories with them again the next day."

He agreed to their request, and after the second storytelling time, many people couldn't stop talking about what they had experienced. "We have never heard God's Word in this way — in [our language]!" they said.

When it was finally time for Simon to leave, the community members asked him to visit again — and often. "This brought joy to my heart, seeing what God could do through the stories," he said. "I knew I wasn't just a storyteller. God has called me into the ministry to change lives through the oral Bible storytelling strategy."



Raising Awareness on a Walkabout

In Papua New Guinea, three members of a Bible translation team recently went on a "walkabout" to six villages. They raised awareness for an oral Bible storying workshop through visits with locals in each village. The workshop will open the way for interested individuals to discover the beauty of God's Word. Attendees could take their first steps toward translating the Bible into their own languages. The team members look forward to witnessing the fruit of this walkabout as more people are introduced to the Bible and its transformative power in their lives.

