

Trouble with people, trouble with technology, trouble with life... We were in Salatiga, Indonesia for a New Testament Bible translation event and everything seemed to be going wrong.

A group of translators were supposed to have arrived to translate the bible from Bahasa Indonesian to Malay, Papua. We brought this group of translators and checkers together through a partnership with a Christian University and multiple partnerships with Papuan pastors and church leaders. All were vetted and approved as translators and/or checkers, and ready to start by Saturday. On Saturday, more than 1/3 of the translators from the University did not show up. There was a scramble trying to figure out how to fill the gap. The Indonesian leadership asked the others from the University if they had friends, fluent in both languages, that they could invite. On Sunday new students arrive and jumped into the translation work, and by Monday the room was full again. Some of the translators "looked" a bit questionable (one guy had a curse word on the back of his shirt), but there are multiple checks to the text after translation, so we knew it would be ok.

The technology was trouble from the start. V-MAST (Virtual MAST) is a collaboration tool the translators and checkers use for their work. This program connects to internet or Wi-Fi allowing translators to go step by step through the 4 steps of drafting a translation, and then step by step through the 4 steps of checking with the translator and checker working together. Translators can sit next to each other in the same room with the use of Wi-Fi or they can be in different countries connected through the internet. In April 2017, it was a brand new tool that had only had a few pilot events, so this was the first real test of the program.

The equipment was shipped and was delayed. It didn't arrive until 8pm the night before the event was to start. There were 8 routers and approximately more than 50 computers that need to be set up and configured to connect with the routers. We were up until 1am preparing the equipment for the start of the event. The next day, the server was very slow and continually kicked translators and checkers off of V-MAST. The translators and checkers worked this way for 2 ½ days. Those nights we worked until after 10pm trying to find ways to bolster V-MAST, re-configure computers, and improve the network of routers. I remember looking at the Core performance levels on the tech guy's computer and asking him if it was going to blow up. He just replied, "I hope not."

On the second day, the programmer of V-MAST, who was also the tech guy for the event, suggested that he could probably re-program V-MAST on Linux, and it would run better. So we prayed and took a leap of faith. This would be an "all or nothing" leap. A new computer was ordered and delivered. Max spent the whole day re-programming V-MAST. That evening when the translators left for the day we re-configured the computers to go with the new server and tested it. It all seemed to be working. The REAL test would be the following morning when 70 computers connected and tried to work on the new V-MAST. With baited breath we waited as they logged in and began to work. The new V-MAST was running like a superstar!! No problems for the next 3 days. What a miracle!

On Thursday we realized that we were actually going to finish the whole New Testament by the end of the day. A New Testament translated in 5 ½ days?? How could this be? People didn't show up. Good people we vetted and approved of didn't show up and instead a group of people we didn't know and we questioned their Christianity showed up. The technology was PAINFULLY slow for 2 ½ days of translating, testing everyone's patience. But by the end of the day it was done and there was much celebration!

At the end of the event, they had a celebration and asked for testimonies from the translators and checkers. The first person to stand up and give testimony wasn't one of the people that was "invited and vetted" by the leadership, he was the guy the that had the curse word on the back of his shirt the first day. He stood up and talked about his hard childhood and the bitterness he had against God. He had given up and didn't want a relationship with God. He was invited to the workshop when others didn't show up and came because it was a the school break and it was a free hotel and food for a week. God had other plans for him. As he translated God's Word, God started speaking to him. He realized God had not left him and that the Lord still wanted a relationship with him even though he had given up and turned his back on God. Then the second student, again, not one that

was initially invited and vetted stood up and shared a similar testimony about having anger toward God for growing up without parents. Then expressed how the Holy Spirit had used the translation work to grow his love for God and heal the hurts he had since childhood. Then the next... then the next... They ended the event with the pastors and church leaders praying over the students as they were on their knees before God. I agree with the Indonesian team lead who said to me, through tears of humility, "We had our list of who to invite, but God brought His." God had done what we thought impossible...

