



Meet the

BANYALA PEOPLE

[BAHN - YAH' - LAH]

Living near Lake Victoria, Banyala people speak Nyala. While most profess Christianity, many don't have a personal relationship with the Lord. Animistic religion is widespread. With no mother tongue Scripture, pastors work hard to make their own translation in worship services and Bible studies. This project will fill that void.



Goals

The books of Genesis, Ruth, Luke, 1 Corinthians and Colossians; Scripture-use products



Strengths

Christians strongly desire the Scriptures in Nyala. Churches have asked for the Bible and will be fully engaged in the project. The translators are highly qualified. The Bible Society of Kenya is a well-respected partner.



Partners

Bible Society of Kenya
Theovision International
Faith Comes By Hearing
Life Ministries
Local churches



Risks

The acceptance of the translation by youth, who comprise a large segment of the population, is undetermined. Technology support will be costly. The Bible Society and local churches are embarking on new territory.



Quick Facts

Location: Kenya
Number of Speakers: 274,000
Expected Completion: 2021

Expected Impact

01 The Gospel message will no longer appear foreign to Nyala speakers.

02 The mother tongue Scriptures will breathe new life into churches and cause Jesus' Good News to spread rapidly.

03 Traditional animists will abandon their many local rituals and trust the Lord wholehearted to meet their deepest needs.

The Challenge

The Banyala survive as subsistence farmers on small acreages of land, growing maize and other crops. They also keep a few domestic animals, and some engage in small-scale retail businesses. Most live on a dollar a day. Motorcycles provide a means of travel, primarily for young people, and are sometimes used to transport passengers. The Banyala perform male circumcision as a cultural rite of passage. Polygamy is common. Much of the population is nonliterate.

About 90 percent of the Banyala profess to be Christian. As a result, they're familiar with biblical teaching but have a shallow understanding of the Gospel. Scripture in their heart language will help them connect meaningfully with God's Word.

The Nyala Bible will enable those who practice traditional animism to discover the hope found in Jesus. They will abandon their many rituals and turn toward the truth. Instead of making sacrifices to appease dead ancestors, they'll trust in the saving power of Christ.

Because the Banyala are an oral society, they rely on pastors and church leaders to teach them God's Word. Oftentimes, however, they misunderstand the scriptural content due to the language barrier. This can result in mixing their local religion with Christian beliefs.

The Solution

Pastors requested a Nyala Bible translation, saying they couldn't fully relate to God's Word in other languages. They said mother tongue Scripture would bring about an exponential growth in the spread of the Gospel and people would warmly embrace it. In response, this project was born.

Workshops and other training sessions will equip the team members and Scripture reviewers for the task. They'll learn Bible translation principles, computer use and Scripture promotion methods.

Since most people can't read Nyala with understanding, an audio Bible and other oral-based Scripture products will be effective ministry tools. The team members recognize the need to be creative in their approach, especially if they want to reach children and youth. To encourage Bible use, the team plans to produce the "JESUS" film, Scripture-based music and dramas, hymns, a children's film and Sunday school materials. The books of Genesis, Ruth, Luke, 1 Corinthians and Colossians will be accessible in print and audio and on an app.

The translation office is in a church located a 40-minute drive from the city. People don't typically travel out of their communities and have no smartphones, computers or internet. The team will need to address this issue to meet the technology needs of the project.

Pray
With Us

Heavenly Father, please speak truth to many spiritually hungry hearts through Your Word. Transform the lives of those who identify with Christianity but lack a close, intimate walk with You.

How You Can Make a Difference

PRAYER | Heavenly Father, we thank You for setting Your love on the Banyala people. Strengthen Your workers as they tackle the task of producing five Bible books and Scripture-use materials in Nyala. Please speak truth to many spiritually hungry hearts through Your Word.

God, empower pastors and church leaders as they preach directly from mother tongue Scripture without the need to interpret the message from another language. Make the Good News relevant and attractive to children and youth. Transform the lives of those who identify with Christianity but lack a close, intimate walk with You. Deliver followers of animistic religion from the fear of spirits and bring them into the freedom that's only available through Jesus.



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