



Project Profile

Zapoteco Las Delicias

[ZAHP - OH - TEH - KOH LAHS DEH - LEES - EE - AHS]

FIRST SCRIPTURE



Project Summary

This exciting project will give the Zapoteco Las Delicias their first taste of God's Word in their own language. Local churches have requested the entire New Testament, but for this initial phase, the team has selected the four Gospels and Acts as a good place to start. The community specifically requested this project, and pastors are keen to use translated Scripture to meet their people's spiritual needs.

God's Word in Las Delicias will be read in worship services and other meetings. The materials will also be made available for children to read in their native tongue. As the Zapoteco Las Delicias people are exposed to Jesus' good news in the language they understand best, the hope is that both the older and younger generations will take the Lord's teaching to heart and apply Scripture to their everyday lives.

The Zapoteco Las Delicias community was founded on Christian principles, and to this day, many of their civil laws reflect biblical values. Nevertheless, nonbelievers need Scripture to gain a clearer understanding of the salvation message, and believers need a more solid biblical basis for their faith. The team will evaluate the project's impact by observing evidence of life transformation within the community. The number of people reading Scripture and engaging with the translation will be indicative of the project's success.



Quick Facts

Start Year: 2021

End Year: 2024

Population: 16,700

Location: Mexico

Summary of Goals: Translate the four Gospels and Acts and publish in print and digital formats.

Background

The Zapoteco Las Delicias occupy their traditional homeland in the state of Oaxaca. They live simply, subsisting on agriculture in a temperate zone nestled between mountains. Having little financial resources or monetary wealth, the people provide for their families by cultivating their home gardens or by working on plantations or a tract of land cleared from the forest. The region's main crop is coffee, which takes up 40 percent of the arable land, followed by corn on 20 percent of the land, then beans and sugarcane, each on 10 percent of the land. For education, only elementary schools can be found in the language area, with the nearest junior high or high school located in the market town.

About 75 percent of the rural population identifies as Christian, while 30 to 40 percent of those who live in towns profess faith. The people were first introduced to Christianity in 1935. However, ancestral worship and other religious customs are still practiced in the area. Therefore, a vital need exists for evangelism and discipleship to bring nonbelievers to repentance and to nurture spiritual growth among believers. The translators are confident that the Word of God in the Las Delicias language will effectively satisfy the deepest longings of the community by drawing many lost souls to the Savior and by strengthening the faith of his followers.

Strategy and Partners

The managing partner for this project, Mexican Bible Society (MBS), will provide consultants, give technical help, report progress, supervise funds, and oversee translation quality and publishing. Getsemani Church, a local congregation, is also serving as a project partner and, along with other area churches, is in charge of recruiting the translators, arranging distribution of the Scripture materials, supplying office space, and offering other logistical support. This project will have four full-time translators, with a consultant on hand to advise the team via email, virtual meetings when internet connectivity is good, and one or two face-to-face visits each year. The community will be involved in comprehension testing of the translation.

Though several Bible translations are available in related languages, the intelligibility of those Scriptures has been deemed unacceptable for the Zapoteco Las Delicias. But the team is able to use one of those related languages—San Juan Yagallo—as a source text. MBS will enter the digital San Juan Yagallo New Testament into the Paratext software program, saving the team considerable time during the initial translation step. Besides the four Gospels and Acts, the team will also produce a small dictionary, a Bible-based songbook, and a special children's publication of Luke.

Key Term

Paratext is the world's leading software application for translating, checking, and revising the Bible from the original text into the languages of the world.

Risks and Strengths

Bible translation is a highly technical process that often takes place in some of the world's most difficult environments. Therefore, Seed Company strives to mitigate risks while maximizing the strengths of our partners so that clear, accurate translations are completed on time.

The risks and strengths of the Zapoteco Las Delicias project are as follows:

Risks

- The town where the team is located is in a remote, mountainous region.
- Training the new team in Bible translation principles takes additional time.

Strengths

- Christians are eager to receive the Scriptures in their heart language.
- The translators have strong local church support and are highly motivated to serve in their roles.
- The collaboration among the field partner organizations is good.
- The translation consultant is well qualified.
- The plan has been designed in accordance with the community's wishes.
- The project goals can be accomplished in the allotted time frame.



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