Global PartnerLink
A Wycliffe International Partner

Oku Project

2011

Africa

PROJECT PROFILE

God's Word Brings Transformation

Project Goal:
To translate the New Testament and portions of the Old Testament, to produce the *JESUS* film, and to assist the church to start a community-based literacy program

Project Status:
New Testament

Location:
Cameroon

Number of People:
45,000

Year Project Began:
2001 (GPL's partnership began 2010)

Expected Completion:
2013

2011 Funding Need (Cdn):
$45,000

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Financial Commitment Policy:
Spending of funds is confined to board-approved programs and projects. Each gift designated toward an approved program or project will be used as designated with the understanding that when the financial needs are met, or the project is completed or cannot be completed for any reason, as determined by the board, funds will be used where needed most.

Opportunity

The ultimate goal of the Oku Bible translation project is to see lives transformed through the power of God's Word. Previously, the church in the area has used foreign languages to attempt to disciple a widely uneducated population. The result has been a very weak church and the practice of syncretism (a combination of animistic and Christian beliefs). This project seeks to make Scriptures available in the language that people understand best—the Oku language—so God's life-changing Word can reach their minds and hearts, becoming part of their daily lives. Literacy is also being promoted. The vision includes seeing the Oku experience a progressive and durable socio-cultural economic transformation, a result of the use of functional literature developed in the Oku language.

Since the project began in 2001, the language has been developed (alphabet, grammar analysis, dictionary, etc.), mother tongue translators have been trained, and Scripture translation has been advancing steadily. The script for the *JESUS* film is being checked by a consultant. Literacy and Scripture use activities are ongoing; Luke's Gospel continues to be distributed in churches and classes. The number of Bible study groups using mother tongue Scripture has increased to 15.

As the community discovers the power of Scripture in their heart language, the church is being strengthened through an increasing knowledge of the truth. This project is sowing the Good Seed and anticipating an abundant harvest!

Some of the literacy materials available in Oku

The Plan

Scripture use training

Much has been accomplished by this committed project team. The Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) provides supervision. The drafting of the New Testament is completed. Now a committee of Oku speakers will review it for accuracy, clarity and naturalness. A variety of epistles have been reviewed, including 1 and 2 Corinthians, Hebrews, Romans and Revelation. New literacy classes have begun, and regular teacher training is held. Practical literacy materials produced include primers, a malaria book, an AIDS story and brochure, and a memory verse booklet. The manuscript for the *JESUS* film is nearly complete. Programs are being prepared for weekly radio broadcasts, and regular prayer bulletins are shared with supporting churches.

A priority for 2011 is to finalize all checking for typesetting the New Testament. This includes a thorough consultant-check of each Scripture book—a huge task. A booklet on biblical key terms, including the English term and its equivalent in Oku, plus an Oku dictionary, are also planned. In literacy, the goal is to publish and distribute an Oku diary, and continue to supervise literacy classes in the community. The primary and secondary schools are expected to eventually run the literacy program.

The development of the mother tongue benefits everyone, allowing access to literacy and the many useful materials being translated from official languages into Oku. These cover health, agriculture, economics, and other topics.

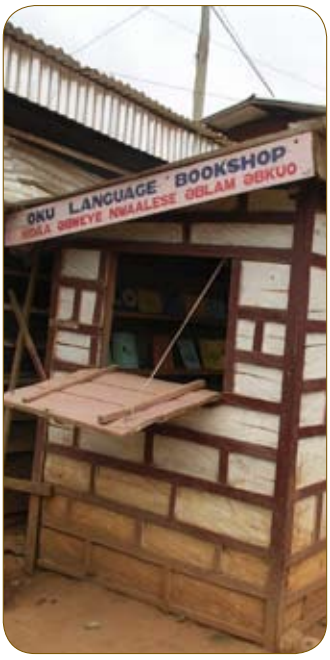
The People

The Oku people live in the mountainous Oku region of Northwest Cameroon, bordering Nigeria, at an elevation of approximately 1,200 metres. The Oku are mainly subsistence farmers. Due to the shortage of arable land, the people farm even the steep hillsides. Beans, corn and potatoes are sometimes planted together in the same furrows.

The religion is predominantly a mixture of traditional beliefs, including animism and ancestor worship, with diluted forms of Christianity. As of 2004, the current traditional king (but with no formal political power), has attempted some religious reforms, to move the people away from some of the more un-Christian traditional practices; these reforms have met with considerable resistance. With the barrier of a foreign language in the churches, the Oku believers have realized their need for mother tongue Scriptures. They requested the help of CABTAL to do Bible translation in their language.

Classes in reading and writing their mother tongue are addressing the low literacy rate. Literacy is the skill that will put a key into their hands—the key that will not only unlock economic and social barriers, but open God's own Word to their minds and hearts.

Mother tongue teaching in a local Baptist school



Challenge

The 2011 budget for this strategic Bible translation project is $45,000. These funds will provide salaries, equipment, materials, training and travel costs for team members and consultants. The challenges are tremendous in sharing God's Word with the Oku, but your partnership, through prayer and financial support, can make the difference. Your role as a partner is absolutely vital.

A deeper understanding of Scripture is the key to the spiritual life and health of Christ's church. For the Oku, too, this will be the necessary foundation for evangelism and true discipleship. Through an increasing knowledge of the truth, the church there can grow and spread, and shine the light of God's love among their neighbours. Mother tongue Scripture translation and literacy classes are paving the way for the gospel to bring new life to the Oku people of Cameroon. This is an opportunity for a true grass-roots investment into the spread of Christ's Kingdom!

Project details, including budget, reporting and project plans, are available upon request. As a sponsor of the Oku project, you will receive regular updates with progress reports, highlights and prayer requests. If this project becomes fully funded, you will be notified and your gift directed to another project of similar nature.

A traditional authority buying a literacy material.

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