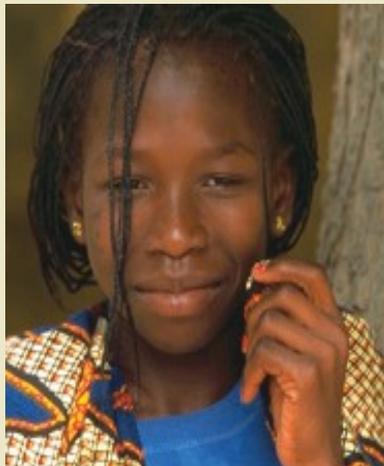


The Mbula of Nigeria



representative photo

The Mbula people live in rural villages in northeastern Nigeria. They are increasingly affected by changes happening around them. About 50 percent claim they believe in Jesus Christ. However, because many Mbula do not understand the Hausa trade language that is used in churches, God seems quite distant. Believers here are convinced that mother tongue Scripture will transform their villages and churches and be a clear tool to share salvation with family and friends.

The Mbula people are farmers. They make a living from their land, but poverty plagues them. Although they live in rural areas, the influences of urban civilization are making inroads into their villages.

Historically, Mbula speakers have been passionate about Scripture translation. Sixty years after they first received Danish missionaries, a mother tongue speaker translated parts of God’s Word on his own. However, he lacked help to produce a full, high-quality translation; today, his manuscripts are illegible.

Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Unknown

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

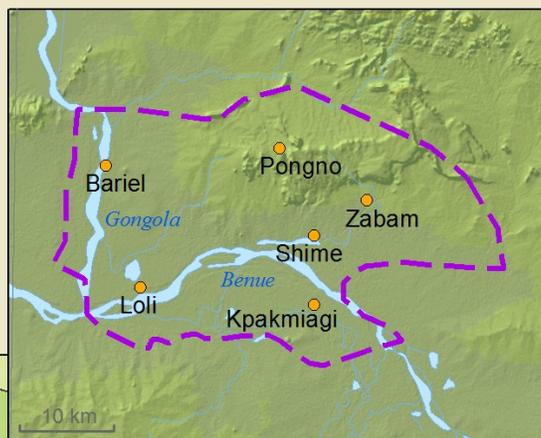
None

Population (date):

100,000



MBULA-BWAZZA HOMELAND



The Mbula of Nigeria

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Is the Word of God Translated?

This team of eight translators has strong local support, including the encouragement of church leaders. Mbula speakers in three different locations will serve as reviewers to give feedback on drafted portions. Local churches will offer limited financial help.

The translators are highly motivated and committed to this project. They are disciplined and producing high-quality translation. One of the full-time workers has been a missionary trainer since his university graduation in the 1970s. Another had linguistics training and has been translating and compiling a dictionary since 1975. The lead translator has excellent potential to become a translation consultant.

Other Forms of Presentation

Many Mbula speakers can read Hausa; some also read English. However, less than 10 percent of people are literate in their Mbula mother tongue. Because of this, the team will produce materials in non-print media, in addition to print. Partner organizations Faith Comes By Hearing, The Seed Co. and The JESUS Film Project will help the people produce audio and video Scripture materials based on the translation. These visual and auditory formats will help the believers share Scripture with other Mbula speakers.

Believers also plan literacy classes to transition villagers who read in a second language to read their mother tongue. Two Mbula speakers drafted a transition primer and are planning other literacy materials. The project staff continues to work on their dictionary.

The Mbula of Nigeria

Status of Christianity

Religion and Response

Need for Translation

Many Christians, especially women in rural villages, do not know the trade language of Hausa well. As a result, when they hear Hausa read in church, they do not understand God's character or salvation through Jesus. Some people are turning to cults that communicate in their Mbula heart language because they seem more powerful than Scripture in a language they cannot grasp.