



Languages: Doondo, Southwest Teke

Speakers: 89,000



Dates: 2017-2019

Total Project Cost: \$262,757

Project Goals: Luke in Doondo and Southwest Teke;
Matthew in Southwest Teke

BOUENZA CLUSTER (BWEN-zah)

AFRICA — REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO

THE PEOPLE

The two language groups of the Bouenza Cluster — Doondo and Southwest Teke — reside in the southwestern region of the Republic of the Congo. Most speakers of these languages live in traditional, rural communities away from cities.

Rich soil and an abundance of water make their land ideal for agriculture and livestock. As small-scale farmers, they cultivate many different crops, including peanuts, soybeans, plantains, ginger and corn. Both people groups enjoy singing and dancing.

The Doondo are known for their unity and willingness to help each other, whether they are related or not. Likewise, the Southwest Teke people accept each other as part of the same family. They have a proverb that says they are “those who have come out of one and the same root.” Peacefulness is a hallmark for both communities.

In addition to sharing many cultural features, the Doondo and Southwest Teke also share a need to have God’s Word in their mother tongue.

THE PLAN

Together with our partners, we are working with local churches to make God’s Word available in the languages of the Bouenza Cluster!

During this two-year project, teams will translate the Gospel of Matthew into Southwest Teke and the Gospel of Luke into both languages. They will make them available as printed booklets and also as audio recordings. In addition, the “JESUS” film, based on Luke, will be produced in Doondo.

Having these books will give local churches the opportunity to read Scripture in their services and use it in small group Bible studies. Project staff will also train church leaders to conduct listening groups, using the audio recordings of Scripture. “This will lead to a desire to have more of God’s Word translated in their language,” says a project coordinator.

A Doondo church committee is also organizing literacy classes and Scripture engagement training among churches in the area, and doing follow-up.

THE IMPACT

The percentage of those who profess Christianity among the Doondo is high. But without God’s Word in their language, faith has become a formality for many, and belonging to church is often viewed more as a rite of passage.

Meanwhile, the Southwest Teke people often feel frustrated and disinterested in the gospel message because it has only been preached in other languages, to people who have heard it before. Plus, other groups often look down on the Southwest Teke and want to exercise authority over them politically and administratively. This can even be true in church governance.

“Having their own language written and promoted will really be important to them, to give them a sense of value and esteem,” says a project coordinator. “For their development and freedom, we need to translate the Bible into their mother tongue.”

Your prayers and investment will help bring God’s Word to people of the Bouenza Cluster!