



Bali-Mba

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Quick facts:

Potential population impacted: 80,000

Number of languages served: Two; Bali and Mba

Geographic area: The equatorial forest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, surrounding Kisangani

Timeline: 2018-2020 (phase one)



Goals:

Equip the Bali and Mba communities as they:

- Translate Scripture
- Teach literacy
- Share the Word of God

Snapshot:

Believers in both language communities are eager to have Scriptures translated into their mother tongue. Your support will enable them to build strong Christian communities amid opposition, overcome poverty with literacy, and preserve their rich culture for future generations.

The Bali people are spread over a large territory. Many live in small, isolated settlements in the heart of the equatorial forest. The roads between these villages are treacherous or impossible to pass in certain seasons.

The Mba people lead a semi-settled life. From December to March, a period reserved for farm work, they leave their villages to move into the forest, where every family has their own small plot of land. Most people in this hot, rainy climate earn a very meagre living.

Challenges:

No printed Scripture is available in these languages.

Bali and Mba speaking churches have to use Bibles written in other languages. As a result, congregations often hear conflicting or confusing sermons.

Occult practices are widespread. Christians in these regions often try to observe their traditional beliefs alongside Christian beliefs, which can lead to contradictory practices.

To protect themselves from magic spells, for example, the Bali and their neighbours (including Christians) turn to sorcerers for protection. The fear of sorcery is so strong that some pastors will pay a fee to sorcerers, hoping this will permit them to safely open a new church.

The DRC is the poorest country in the world. This makes fundraising difficult within the country, as most people struggle to live on less than one or two dollars a day. The Congolese franc continues to depreciate, affecting this project.

The Plan:

Continue translating Scripture: The first objective is to translate six books of the New Testament in both Bali and Mba.

Keep sharing the gospel: Through the "JESUS" film and oral Bible story workshops. The showing of the "JESUS" film in the Bali language greatly influenced community life. People got involved in dubbing the film without considering their religious affiliations. Every time the film has been shown, crowds have come forward, accepting Christ.

Teach literacy: One to two per cent of Bali speakers are literate in their mother tongue. About 45 per cent of Mba students attend school. That's one reason this initiative aims to open literacy centres and train literacy workers.

During one literacy class, a pastor observed, "It's important for us to organize language classes in the mother tongue, for ourselves and for our children, rather than consciously lose our linguistic identity without doing anything about it."

Grow the community development projects: Have all the Bali chiefs get involved and take ownership of the mother-tongue based, community development projects. The objective is to see cocoa and coffee farmed, fish harvested, and goats bred, in order to support the Bible translation projects and the wider community.

Build capacity: Provide coaching for the project co-ordinator to enable him and his team to plan their work well, set reasonable objectives and budgets, and to submit good reports that demonstrate their progress towards the project objectives and the impact they're having.

Encouraging and equipping Christian leaders as they take pride in their heritage: Train at least church leaders and other officials to read in their mother tongue.

The Impact:

The Word of God is transforming lives. After seeing the "JESUS" film, one listener said, "We have heard Jesus being spoken about in other languages. Today He has come to our own village, for **He speaks our own language.**"

In all four locations where the film was shown, **the translator invited people to follow Jesus. Joyful chaos followed as people flowed forward.** The local pastors were so engrossed in their own lively discussion about the film that they didn't notice that the translator was overwhelmed with the crowd of new converts.

The Bali also have an 8-hour series of Bible story recordings from the Global Recordings Network.

Passion for the Word is growing. Louise, a widow, said, "We who are poor will be the first to contribute towards translating the Word of God into our language because the gospel was received first by the poor. As for me, I will contribute my part before I die!" A few months later, she passed away. Her gift challenged others to give. As a result, additional support came in from the entire community!

People are taking pride in their culture and identity. During the mobilization phase, a presentation on the Mba culture was given at the University of Kisangani, many people were happy and said, "We too are an important people and we have shown our strength and capacity via our culture and language. Why were we afraid to sing and display our culture?"



Your financial gifts and prayer can help bring the Bible to thousands of people in DRC who have never heard the Good News.



...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11 (NIV)

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