Subject July 2025 Translation News

Preheader SIL Translation Services (ITS)

SIL Translation Services (STS) works in collaboration with colleagues in SIL and other agencies to creatively steward and advance the translation practices, tools, methods, and training necessary to enable a supportive environment for individuals and communities to flourish and engage with Scripture.

We value: Interconnectedness. Capacity Building. Diversity. Innovation.

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Genuine Collaboration

- Kris Toler *- International Oral Translation Services*

In his recent email, Dr. Johnstone Ndunde (SIL's recently appointed Executive Director) encouraged us to engage with the Directional Statements that came out of SIL's quadrennial International Conference in May (ICON25), as we explore how they will shape our way forward as an organization. Two of the Directional Statements stand out to me.

Number 6 - collaborate in quality standards. We will champion and uphold clear quality standards in Bible translation and language development while fostering collaborative partnerships grounded in mutual respect and contextual sensitivity, offering our expertise yet remaining open to learning, adapting, and co-developing sustainable practices that serve the needs of local communities and churches.

Number 7 - strengthen partnership relationships. We will engage intentionally, clearly and genuinely with traditional and emerging partners, to build trust-based relationships, reduce confusion, address potential barriers and bring mutual benefit.

At the core of both of these statements is the idea that we are not doing this alone. We are working with others to develop and strengthen the Bible translation movement both at the local community level as well as at the global level. I have recently seen this through opportunities to collaborate with other organizations in the facilitation of the Pre-EMDC OBT track in May. It was an encouragement to me to work with other organizations towards a shared vision of working together in support of *Oral Bible Translation*.

It is important that we develop a posture of listening and learning as we work with local churches, pastors, and translators on developing a translation project that meets the needs of the community while maintaining a quality translation. While we want to maintain a high level of quality assurance, this may look different in different contexts, and that is okay. It is important that we listen to the needs and desires of the local community as we work together towards the goal of God's Word transforming lives. This will keep us locally rooted and at the same time globally relevant as we seek to strengthen and deepen our relationships with others in the space of Bible translation.

It is an exciting time to be involved in the ministry of Bible translation.

In a recent Wycliffe USA's "Deeply Rooted" post Daniel Watters wrote about how he has seen the methodologies of Bible translation work change over his lifetime. It honored all involved, from each generation, including how each season has different models that God has used. The older generation were pioneers and we in turn, in our generation, are being called to join in with God's mission in a new way, with different methodologies. In this generation we co-labor as part of a multitude of local believers from all over the world.

When Global Bible Translation Ministry Meets Local Church Ownership

- Daniel Watters - *Wycliffe USA Board Member*

God is always at work in ways beyond our understanding. As professional missionaries, we often see our role in His mission as central, but He consistently reveals that His plan is more expansive and beautifully orchestrated than we ever imagined.

Right now, something remarkable is unfolding, and I see a beautiful convergence of paths. On the one hand, there are decades of foundational work by our family of Bible translation organizations — linguistic research, cultivated relationships and the patient labor of translation itself. This represents years of faithful service and accumulated expertise.

On the other hand, there's the vibrant, growing local church movement marked by an enthusiasm and a passion for reaching the unreached. These church leaders' regional knowledge, cultural understanding and spiritual fervor bring essential elements to the work.

In Wycliffe USA, we are seeing these paths increasingly converge in ways that multiply our effectiveness. Worldwide, believers are embracing and building upon the foundational work for their own communities, while we in Bible translation agencies are being renewed and redirected by local passion and vision.

I see this partnership producing something far greater than either our organizations or local churches could achieve alone. It's a stunning display of God's wisdom and timing — His people coming together, each contributing their part, to ensure His Word reaches those still waiting.

I recently saw this truth come to life. I met with a small group of pastors to discuss launching a new initiative in their region. I was disappointed that only a handful of pastors had been able to attend, as travel remains sensitive and challenging in that area of the world. Yet something incredible happened at the end of the day. As we stood together singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness" — a beautiful moment of harmonious worship in three different languages — I was profoundly reminded that it is not our careful planning or impressive numbers that bring the increase; it is God alone.

One pastor's story made this even more tangible. Years ago, during the birth of their first daughter, serious complications arose, and doctors delivered devastating news: his wife was dying, and he should prepare to say his final goodbyes. In that moment of desperation, he remembered his sister who had become a believer in Christ. Although she lived in a distant part of the country, he reached out to her with a simple text message. She immediately mobilized her rural church community. He described how even farmers working in remote fields stopped their labor to intercede for a woman they had never met.

Just an hour after these prayers began, the doctor emerged from his wife's room. The pastor braced himself for news of her passing, but instead he heard words that could only be described as miraculous: "Get her some food; she's hungry!"

As a result of that miracle, the rest of his family immediately placed their faith in Jesus and he has been fully committed to sharing the gospel ever since. Today, he is excited to engage language communities in his region of ministry that want to be involved in Bible translation. This pastor's journey to becoming a translation advocate, propelled forward by one desperate text message, embodies everything I believe about how God works — bringing life from death, purpose from pain, and using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary missions.

Having spent more than 30 years in our family of organizations, I've experienced my own profound journey of transformation. Initially, I joined to continue the legacy of my parents' translation work, having grown up completely immersed in their vision, mission and methodology. Their approach to reaching the nations was part of my DNA.

As the global landscape evolved, our methods necessarily shifted as well. I confess this transition wasn't easy for me. For years, I viewed God's heart for the nations as being fulfilled primarily through my efforts and imagined myself walking the same pioneering path as my parents before me.

But God gently reshaped my understanding of His heart. I came to realize He desired not only to reach the nations through us but to also include the nations in the work. His plan was to make room for local believers — the very fruit of my parents' generation's faithful service — to participate fully as vital members of the living, breathing body of Christ.

Looking back, I have witnessed a beautiful evolution from the necessary pioneering model of our early decades to the full, active participation of local believers in accomplishing Vision 2025. This new layer of involvement represents something remarkable — a maturing church that has grown into its calling, equipped with capability, skills and passion to meet the needs of their generation and generations to come.

God's mission isn't just about reaching the nations; it's about the transformation that sees indigenous churches transition from recipients to agents of God's Word. What moves me most is realizing that Bible translation itself reflects God's incarnational nature — the Word becoming flesh in each unique cultural and linguistic context, making His presence known in deeply personal ways.

As we witness this transformation, let's trust God's process. He is the one who brings the increase, using all of us — no matter our background — to accomplish His purposes.

Global OBT Consultant Movement

- Viji Mathew

With the rapid expansion of *Oral Bible Translation* (OBT) projects around the world, the need for a new kind of consultant—skilled in oral methodologies and equipped to uphold quality standards—is more urgent than ever. In response, the Global Consultant Pool (GCP) and Oral Translation Services (ITS) have launched a five-phase development initiative to train and certify 25 - 30 OBT consultants over the next two years.

We are laying the foundation for a Global OBT Consultant Movement. Phase One of the Oral Bible Translation Consultant Development Series was held in Bangalore, India (2-13 June 2025) and marked a powerful beginning. It brought together 24 participants from seven partner organizations, including certified consultants, consultants-in-training (CiTs), and experienced translation advisors. Of these participants, 22 were South Asian and one was from Brazil. This foundational workshop focused on:

- Familiarisation and internalisation techniques
- Oral and emotional exegesis
- Community testing principles and peer checking sessions
- Live consultant-checking practice across five narrative Scripture portions
- Deep discussions and collaborative reflection

Led by the Spoken English Bible (SEB) team, the workshop offered an immersive environment where participants could grow in confidence and skill, gaining both theory and hands-on experience. The energy in the room was palpable, and the feedback confirmed it: this is a movement whose time has come.

The journey continues with Phase Two in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 03-21 November 2025 (3 weeks), immediately following the Bible Translation Conference 2025. The next session will include returning participants and new candidates passionate about serving oral communities worldwide. This is an opportunity to join in with a shared commitment across multiple organisations to support Oral Bible Translation.

This is more than training—it's a catalytic effort to grow a strong, global community of OBT consultants who will serve with excellence, clarity, and impact. If you would like to join this training email Viji Mathew and Kris Toler.

New Translation Consultants

Novethan Shanui (Africa) and Winata Setiawan (Asia)

Novethan Shanui - *Africa*

I came to realize that Bible translation is not that easy. And I thought that the Bible in the mother tongue was only for those that cannot read or write in English or that it is only for those who do not understand English. But I discovered the contrary. I discovered there were a lot of concepts that I thought I knew and actually did not. I keep growing in my understanding of the Word in the process of doing translation into my mother tongue. To have Scripture in a language that one understands best is a big necessity for Christian discipleship.

Certificate of Accreditation

SIL

This certificate attests that

NOVETHAN MBIJIGOH SHANUI

has successfully completed the requirements to become a

Consultant in Bible Translation

as defined by SIL Global

As an accredited consultant, the above-named bearer is an expert authorised to guide, train, review, and approve Bible translation work. This certificate, issued on 22 May 2025, is subject to periodic review and renewal by SIL.

Gaston Angbo
Director of Language Services
SIL Africa

1982

Drew Maust
Translation Remote Team Leader
SIL Africa

Language for a Better Life

Congratulations to Novethan Mbijigoh Shanui working with SIL Cameroon on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Drew Maust (Chairman) announced that the *SIL Africa Area Accreditation Committee* for translation consultants has examined his dossier and they are pleased to say that the committee has formally recognized him as a Translation Consultant. Novethan's experience, expertise, and wide-ranging competence, will, by God's grace, be a great asset to the work of Bible translation in Africa and beyond for years to come. His primary mentor was Greg Beyer.

Novethan is a Cameroonian and has been working with SIL Cameroon since 2019, primarily serving the Ndop Cluster project. He obtained the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Certificate in 1998 and then completed a Bachelors of Theology (2006) at the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently working on a Masters at the South African Theological Seminary.

He began serving with the Bambalang translation project in 2002 and then started actual translation in 2008 when he worked as an MTT with his own language, Chrambo (Bambalang). His CiT training started in 2015 using the growth plan documents, but in 2023 they moved to using CBC. He attended CABTAL's translation consultant training (2019-2020) where he had supervised checking under Margaret Hill. He also had supervised checking sessions with other experienced consultants - Greg Beyer, Dr Joseph Mfonyam, Ginny Bradley, Alfred Njinyoh, and Joshua Ham.

Novethan's translation journey started when he was selected by the village authority to join a team of four people to undergo training (*Foundations for Writing*) organized by SIL Cameroon in 2002 for the development of their language. This team collected 1,800 words which Dan and Melody Grove used as the basis to develop the orthography for this language. Thereafter he helped develop an alphabet book, the transition primer for the Bambalang language (Chrambo) and other literacy materials in his mother tongue. He became one of the pioneer literacy teachers.

In 2008, the translation of the New Testament started with Translation Principles courses and Novethan was selected to be one of the main translators, while he was also pastoring a church. In 2015, he began his CiT training and Greg Beyer started taking him along on trips to observe checking sessions. Novethan also served on staff for the Translation Principles Courses for language communities that were beginning translation in the Ndop Cluster. Later when Greg moved back to the States, Novethan would sit with the local teams and go over the notes that Greg sent on Paratext and help the teams make the necessary adjustments.

In 2018 when they finished typesetting the Bambalang New Testament, Novethan concentrated on doing prechecking of the translation of other languages (Bafanji and Bamessing) of the Ndop Cluster, working with Bamessing to resolve notes that Greg had put in Paratext. He also served on staff for review training for other languages within the Ndop cluster like the Bangolan, Bamali, Bafanji, and Bamessing languages.

During this process, he came to realize that Bible translation is not as easy as he first thought. When he graduated from Seminary and went back to his village, he thought that he would "*get involved and quickly finish translation, possibly within a year or two and then devote himself full time to pastoral ministry*". In his mind, translating the Bible would be quite easy and would quickly get finished. But in actuality, it took the team ten years to go through the New Testament.

Initially he thought that the Bible in the mother tongue was for those that cannot read or write in English or only for those who do not understand English. But he discovered the contrary in the translation process. Despite his seminary studies, there were a lot of concepts he discovered that he thought he knew and actually did not. For example, he would read '*the Christ*' in the New Testament but never ever paused to think through exactly what that meant until he began doing translation himself.

Novethan visited one of the villages in the Ndop area and asked the church leaders, who a believer in Christ is, or what is a Christian? They told him that it refers to someone who has been baptized. These were the church leaders and the ones the people relied on for spiritual nourishment. If they did not have a good understanding of some of these key concepts, then how could they nourish the people well?

In Novethan's training to become a translation consultant, he still would come across many passages in the New Testament that seemed to him as if he had never read them before. The Word indeed continues to be new every day and he keeps growing in his understanding.

In the midst of all of this, Novethan still believes that the translated Word is for all mother tongue speakers whether they can read English or not and for pastors also. To have Scripture in a language that one understands best is a big necessity for Christian discipleship. The Word of God in their language speaks to the heart and is better understood.

Winata Setiawan - *Asia*

KETERANGAN KEAHLIAN

SIL Asia menyatakan bahwa
pada tanggal 13 Juni 2025

WINATA SETIAWAN

sudah memenuhi segala persyaratan SIL Global
untuk melayani sebagai

Konsultan Penerjemahan

Angeline Foo dan Stephen Doty, PhD
Atas Nama Tim Koordinator Penerjemahan Alkitab Asia

SIL

Congratulations to Winata Setiawan working with Kartidaya on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Kartidaya announced that Pak Winata is recognized as a translation consultant based on his recommendation from completing the Indonesian TCDW (July-Sept 2024) and further recommendations from several consultant mentors. Roger Hanna and Bryan Hinton were his primary mentors.

Winata has been working with Yayasan Kartidaya Sahabat Indonesia (Wycliffe Indonesia) since the end of 2015. His first degree was in Economics and then he studied at a Bible Theological Institute completing a Master of Divinity (M.Div). After that he completed an MAPC (Master of Pastoral Counseling) and then took training for Bible Translation from Kartidaya.

In 2021 he began serving as a translation facilitator with the B people group. In 2023 after completing many books of the New Testament, he was asked to help another translation team. At the end of 2023, Roger Hanna recommended that Winata begin training as a translation CiT. Since then, he has completed eight mentored checking sessions under the guidance of seven different consultant mentors.

Interviews with Translation Consultants

We asked experienced Translation Consultants, Samy Tioye (UBS) and Michael Jemphrey (SIL Africa), to share their thoughts concerning their work and philosophy of ministry. Experienced consultants have been a key organizational resource over the years, equipping and encouraging others to academic and professional excellence while providing much needed leadership and service to many Bible translation organizations.

Samy Tioye - *UBS*

How did you get interested in Bible translation? At the time, I was working upcountry as a French teacher in a public secondary school when I received a letter from a pastor in my home area. He invited me to join their efforts in translating the New Testament into their local language. When the school year ended, I took three months to pray over the decision before responding. Although I knew nothing about the translation process, I felt compelled to accept the call.

What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? Having a Bible or portion is a lifetime experience for people in their community. Witnessing the joy of these people fills my heart with gratitude that I was somehow part of the process.

What is your consulting philosophy? Empower translators and CiTs as I consult with teams. Empowering them is key for a consultant success

What translation resources do you really value? The knowledge of Biblical languages and the experience of the Bible land are invaluable resources in the translation process. I have witnessed the difference between having them and lacking them.

How do you continue to grow as a consultant? A consultant grows in his work by learning from experienced consultants and by investing in CiTs. Attending gatherings (workshops, seminars, conferences) and networking with others are avenues for me to learn and grow.

How do you share your translation discoveries with others? The information is shared through BT channels in our organization, and in BT forums (BT Conference, SBL, etc)

Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? When translators stand their ground and clearly explain their translation decision, I acknowledge it and seek for a better understanding of their language (linguistics, culture and the like). I make a note for the future. We always learn from our teams.

What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? It depends whether the person is a translator or aspires to become a translation consultant. The paths are not the same, but are similar. Pursue a certificate or degree in Linguistics, Translation studies, Biblical Languages, and Bible Knowledge. Assessing the person's competencies and skills is a must if we need to help.

Share something that you learned from a mentor or from a mentee? From a mentor, I learned to listen and ask questions. How the mentor brings together the source texts, the translators, and the quality control is very important in tapping from his/her experience. From a mentee, I have to learn more of his world view, his language and culture in order to find a better approach to the mentoring process.

What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? The church is "Dynamic" and shape-changing depending on the community, and many other social, political and religious factors. However, the church is in fact the channel to provide the Scripture into the community. It is the gateway to access the community. The church carries Bible translation products to the community.

What would you say to young/ aspiring translators? Translators should know that beside being a "job", translation is also a ministry and a spiritual calling. Colossians 3:23 should be our guiding principle.

Any other comments? Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts on this important part of the ministry of sharing the Good News to the nations.

Michael Jemphrey *- Africa*

How did you get interested in Bible translation? I was studying law at university when during a church service I felt challenged to ask the Lord, for the first time, what *He* wanted me to do with my life. At that point, the idea of serving overseas felt out of reach—I couldn't see how a lawyer could contribute much to missions but I reached out to a few mission organizations, including Wycliffe and to my surprise, Wycliffe wrote back and said that legal training could be *very* useful. That response lit a spark of excitement in my heart.

Looking back, I can see how legal work and translation work share certain parallels. Both involve deep research and people-focused interaction. As a lawyer, someone brings you a problem, and you have to research and find an answer to help them in everyday life. In Bible translation, you're also researching—digging into the original meaning—and then working out how to communicate that meaning effectively in another context. In both there is a combination of interacting with people and spending time on meaningful research.

What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? Seeing people *hungry* for the Word—and being transformed by it. One memory stands out clearly: I'm thinking of a Supyire neighbour in the village where we lived in Mali. She had never been to school, but she loved the Lord. One day I was visiting her compound and saw her pounding corn to prepare for the evening meal, her youngest child strapped to her back. Beside her pounding pot lay open the newly printed Gospel of Mark in the Supyire language, her language. She was using whatever opportunities she had to teach herself to read God's Word at the same time as preparing dinner.

It reminds me of a Supyire proverb that says: *"If you're not motivated, you can't lift a feather; but if you are motivated, you can lift a dead donkey."* That kind of deep motivation —the hunger for God's Word, that excites me.

What translation resources do you really value? I value commentaries that dig deep into historical and cultural contexts—writers like N.T. Wright and Ben Witherington. I also appreciate scholars like D.A. Carson, whose analysis of the logical connectors helps me see the flow of the argument.

How do you share your translation discoveries with others? I've written several articles for the *Key Terms in the Old Testament* (KTOT), including a series of articles on the sacrificial terms in Leviticus. Just recently I completed another mini-series on key verbs in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15—*radah*, *kabash*, *abad*, and *shamar*. These foundational passages and the translation of these verbs help to shape our understanding of human's relationship to creation. I'll also be presenting a paper based on those four verbs at the upcoming BT conference.

Can you share about a time you realized you were wrong—and what you learned from it? While working with the Supyire translation team in Mali, we hit a snag translating the word "sin." The Protestant church used *kapi*, which also meant murder or violence—it felt too strong. The Catholic church used *kakuu*, meaning mistake—which felt too weak. We tried a new, fabricated word, *katiimbaa*, which literally meant something not straight. Technically it worked, but the rest of the team wasn't at peace with it as it wasn't a word in common usage. I was convinced enough to push for it anyway.

Eventually, we gathered about a dozen people—different churches, villages, and dialects—to talk through the issues. That meeting revealed that the community didn't resonate with the fabricated term that I was advocating, and that all were happy with the stronger term *kapi*. I had to eat humble pie; but I was glad to be proved wrong. It reminded me that Bible translation isn't just technical work—it's a communal and dynamic process.

What are your top tips for someone starting out in Bible translation? When you hit a translation problem, dig in—ask lots of questions. Learn about the cultural context. Ask others and listen, listen, listen. Share your problem with the BT email list; it's a treasure trove of insight and experience from translators worldwide. If you're training to be a consultant, I highly recommend reading "The Aptitudes of a Consultant" by Mildred Larson (*NOT 110*, Dec. 1985, pp. 7–18).

What have you learned from a mentor—or a mentee? A Cameroonian colleague, a CiT whom I was mentoring, taught me something powerful. After every verse we discussed, he would start with some kind of affirmation—"Great translation!" or "Thanks for your effort!"—even if the verse needed lots of work. That style felt foreign to me —too much beating around the bush. But I came to see how valuable it was in building trust, especially at the beginning of a relationship.

Later I learned that you can negotiate a sort of "cultural island"—to use the term coined by Teryl Gonzalez. It entails discussing, ahead of any working together, the ways each person gives feedback in their own cultural context and find a way of doing it that is acceptable for all involved. It may not be the natural way for any one of the parties (hence the term "cultural island") but it is a workable solution for this particular cross-cultural group. Talking about it ahead of time like that can prevent so many misunderstandings.

What helps you continue to grow as a consultant? Mentoring relationships are key. Working closely with others helps me learn different ways of approaching problems. Sometimes, working in a small group—with two or three Consultants-in-Training—can be incredibly rich.

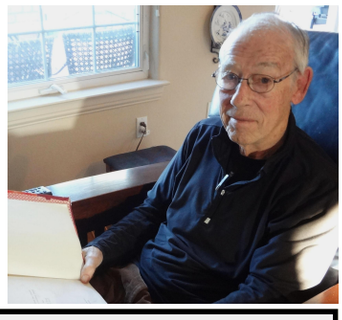
I've also found lasting relationships often develop out of mentoring others or being mentored by others. When I hit a tough issue I know to whom I can reach out to for help. The BT community is a huge part of what keeps me growing.

Memoriam

Ken Gregerson - (1936-2025)

Ken Gregerson passed away on 25 June. Ken and Marilyn joined Wycliffe in the 1960s, serving in Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and finally in Cambodia. Ken also served as SIL President in the 1980s, following Kenneth L. Pike.

A prolific linguist, he received his PhD in Linguistics (1971) from the University of Washington writing on *Predicate and Argument in Rengao Grammar,* following his 1969 MA thesis on *A study of Middle Vietnamese phonology.* Click here to see the list of his publications on the SIL public site.



News

*We've been very excited to hear this week that all the fantastic content from the Digital Training Library is now **FREE TO ACCESS**. This includes comprehensive certificates in a variety of different major world languages to train translators or advisors in: the Foundations of Bible translation (including an ASL version); Oral Bible Translation; Greek; Hebrew; World of the Old Testament; World of the New Testament; and Discourse Analysis of Narrative Texts.*
Have a think about how you can build these certificates into your training.
Here's the announcement from Fuller:

Free DTL Certificates - *Digital Training Library*

The Digital Training Library (DTL) continues to grow and develop, and we're excited to share three important updates with you. As always, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out at hello@digitaltraininglibrary.org. If you or your team are looking for solid, accessible training for Bible translation, the Digital Training Library continues to be a resource you can count on. Need help with registering, onboarding, or training? Please contact us!

DTL Certificates Now FREE on Equip. If you're exploring Bible translation training for yourself or your community, this is a simple and accessible way to begin. We've now made the DTL free for everyone with no barriers to entry, now available on the Fuller Equip Website! If you're exploring Bible translation training for yourself or your community, this is a simple and accessible way to begin. There are no coupon codes needed, no barriers to entry. Simply go to the Equip website and create an account.

Discourse Analysis: Narrative Text course now available in Spanish & Indonesian. This certificate supports learners in understanding and applying the structure and flow of narrative texts; an important skill for accurate and natural Bible translation.

The **Foundations in Bible Translation** certificate, the starting point in the DTL certificate series, has been released under a **Creative Commons license (CC BY-SA)**. This allows users to: (1) Use the course materials freely, (2) Adapt content to fit local needs & languages, and (3) Share within community-based training programs. This is an important step forward for the DTL, recognizing the priority of Creative Commons within the Bible Translation movement. We see this as a practical step toward supporting locally driven translation efforts and making quality training more widely available. Additionally, it will allow the inclusion of DTL content into other training platforms like the Bible Aquifer.

DTL Certificates Available Now on Fuller Equip. These courses are still available at no cost: Foundations in Bible Translation / Oral Bible Translation / The World of the New Testament / The World of the Old Testament / Discourse Analysis: Narrative Text.

Asia TCDW Report

- Angie Foo

The Asia TCDW is currently conducting their onsite supervised checking sessions. The CiTs come from 6 different organizations and work in 8 different locations around the world. The trainers also come from 6 different organizations and have worked in many different areas.

On 2-14 June they had their two-week online training course via Zoom. This included an additional day with three optional sessions on OBT checking. There were 14 CiTs participating with 14 trainers covering 33 modules.

Then on 16-20 June, the CiTs learned to write good consultant notes by going through the 1 Thessalonians consultant notes exercise under the guidance of 4 consultant trainers. On 23 June, 10 CiTs and 5 supervising consultants gathered in Southeast Asia for the onsite checking sessions - some CiTs even traveling from as far away as Europe and Africa.

The CiTs are working with the consultants to prepare for supervised checks with five translation teams. These supervised checks will run for two weeks (30 June to 11 July). For the second week of supervised checks, the 10 CiTs will each work with a different translation team and a different consultant mentor.

EMDC 2025 Summary

- Steve Baughman

This EMDC conference was held 14-22 May 2025 in the Netherlands, bringing together 430 people from across the world - workers based in local communities and resource trainers and developers involved in Scripture engagement, media, EthnoArts, trauma healing and language technology. Around 175 organisations and 57 countries were represented.

Click here for the full Executive Summary. Next year's EMDC 2026 will be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 13 to 26 May. Click here for more information on EMDC 2026.

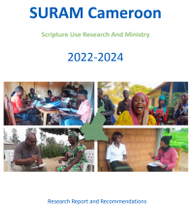
The main conference was preceded by four days of training (Pre-EMDC) with a choice of eleven training tracks. It was an excellent opportunity to encourage collaboration and partnerships between organisations and to share ideas and resources that we can use in our different contexts. For many of us, the networking opportunities and meetings during meals and breaks are among the highlights and most fruitful aspects of being together. This year's breakout sessions focused on the following topics: Media production and communication, Technology and tools for ministry, Bible translation and Scripture engagement approaches, Culture and context, and Orality and Arts in mission.

The plenary sessions included:

- ***Where do we go with the Gospel?*** Dr Joanna Heath from the British and Foreign Bible Society presented a plenary session on the research findings of the *Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey* (patmos.bfbs.org). This is the biggest survey ever conducted on attitudes to the Bible around the world, with 91,000 people interviewed in 85 countries.
- ***How do we go with the Gospel?*** Dr Sue Barclay from All Nations Christian College asked us, "What criteria do you use to decide what to do?", "What is right?" and "What do we need to take into account?" She called for joined-up Christian living and mission, displaying right actions, intentions, outcomes and relationships.
- ***With whom we go with the Gospel?*** Jon Ralls from Kavanah Media led us in examining some of the realities in our digital world, seeing the need for discernment in the age of digital surveillance. We must be aware of the risks of being manipulated, as more and more data is collected on our behaviour, with the power to shape our thinking and actions. We live in a "VUCA" world, marked by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity.

SURAM Cameroon Report

- 2025

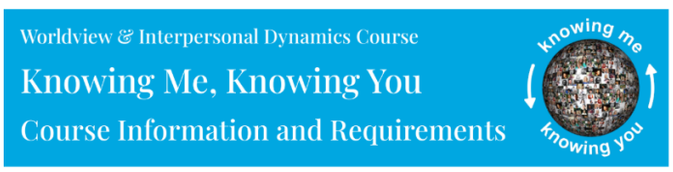


The 2025 SURAM (Scripture Use Research And Ministry) Cameroon Research Report and Recommendations is now available for download in both English and French. There are 10 key findings and 10 recommendations. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of local language Scriptures and provides actionable insights for improving Bible engagement strategies in Cameroon and beyond.

The aim of SURAM Cameroon was to evaluate the ownership, use, and impact of vernacular Scriptures in communities across Cameroon where New Testaments or full Bibles in the local mother tongue were published between 2007 and 2017. The research, carried out in 25 communities from 2022 to 2024, employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including questionnaires, observation and interviews to gather data.

While collecting data in these communities, the Scripture Engagement team worked simultaneously, teaching Bible engagement methods in the mother tongue and helping revive existing SE activities.

The study revealed varying levels of Scripture use among communities, highlighting barriers such as dialect complexities and challenges in mother tongue literacy. Key findings underscore the importance of community ownership, the role of church leadership, and the influence of factors like literacy, orality, distribution efforts, and the integrity of translation teams and committees on the use of the local language Scriptures. Recommendations for greater success in current and future language development and Bible translation programmes include strengthening partnerships with churches, consecrating time for dialect research and community decision-making, promoting sustainable literacy programs, establishing effective systems for distribution and promotion, engaging more youth and women, and increasing awareness of digital and audio Scripture resources.



Knowing Me, Knowing You Course *- Sharon Merz*

The next Knowing Me, *Knowing You: Online Anthropology Course on Worldview and Interpersonal Dynamics* will take place in September and October 2025. This course will be in English and hosted on the new *SIL Learning Hub* platform. Plans are to have two cohort groups for both the Eastern hemisphere and Western hemisphere. For more information contact Sharon Merz. These are the dates:

- Course Opens: Monday, 1 Sep. This is when those registered will be able to access the course modules on the learning platform.
- First meeting: Friday, 5 Sep, course orientation and introductions
- Official course start: Week 1 Monday, 8 Sep, cohort Friday, 12 Sep
- Last week of course: Week 6 Monday, 13 Oct, cohort Friday 17 Oct
- Final assignment due: Friday, 7 Nov

During this course you will acquire basic anthropological insights and skills that will equip you to build and deepen relationships with the people you work with.

This course is all about humans, which is what anthropology deals with. During the course you will deepen your knowledge of human diversity by exploring how different people understand what it is to be human, how they view the world and how this, in turn, impacts how they interact with others.

You will also learn how you can know yourself better. Increasing our awareness of our own thinking, behaviour and attitudes should lead to a deeper understanding of both ourselves and others. This, in turn, should help us to relate more effectively to those we work with and lead to a stronger sense of community, regardless of our different backgrounds and ways of life. The skills you will gain should also help you to understand and promote wellbeing, which is important if we want to flourish and help others to flourish.

Journal of Community-based Language and Social Research *- Sharon Merz*

The *Journal of Community-based Language and Social Research* (JCLSR) provides an outlet for research presented for and by local language communities. The contributions provide insider views and insights about the communities and their languages using accessible, non-technical language. The community members have decided what data should be represented. Local speakers have given substantial input into the analysis, which takes their intuition into account. The first article in this journal is from Boco François (in French), Rites de passage de classes d'âge des Daataba du milieu waao (République du Bénin).

If you are interested in publishing an article in JCLSR or know about potential contributions or have further questions, please contact Sharon Merz. Here are the latest submission guidelines.

Coming Events

- 2025 - 10-23 September. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation. Tanzania
- 2025 - 14-16 October. Africa Oral Bible Translation Consultation. Online Consultation. Click here to register
- 2025 - 28-31 October. Bible Translation Conference 2025. Chiangmai, Thailand. Click here to register
- 2025 - 03-06 November. FLExTrans Workshop. Chiang Mai, Thailand. Click here to register
- 2026 - 18-21 May. EMDC. Chiangmai, Thailand.

Useful Links

- Bible Translation Consultant Competencies / YouTube channel for BT Competencies
- SIL Senior Translation Consultants
- Email the SIL International Translation Office / International Translation Services ILS page
- Join/visit the SIL Translation Resources Google Group
- Visit the public SIL.org/Translation site
- Find Translation Resources (both free download and for purchase) SIL.org/Resources/Publications
- Bamboo Project website / Journal of Translation
- Mentoring Matters website - Mentor Training Courses
- Consultant Development and Management Team
- Progress.Bible Information / Memoriam website

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