

2026

WYCLIFFE SOUTH AFRICA

Programme Portfolio



Table of CONTENTS

01	Vision & Values
02	Distinctives
04	Pipeline Programmes
05	Oluhumbi
06	Olukuvale
07	Olukwando
08	CD Cluster
09	Himba
10	Olucilenge
11	Oluhanda
12	!Xun
13	Holo & Kisuku
14	Kaaps
15	Koti
16	Esaka
17	Marrevoni
18	Xirima
19	Marenje
20	Meetto
21	Phimbi
22	Sepulana
23	Siphuthi
24	Get Involved



VISION & VALUES

WSA'S VISION:

“Transformed communities meaningfully engaging with God’s Word.”

WSA'S MISSION STATEMENT:

“We serve local language communities through strategic partnerships to facilitate the translation of and engagement with God’s Word towards transformed lives.”

WSA'S CORE VALUES

HIS GLORY

We seek God’s glory among nations communities and seek every opportunity to give God all the glory. God-centred, bold, courageous and obedient; and in humility, always pointing to God.

HIS WORD

We pursue the transforming power of the Word of God in our own lives and work passionately to share this with those people who still need to hear it in their own language.

PRAYER

We are led by the Holy Spirit as we pray. Prayer is the fibre that runs through all we do, every decision we take, everyone we meet with and every project we are involved in.

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP

We follow Jesus and have an authentic relationship with Him. We honour and respect all people, and endeavour to guard, strengthen and restore our relationships.

THE CHURCH

We believe in the centrality of the Church in the fulfilment of God’s mission on earth. The Church is the bride of Christ, and our attitude and the way we speak about the Church should always mirror the love of Christ for His bride.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We delight in working together in community for the sake of advancing His Kingdom through Bible translation in partnerships. We consider it a real privilege to participate in the Bible Translation Movement and joyfully serve all.

LOCAL COMMUNITY

We respect and understand the dignity of the individual within the community. We value the local community’s needs and expressions and serve them by coming alongside to help empower and honour their place in the community.

DISTINCTIVES

FULL BIBLE - BOTH ORIGINAL (OLD) & NEW TESTAMENTS

While there is good reason for Bible translation to start in the New Testament, only 10% of language communities have a full Bible in their Mother tongue. Many of the foundational truths of Scripture are laid in the Original Testament, and Wycliffe South Africa, in our discussions with the leaders in the language communities, supports the request for a full Bible to be translated. The Old Testament is the first division of the Christian biblical canon which translates to the need for Hebrew knowledge as the Old Testament originates from the ancient religion of Judaism and makes up 75% of the Bible.

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

While all Bible translation seeks heart and life change in individuals and communities by accessing God's Word, this will not happen automatically. Wycliffe South Africa emphasizes transformation and seeks to partner, through Wycliffe Links, with individuals, Churches, Businesses, and Missions partners, to support local communities and seek ways to empower for change. The deepest desire is to focus on a holistic approach that meets physical and spiritual needs.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Is a quality control tool and a step towards transformation, to encourage and equip the translation teams and translation

communities to engage with the translated Scriptures in a way that is appropriate to their context. Ideally, a champion or Scripture Engagement team is appointed and trained to effectively implement plans to engage the community with God's Word.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS, ORAL-CULTURE TRANSLATORS AND CONSULTANTS

We believe the best people to impact the language community are people from within the community or close neighbours. We have experienced that consultants from an oral-culture background have an instinctive and intuitive knowledge on how to work well with oral communities. As most of our projects are with oral communities, the desire is to raise local capacity to translate God's Word so that the translations are natural and relateable. The whole translation process, using local teams, helps to bring dignity to communities that have often been marginalized. Moreover, the consultant and exegete better have an understanding of the target language.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Transcription has opened an opportunity for language development in oral communities. For example, using the transcribed texts, in Participatory Language Discovery (PLD) the Marenje and Siphuthi programmes have discovered a lot of general knowledge and some linguistic features used in their languages. Before, they only spoke through tacit knowledge, but now they are aware



of the parts of speech they are using. They discovered the most commonly used connectors, i.e. 'but', 'then', 'after'. Also, some letters are not reflected in the Marenje alphabet.

OBT&T & SIGN LANGUAGE

At the moment, Wycliffe South Africa's preferred methodology for translation is called Oral Bible Translation and Transcription (OBT&T). This has been shaped by the language communities in which we work. The full-time projects work to a rhythm to produce an average of a chapter per week which is translated, community reviewed, consultant checked, recorded (as an audio), and transcribed. We use technology to assist the teams, but do not want to embrace tools like Artificial Intelligence if the community benefits more by being hands-on in the process. In dynamic transcription, the team has the opportunity to edit the text as they listen and write/type. We support Sign Language translations and pray for the Deaf to receive a Bible in their heart language.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Wycliffe South Africa's Finance Team not only provides excellent financial management of the projects that we manage, we also provide financial management to others. Due to the majority of our projects being cross-border, we serve both the teams on the ground as well as the funding organisations to provide regular and accurate reporting and accountability. This means we are able to provide processing and reporting in three currencies, and be a seamless link between

first-world systems and transactions in remote, rural communities

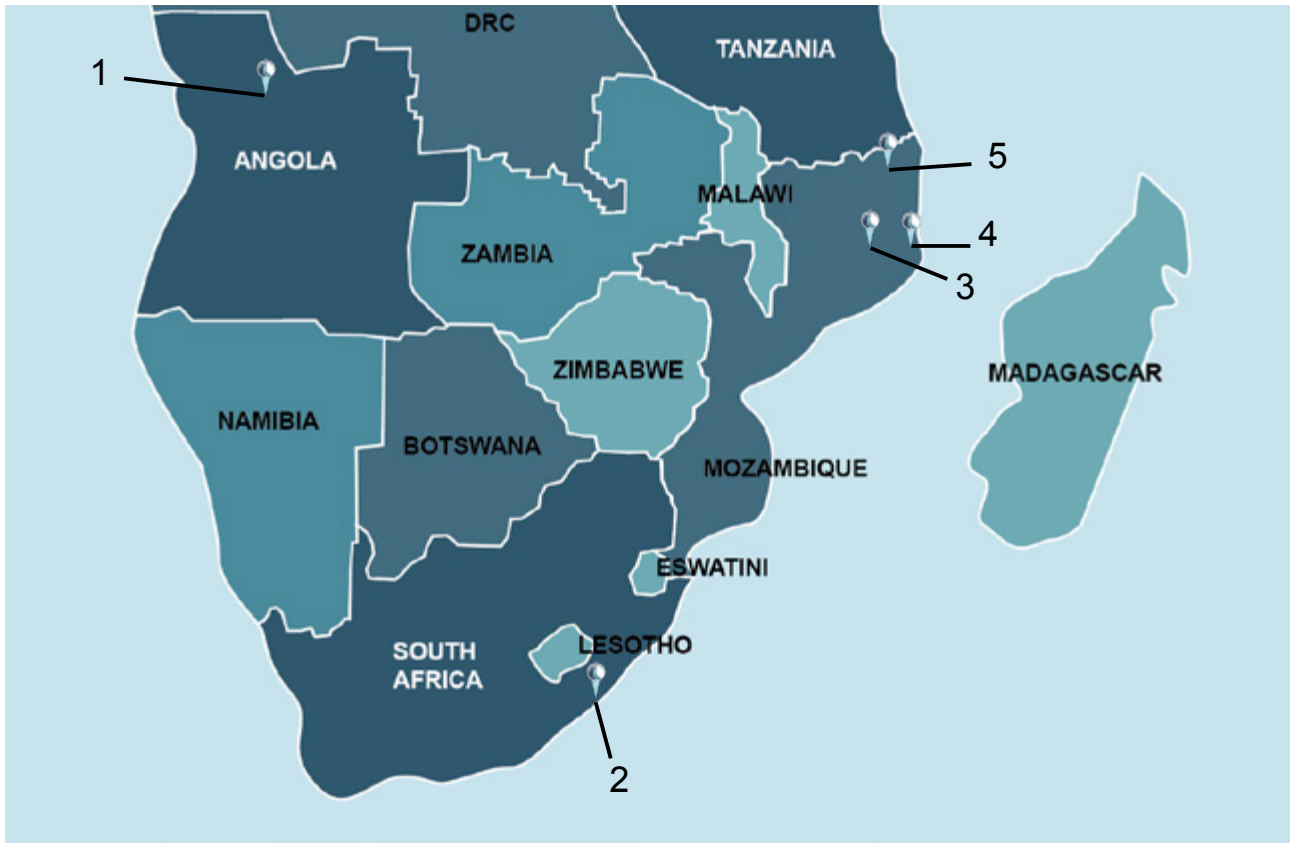
LANGUAGE COMMUNITY CENTRED

Translation is done best in the community itself, for a sense of ownership and so that the finished products can be taken to the people immediately. Training of the translation teams is done on-the-job so that decision-making is in the hands of the local community. Also, during the training, the team is familiarized with the working environment they will become part of, and a hands-on experience. Wycliffe South Africa personnel should always be considered as the guest supporters and not the leaders of the project.

LOCAL CHURCH FOCUSED

It is a joy to serve the local Church and to serve with local churches. Wycliffe Links brings the Church in southern Africa closer to the translation communities for mutual blessing and encouragement. We partner with local churches to equip them in their mission and discipleship, and connect them to language communities for prayer, visits and equipping. We encourage "mission tourism" so that people from all over the world can experience first-hand what God is doing to transform lives and communities through His Word. The stories of transformation documented and published as videos, stories and social media is intended to inspire believers and congregations in service God in His mission to reach nations.

PIPELINE PROGRAMMES



1 KIMBUNDU (ANGOLA)
This translation is due to start in 2026.

4 MAKHUWANI (MOZAMBIQUE)
This translation is due to start in 2026.

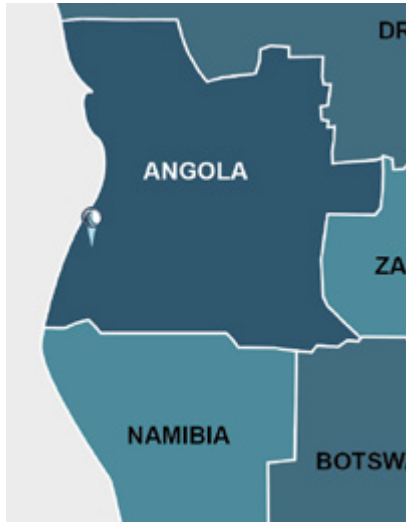
2 BHACA (SOUTH AFRICA)
This translation is due to start in 2026.

5 MAKONDE (MOZAMBIQUE)
This project is in the research and readiness phase.

3 NAHARA (MOZAMBIQUE)
This translation is due to start in 2026.



OLUHUMBI



Languages: Oluhumbi

People Group: Ovahumbi

People Group Size: 80,000

Location: Angola

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 4

Translation Time-frame: September 2024 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke, Acts, and Hebrews

Completed in Past Phases: 86 portions from the Old and New Testament

Source Languages: Portuguese and Umbundu

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / JOCUM

IMPACT

The translation team reported the following about one village:

“Elder Pinto’s village have always welcomed us with great joy... What they want most is for us to continue telling stories so that they and their children stay in God’s Word. Because today, in the world we live in, there have been many negative influences and young people no longer want to go to church, and telling stories from the Bible in the villages is of great value to them, so that all people can be reached.”

The Ovahumbi people live in rural villages near Camucuio town in Angola. Heavy seasonal rains can cause flooding that isolates the area. Daily life centres on caring for livestock, crops, and children. Of the three Camucuio language groups, the Ovahumbi are the most developed and have encountered the Gospel since at least 1995. Christianity is sometimes blended with traditional beliefs. Poverty and intergroup conflict have caused divisions, even within churches. Encouragingly, younger Christians are increasingly open to unity across ethnic lines, aided by oral Bible stories in heart languages.



OLUKUVALE



Languages: Olukuvale

People Group: Ovakuvale

People Group Size: 103,000

Location: Angola

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: September 2024 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke, Acts, and Hebrews

Completed in Past Phases: 83 portions from the Old and New Testament

Source Languages: Portuguese and Umbundu

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / JOCUM

IMPACT

“While we were working, a 32-year-old man approached us... and said he wanted to talk to me.

He began to speak about what had brought him there: to confess his sins, and so he spoke... After he confessed, I prayed with him so that the devil could not accuse him. And I taught him that Jesus had already cleansed his sins with the blood he shed on the Cross.”

Sebastiao, Exegete

Formerly part of the Camucuo Cluster translation, the Ovakuvale live in low-lying rural areas of southwest Angola. They depend on livestock and small-scale farming and are a traditionally oral people. Less affected by the civil war than neighbouring groups, most still live on ancestral lands, though some have moved to cities for work. Often described as “aggressive herders,” the Ovakuvale have very few believers or churches. Ongoing challenges include strong traditional religion, syncretism, poverty, limited access to safe water and sanitation, disease, and strained relations with neighbouring communities. Access to God’s Word can help them navigate these challenges and bring transformation to lives still unreached by the Gospel.



OLUKWANDU



Languages: Olukwandu
People Group: Ovakwandu
People Group Size: 8800
Location: Angola
Lifestyle: Subsistence farming
Translation Phase: 4
Translation Time-frame: September 2024 - September 2027
Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke, Acts, and Hebrews
Completed in Past Phases: 83 portions from the Old and New Testament
Source Languages: Portuguese and Umbundu
Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / JOCUM

IMPACT

When the translation team visited the village of Diongui to share translated Bible narratives, the people welcomed them with great joy and were deeply moved by the stories. Their response was, “we want to hear more about this God who made all things. Thank you for coming to us to let us know about this loving God.” The community asked the team to continue teaching and sharing Bible stories so that real change and transformation can take place in their lives. The team plans to return to the village and continue the stories, helping the people grow closer to God.

The Ovakwandu live on the Serra das Neves mountain plateau near Camucuio town in Angola, mainly on their ancestral lands, with some displacement due to civil war or employment. They are subsistence farmers who rely on the land and livestock for survival. The Ovakwandu were first exposed to the Gospel by missionaries in 1995, yet traditional religion and syncretism remain widespread. Many have not developed a personal relationship with God. Poverty, harsh living conditions, and inter-ethnic conflict continue to challenge their wellbeing. Bible translation can strengthen believers, reach the unreached, and promote unity and reconciliation within and between communities.



CD CLUSTER

IMPACT

"I am so grateful that the word of God has been translated in my mother tongue, as a pastor this is very helpful in our evangelism.

We travelled to one village, where we used these recorded stories and shared them with the community. The Lord opened a door, even in the midst of these political challenges and war all over our province. It was hard for us to be accepted by the government to take the letters of approval. However, we saw the hand of God moving on our side and we were allowed to go and share the Word of God.

During our evangelism program 20 people gave their lives to Jesus Christ and received Him for the very first time in their life as Saviour and Lord, and we planted a church in that community."

Local Pastor

Language: Kiibo, Kichokwe, Kikabe, Kikhuxanga

People Group: Kiibo, Kichokwe, Kikabe, Kikhuxanga

People Group Size: 120,000, 22,000, 517,000 and 380,000

Location: Southern Africa

Lifestyle: Fishing, farming, trading and wood carving

Translation Phase: In transition

Translation Time-frame: To start in 2026

Translation Goals: To be determined

Completed in Past Phases: 60 narratives in 3 languages

Source Languages: Lingua franca of the country and neighbouring languages

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / local organisations

These four language groups live in a region where Christianity is not the dominant religion, yet the number of believers has grown steadily. One group already had some Scripture and, in 2017, requested additional Old Testament oral Scriptures. This need became more urgent after a devastating natural disaster in 2019 that destroyed several villages. During relief efforts, mission organisations reported strong interest in audio Scripture. Making translated Scripture available in all four languages will help reveal the God of the Bible in a context where sharing the Gospel is difficult and dangerous. Ongoing armed conflict in the region limits the details that can be safely shared about this work.



HIMBA



Language: Himba

People Group: Himba

People Group Size: 50,000

Location: Namibia

Lifestyle: Semi-nomadic and pastoral (cattle, goats and sheep)

Translation Phase: 4

Translation Time-frame: October 2024 – September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral translation and transcription of Exodus, Matthew, John, Galatians and Ephesians

Completed in Phases 1,2&3: 83 oral narratives, oral translations of Genesis, Romans, Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, 1 & 2 Timothy, and production of various materials, songs, and the Greatest Gift booklet

Source Languages: Herero and English

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Opuwo Pastors' Forum / Bible Society of Namibia

IMPACT

“Now, we're able to internalise Bible passages more effectively. This is a significant step for me, as I'm not literate, but I can listen and grasp the scripture well through these MP3s. They're a valuable resource, allowing me to recall God's Word at any time, much like a pastor's Sunday sermon. The MP3s are always available, providing me with spiritual guidance whenever I need it, even when no one is around to share the Word.”

Kaivaka Muharukua, Himba Community

The Himba are nomadic cattle herders living in northern Namibia, with a related community in Angola's Kunene province. Numbering over 50,000, they are a pastoral people historically linked to the Herero. Although their language is closely related to Herero, the Himba were unable to connect with God through a Herero Bible translation. As a result, an oral Bible is being recorded for the Himba. In addition, a transcription project is beginning for the Himba community in Angola, who have requested written Scriptures in their own language.



OLUCILENGE



Languages: Olucilenge

People Group: Ovacilenge

People Group Size: 120,000

Location: Huila Province in Angola

Lifestyle: Semi-nomadic and pastoral

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: October 2021 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke, and Acts

Completed in Phase 1: 25 stories & 5 songs

Source Languages: Nyaneka and Portuguese

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / IESA church

IMPACT

“We Ovacilenge want the Word to be translated into our own language so that we can understand it. Before, we only heard the Word of God in Umbundo and Portuguese, and we thought it was only for other people.”

“When people hear God’s Word in their own language, they realise that God is interested in them and loves them too. We want people to believe in God through communicating with them in their own language.”

Daniel Beu, Ovacilenge Community

In the south of Angola and north of Namibia are the Ovacilenge, who live extensively in the provinces of Huila, Namibe and Bengela. They live in small communities, villages and groups, and are described as a hospitable and considerate people. They live on subsistence or family farming, and raise animals such as cattle, goats, pigs, and chickens. Their traditional religious beliefs are polytheistic and animistic, worshipping gods of the ancestors and the dead, who are considered to be at the centre of their being. With Bible translation underway, more and more people are getting excited about the God of the Bible.



OLUHANDA



Languages: Oluhanda

People Group: Ovahanda

People Group Size: 200,000

Location: Huila Province in Angola

Lifestyle: Semi-nomadic and pastoral

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: October 2021 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke and Acts

Completed in Phase 1: 18 stories & 3 songs

Source Languages: Nyaneka and Portuguese

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / IESA church

IMPACT

“In our community when there is a case of death, we used to put on traditional music and listen during the obituary until it was over, but since we received the audio devices, we have been putting them on at night for everyone to listen to and many come to the tent and listen to the Word of God. This has been a great blessing in our lives because it has brought a lot of transformation in the lives of each one of us and that is why we are asking for more devices because we all want to have more, so we can listen in our homes.”

*Chilengula Manuel,
Oluhanda Exegete*

The Ovahanda come from the south of Angola in the province of Cunene, and live extensively in the province of Huila and surrounding regions. We are told that they're very fond of riddles and are a humble people who don't get carried away or like meaningless changes. They survive on agriculture, and breed cattle, goats, pigs, and chickens. They live mainly in villages with wattle and daub buildings. Although they are traditionally a polytheistic people, there is a hunger for the Word of God that we see through the stories we hear about the impact of the translated Word in the local communities.



!XUN



IMPACT

"I thank God for thinking of us because I thought this Bible thing was only for white people and if today we have our own Bible, that's something to be praised, we weren't seen, now we'll have the Word of God in our own language and that's something we never thought of, after all this God knows us too, I'm very surprised."

Community member

Languages: !Xun

People Group: San

People Group Size: 3,000

Location: Huila Province in Angola

Lifestyle: Semi-nomadic and pastoral

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: October 2021 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of Genesis, Luke and Acts

Completed in Phase 1: 16 stories & 4 songs

Source Languages: Nyaneka and Portuguese

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / IESA church

The !Xun are an extremely isolated Bushmen group that have largely been without any Christian witness until recently. They originated in the southern part of the African continent, and are scattered across Angola, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. In Angola they are widespread in the provinces of Huila, Cunene and Cuando Cubango. They live in small groups, usually united by blood ties and their main economic activities are hunting, gathering, fishing, handicrafts and agriculture.



HOLO & KISUKU



Languages: Holo, Kisuku

People Groups: Maholo, Basuku

People Group Size: 53,000 (Maholo), 80,000 (Basuku)

Location: Angola

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 1

Translation Time-frame: September 2024 - September 2027

Translation Goals: 60 oral portions and transcriptions selected from the Old and New Testaments

Source Languages: Portuguese, Kimbundo (Holo), Kikongo (Kisuku)

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / IMEAS

IMPACT

When the Holo translation programme was announced, the community expressed thanks for providing Scripture in their language, since there had never been a document or book written in their language before. They asked the translation team to commit fully to the work and promised their support.

When the initiative was shared with the Kisuku community, it was received with great joy. Religious and traditional leaders expressed surprise and excitement, and many praised God and danced in celebration upon hearing the news.

The Maholo and Basuku peoples live in northern Angola and across the DRC border. They practice subsistence farming, growing manioc, macunde beans, and vegetables. Livestock farming is also important, with goats and pigs being a symbol of wealth and social status. Oral tradition is a means of passing on knowledge, stories and cultural values. Tales, myths and legends are told in families and communities, strengthening social ties and cultural identity. They mark life events with ceremonies featuring traditional dance, music, and dress, and their traditional religious beliefs center on ancestors, nature, and spirits. While many are Christian, the Bible is read in other languages at church. So now that translation has started, the local communities cannot wait to receive the Scripture audio devices and hear the Word of God for the first time in their own language.



KAAPS



Language: Kaaps
People Group: Kaaps
People Group Size: 3,000,000
Location: South Africa
Lifestyle: Urban
Translation Phase: 1
Translation Time-frame: February 2025 - September 2027
Translation Goals: Oral translation and transcription of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Psalms
Source Languages: English and Afrikaans
Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA

IMPACT

One Sunday, Shawn George, the Kaaps project coordinator, was invited to preach at a church. After hearing about the Kaaps Bible translation project, the presiding pastor devoted the remainder of the service to exploring the initiative. The congregation responded with deep engagement, gaining fresh insights into Creation through the Kaaps translation. Many appreciated the clarity and relatability of Scripture in their heart language. The service sparked wide interest, and inspired some to explore their cultural heritage further.

Kaaps is spoken mainly by the Coloured community in the Cape Flats of Cape Town, South Africa. It emerged in the 1500s as a trade language between indigenous peoples, settlers, and passing traders. Long treated as a dialect of Afrikaans, Kaaps likely predates it and has developed its own distinct form, closely shaped by the culture of its speakers. Today's Kaaps speakers descend from diverse groups who lived under European colonisation, including Malays, Khoisan, and other African peoples, many of whom were enslaved and oppressed. Their language and identity have long been stigmatised, yet Kaaps culture remains vibrant, known for its music and expressive speech. As they embrace their identity afresh, the translation of God's Word into Kaaps brings further validation that they are utterly treasured and wonderfully made; a message with the power to heal centuries of discrimination.





IMPACT

“We really enjoy hearing the Word of God in our own language, because it was something we needed very much, to be able to know how to follow God’s laws, and many of us also did not know how to read, so having the words of God recorded helps us a lot to understand, and thus we will walk based on what our God wants.”

“Thank you for the translation of the Word of God that is happening now, we listen and are grateful to have it brought to us in our own language, because we only heard it in Arabic before.”

Community members

Language: Koti
People Group: Koti
People Group Size: 100,000
Location: Mozambique
Lifestyle: Agriculture, fishing, and trading
Translation Phase: 2
Translation Time-frame: April 2025 - September 2033
Translation Goals: Oral translation and transcription of the Old Testament
Completed in Phases 1: Written translation of the New Testament
Source Languages: Portuguese
Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA, Seed Company

Koti is spoken around Koti Island and in Angoche, Nampula Province, where Islam has long been the dominant religion (93.8%), with Christianity previously at only 1.2%. Since the New Testament was translated and published in Koti in 2021 by the Way of Truth Church, significant change has taken place. The Gospel is being preached more widely, and many have come to faith. Christianity in Angoche has grown to around 15%, despite the presence of only four main churches in the district. The complete translation of the New Testament into Koti has had a deeply positive impact on the community, especially among adults and those who cannot read or understand Portuguese. Now they are able to read it themselves or ask someone to read it to them, and they can clearly hear and understand God’s message in their own mother tongue.





Languages: eSaka
People Group: aSaka
People Group Size: 432,000
Location: Mozambique
Lifestyle: Subsistence farming
Translation Phase: In transition (Phase 2 to 3)
Translation Time-frame: March 2026 - December 2028
Translation Goals: Translation of the whole New Testament
Completed in Phases 1&2: Genesis, Luke, Acts, and 65 narratives from the Old and New Testament
Source Languages: Central Makhuwa and Portuguese
Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Nampula Roman Catholic Church

IMPACT

Two young women, Alleluia Pedro and Genita Vasco, are eSaka speakers who say that hearing God's Word in their own language deeply stirs their hearts. Alleluia bought a radio device that the family listens to together, whether in the fields or at the hairdresser. Listening in eSaka helps them understand Scripture more clearly and silently reflect, letting God speak in their hearts. They emphasise that words they didn't understand when they read the Bible in Central Emakhuwa, they now understand in eSaka.

The eMakhuwa language group is spread across the northern provinces of Mozambique and represents the country's largest Bantu language, spoken by about one third of the population. eMakhuwa consists of eleven variants, including eSaka. This translation project is based in Alua Village in Nampula District, where the language is spoken across four main districts. Communities rely mainly on agriculture and fishing for subsistence. Around 25% of eSaka speakers identify as Christian, alongside the practice of Islam and traditional religion. The need for Bible translation became clear through outreach efforts by the Catholic Church and Evangelical churches, who recognised that meaningful life transformation and effective participation in God's mission require Scripture in people's own languages.



MARREVONI



Languages: eMarrevoni

People Group: aMarrevoni

People Group Size: 438,000

Location: Mozambique

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: In transition (Phase 2 to 3)

Translation Time-frame: March 2026 - December 2028

Translation Goals: Translation of the whole New Testament

Completed in Phases 1&2: Genesis, Luke, Acts, and 65 narratives from the Old and New Testament

Source Languages: Central Makhuwa and Portuguese

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Nampula Roman Catholic Church

IMPACT

Ezequiel Valentim is a 32 year-old farmer and fisherman. He is married with two children and was exposed to God's Word in Marrevoni after joining a local listening group.

He says, "My testimony is that I did not take care of my children, but now I am treating and valuing my children well after hearing about the importance of family by listening to the story of the father who welcomed back his son after he had spent his inheritance without any return."

Marrevoni is one of the 11 variants of the eMakhuwa language group, which is spoken by about a third of the population in Mozambique. The Marrevoni translation project is located in Micane Vilage in Moma District. The subsistence activities are agriculture, and fishing, due to their location alongside the ocean. The majority of the Marrevoni people are Muslim with only a small percentage of Christians. Traditional religion is also practiced. The need for Bible translation was determined when the Catholic Church, together with other Evangelical churches, began conducting outreach programs. They came to realise that what they needed, both to elevate life transformation in the communities and to follow God's mission, was to have relevant Bible narratives in their own languages. This would open up God's Word and provide opportunities to reach out to all people.



XIRIMA



Languages: eXirima

People Group: aXirima

People Group Size: 729,000

Location: Mozambique

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: In transition (Phase 2 to 3)

Translation Time-frame: March 2026 - December 2028

Translation Goals: Translation of the whole New Testament

Completed in Phases 1&2: Genesis, Luke, Acts, and 65 narratives from the Old and New Testament

Source Languages: Central Makhuwa and Portuguese

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Nampula Roman Catholic Church

IMPACT

“When I started listening to the audios, my life began to change. Before, I did not respect my husband. But with this program, my home has changed a lot. Now I respect my husband and take care of my children.”

“They help me meditate and internalise the Word of God to the point of seeking to do God’s will. Every day that I read the Bible and listen to the audios, there is a new discovery within me, which helps me find a new meaning in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Muanjuma Adriano, Xirima Community

The Xirima translation project is located in Nampula province in Mozambique. It is a Bantu language, and one of the 11 variants eMakhuwa - the language group spoken by about a third of the population in the country. The Xirima people are traditional farmers, based in Malema district, which is considered the storeroom of the province. This is because it supplies the wider area with all kinds of produce, including maize, beans, tomatoes, onions, and potatoes. Animism is the traditional religion of the Xirima people, but Islam and Christianity are also practiced. The need for Bible translation was determined when the Catholic Church, together with other Evangelical churches, began conducting outreach programs. They came to realise that what they needed, both to elevate life transformation in the communities and to follow God’s mission, was to have relevant Bible narratives in their own languages.



MARENJE



Language: Marenje

People Group: Marenje

People Group Size: 588,000

Location: Mozambique

Lifestyle: Agriculturalists

Translation Phase: 1

Translation Time-frame: October 2022 - September 2026

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation of the New Testament, and a booklet with the transcriptions of the translated books

Source Languages: Portuguese and Chichewa

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA and the Pastors' Forum of Milange

IMPACT

"There is a great change in my knowledge of God's Word, because every time I read chapter by chapter, I am discovering many secrets that I never had and that have greatly helped in spiritual growth, not only to live according to the Word, but also to live in the translation group according to the Word of God. In my family, we have experienced great development in spiritual growth because of the time spent in Bible study that we have been doing, thus transforming the family into a model of God's Word."

*Samuel Reginate Matunda,
Marenje Translation Team*

The Marenje live in Mozambique's Milange district, a tropical, mountainous area near the Malawi border. Most make a living through farming and selling produce locally. Their first exposure to Christianity likely came as refugees in Malawi during the Mozambique war in the 1980s. Currently, the Marenje church uses Chichewa and Portuguese Bible translations. Most churches use Chichewa, while a few use Portuguese, but in every case, someone must translate orally into Marenje for the congregation to understand fully. The Christian Council of Mozambique, together with local church leaders, has therefore requested a Bible translation in Marenje. Making Scripture available in their own language will improve accessibility, spark greater interest in the Gospel, and make Christian discipleship far more effective.



MEETTO



IMPACT

The Meetto translation team shared this feedback from the community:

“They testify saying that having the translation in our own language is valuable because we understand it in a profound way, and because of that, it brings edification to our spiritual life. We remember the days and years that passed, we listened to the message of God’s word in the Portuguese language, yet we still faced many difficulties in understanding it; but now we notice the difference when it is in our own language.”

Language: Meetto

People Group: Meetto

People Group Size: 1.7 million divided between Mozambique (1.2 million) and Tanzania (500,000)

Location: Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: Jun 2025 - Sep 2033

Translation Goals: Oral translation and transcription of the Old Testament

Translated in Phase 1: New Testament

Source Languages: Portuguese, Hebrew, Central Makuwa

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Boa Nova Para África

The Meetto people are matrilineal, tracing family lines through the mother, and traditionally matrilineal, with new couples living near the bride’s mother’s relatives. About 70% practice folk Islam, and while there is family pressure not to convert, it is less intense than in neighbouring Muslim groups, likely due to a long Catholic presence. The Catholic Montfort Fathers of Holland arrived in 1922, impacting non-Muslim districts. Evangelical churches are young, established by Mozambican evangelists, some of whom came north while serving in the army during the civil war (1975–1992). The first Meetto converts appeared around 1988. Church growth is steady, and the recently published New Testament is widely used, with local churches requesting a complete Bible.



PHIMBI



Language: Phimbi

People Group: Phimbi

People Group Size: 12,800

Location: Tete province, Mozambique

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 1

Translation Time-frame: May 2024 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral translation of 60 biblical narratives

Source Languages: Chichewa

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA, Nazarene Church

IMPACT

“There was great joy in hearing the stories recorded in their language. The Phimbi community is happy because their language is being valued.

The churches were happy to hear the stories recorded in their language. When they hear the Bible stories in their language, it seems like something new. It doesn't even seem like the Bible they always read. It seems like a new message.”

Feedback from the Phimbi translation team

The Phimbi language originated in Maravia District, in the Tete Province of Mozambique. This language is spoken in a number of villages including Chipera, Nhenda, Mazaze, and Thingwe. But Phimbi has become overlooked and rejected, which likely goes back to the civil war in Mozambique between Frelimo and Renamo from 1976 to 1992. When the Phimbi families fled for their safety to the nearest countries, such as Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, they needed to learn new languages. After sixteen years of war, some Phimbi speakers remained where they'd fled and established homes and families there. Others went back to their original homes. This might be one reason why, up until today, the Phimbi language does not have the Bible.



SEPULANA



IMPACT

“My involvement with the Sepulana translation programme has enabled more people to connect with our churches, receiving God’s Word in their mother tongue. I have witnessed a great revival and have seen their joy in worshipping God and seeing an increase in engagement with the translated scriptures.”

Jeffrey Malibe, Sepulana Translation Team

Language: Sepulana

People Group: Mapulana

People Group Size: 800,000

Location: South Africa

Lifestyle: Subsistence farming

Translation Phase: 2

Translation Time-frame: October 2022 - September 2027

Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation and transcription of the New Testament

Completed in Phase 1: Oral Bible translation of 40 narratives from both the Old and New Testament, and an oral and written translation of Mark

Source Languages: Sepedi and English

Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Church of the Nazarene / Mapulaneng Writers’ Association

Mapulaneng, meaning “the place of the Mapulana people,” spans northeastern Mpumalanga and southeastern Limpopo in South Africa. Sepulana, a non-official community language, is widely spoken in Bushbuckridge. Long marginalised during apartheid, the Mapulana have since advocated for Sepulana to gain official recognition. In 2018, a government body began using Sepulana on official signage, and in 2019 the Mapulaneng Writers’ Association launched six newly published novels in the language. For the Mapulana, access to Scripture in Sepulana will encourage deeper study of God’s Word and strengthen outreach to those who are unreached. The community is eager to see Sepulana valued and affirmed.



SIPHUTHI



IMPACT

A church leader marvelled at the efforts of the Scripture Engagement team. She said as the leader of the church, she is now encouraged and will be preaching and teaching her congregation in Siphuthi;

“I have learned that God made every culture and values all cultures.”

Language: Siphuthi
People Group: Baphuthi
People Group Size: 43,000
Location: Lesotho and South Africa
Lifestyle: Subsistence farming
Translation Phase: 3
Translation Time-frame: October 2025 – September 2028
Translation Goals: Oral Bible translation and transcription of Matthew, John, and Romans
Completed in Phases 1&2: Oral translation of 39 narratives from both the Old and New Testament, oral translation and transcription of Genesis, Luke, and Acts
Source Languages: Sesotho and English
Managing Partners: Wycliffe SA / Bible Society of Lesotho / Libhadla le baPhuthi

Tucked in the mountains of Lesotho are the Siphuthi speaking people who have maintained their language and culture, despite the shifting cultures around them, and have been in desperate need of a Bible translation. Partnering with the Bible Society of Lesotho, translation work began in early 2019 and has been recognised and covered by national TV and radio stations. The Bible translation process has also given the language status with the government; it will be named the second national language of Lesotho.



GET INVOLVED



Pray



Join a mailing list to intercede for one or more of the translation communities, the translation team, and the programme.

www.wycliffe.org.za/signup-intercessors-for-africa

Give



Become a partner and invest in God's transformative hope, planting seeds that will impact millions across Southern Africa.

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Adopt



Journey with a language community by building relationships, encouraging, and supporting them in practical ways.

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Visit



Get to know a language group by visiting them and taking time to talk, pray, eat, and serve with them.

www.wycliffe.org.za/contact/visit-a-language

