

Broadcast 15 – Staying Motivated

MARA:

Hello! This is Mara. Oliver asked me to lead our time together today. The last few discussions were about keeping a translation project moving forward, using the resources, and preparing for accessibility. We know translation is a major commitment. Even though the MAST process – that is Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation -- is quicker than other methods, it still takes a lot of time. Sometimes things can get in the way of keeping translation on schedule. A dear translator named Delia is with us for this broadcast. She has encountered her own challenges in her work and wants to share some of their ideas for keeping translation moving forward when things are difficult. Delia, thank you for being with us.

DELIA:

Thank you for inviting me, Mara. I look forward to sharing my and my team's experiences with you. There are so many things that can cause delays when translating the Bible! It is good to hear how different translation teams moved through their setbacks. We can learn so much from one another.

MARA:

Let us start by talking about how you decided to be a translator. Delia, could you please share the story of how you got involved in Bible translation?

DELIA:

A friend of mine told me about the translation project. I recently became a Christian, so it seemed too important and too difficult for someone like me. My friend assured me that was not the case. He told me all that was needed was the ability to speak our mother-tongue language and the national language. I can do both of those! But I wondered about my knowledge of the Bible. My friend told me this would be a good way for me to learn more about Scripture. So, I prayed about it. I felt God was asking me to try this for Him, so I agreed to be part of the translation workshop. I was nervous at first but became more confident as our work has continued. It helps me understand more and grow in my faith.

MARA:

That is great to hear! Now we are especially interested in the ways you and your translation team found to help keep your translation work moving forward. How is your work progressing?

DELIA:

Everyone started out so strong at the translation workshop. The team decided to translate the Gospel of John first, and it was going well. When we left the translation workshop, we had only a few chapters left to translate. Each of us had an assignment and we finished within a few weeks. We had a celebration! It was very encouraging to us. We received our new assignments and started working. The team leader checked in with us every week to keep track of how we were doing.

MARA:

That all sounds very good.

DELIA:

Yes, it worked well at the beginning. Everyone was completing their work on schedule. But as time went on, the team's work started falling behind. The project got off schedule.

MARA:

Why do you think that happened? Why was the project behind schedule?

DELIA:

Struggles of daily life. At the translation workshop, we were all together and translation was our only concern. But once we came home, we resumed our day-to-day responsibilities with jobs, raising children, and caring for the household. We needed to find the time in our day to work on our translation. Another challenge was we were working alone, not in a room with other people working on the translation who could encourage us.

MARA:

I understand. Sometimes I have that feeling. I am fortunate Oliver is nearby to talk with and work with.

DELIA:

Yes, you are blessed to have someone that lives close to you. I began to doubt that I could do a good translation. I needed encouragement. But once some translators started falling behind, it seemed to discourage everyone. We lost translators over time and it was difficult to replace them.

Sometimes we need to wait longer for another translator who can work with us on checking steps. Sometimes the leader is busy and cannot get back to us with new assignments. Another very discouraging thing that happened is many chapters we had translated were missing. They were done on paper and not yet typed into the computer and no one could find them.

MARA:

Oh, I am so sorry to hear that! It is important to hear about the many things that can cause a project to fall behind. What do you find helps keep your translation project moving forward? Let us start with you as an individual. What helps you stay motivated and on track with your assignments?

DELIA:

What works for me is to set aside a specific time each day to work on translation. My family knows that is translation time and they honor it, even though sometimes it means things they need my help with must wait. Others on my team say doing some translation every day does not work for them. Too often they get to the end of the day and find that they were too distracted with other things. They say that it is easier for them to set aside a few mornings or evenings each week to do their translation work. They feel that any time they can spend in addition to that is a bonus. Some find their best time to work is early in the morning, before the responsibilities of the day start, or late at night when children are asleep.

One person on my team has a great situation. He found it difficult to concentrate and not be disturbed when trying to work at home. Thankfully his employer is a Christian! So, this translator can use a small, unused space at work so he can do some translation before or after work or during lunch time. This has turned out well for him and it also gives an opportunity to share his testimony with others in the workplace.

MARA:

That is wonderful. And those are all good suggestions that other translators may want to try. Perhaps your ideas will inspire other translators to develop their own approach to keeping their work moving forward. What things have the team leaders done that helped support translators so that there is progress in the translation?

DELIA:

Encouragement from the team leader is so important! The workshop celebrating a completion of a book provides motivation, but it can be a long time between finishing books and having celebrations of that kind. My team leader tries to encourage us with little celebrations along the way. If we made good progress in a week, she may invite the team for a small party at the church.

However, I should add this was not well received by all the translators. Some felt that if we were going to take time to get together, we should be working on the translation together, not celebrating, not wasting any time. Now we try to balance gathering for working purposes and gathering for encouragement and celebration.

MARA:

That makes a lot of sense. We know that God welcomes our celebrations. But I understand how people might feel that way with so much work left to do.

DELIA:

Our team leader regularly keeps in contact with each of us. He asks how we are doing and how he can help. If we are busy, he even tries to find help for us. Once I was having trouble getting repairs to my home done. It was taking all my time. Our team leader found two people to help me with the repair work so that it could be completed more quickly and give me time to work on translation.

MARA:

That was a great idea and a help to you!

DELIA:

Our leader also keeps track of our progress on a chart. He lists the chapters of Scripture. Then he colors them in with a different color to show which ones are assigned and which are completed. Seeing those colors gives us motivation. We want to see all the chapters turn green. That is the color the team leader uses when the eight steps of the MAST process are completed for that chapter. The chapter was CONSUMED, VERBALIZED, CHUNKED, BLIND DRAFTED, SELF-EDITED, PEER-EDITED, KEYWORD CHECKED, and VERSE-by-VERSE CHECKED.

We found it is helpful to show these to the church community. That way they know about the progress being made too. It encourages them to talk with us translators about it more. And it motivates us translators because we know that the community is watching our progress and eagerly awaiting completion of the next book of Scripture.

MARA:

That sounds like a very useful way to let everyone know about the progress that is being made. What else did you find helpful for motivating the team of translators to keep working?

DELIA:

Prayer is an important motivator. Our team leader helped each of us find at least three people to commit to pray for us and our work on the translation. When I feel discouraged, I remember that these people are praying for me and I remember all the people who are waiting eagerly to hear Scripture in their mother-tongue language.

MARA:

There is a lot of thought that has gone into the ways to keep translation projects moving forward. What else can those who are not translators do to support your progress with translation?

DELIA:

To pick up on what we were talking about, you do not need to be officially asked or assigned to a translator to pray. We need all the prayer we can get! And let us know that you are praying!

It also means so much when someone says “thank you” to the translators. It only takes a moment to tell them what it means to you to have Scripture in your language. Some people were kind enough to write their words of thanks to me. I keep those notes and read them when I need encouragement.

Volunteering to help is always appreciated. There are always opportunities for more people to work as translators. But there are other ways that you can help. You can participate in community checking workshops to help assure the clarity and accuracy of the translation. You can help a translator find more time to do their translation work. Having those two people help with the repairs at my home was a true blessing. It encouraged me so much. Perhaps there are translators needing childcare. You could help by caring for their children for a few hours. Or maybe you could take a translator a meal or provide help with housework. Any of those things would show appreciation and give time to the translator to work. Each of these people are a part of the translation team because of their service to help the translation reach completion.

MARA:

There are so many ways to help translators and the work of translation.

DELIA:

Translation is a big task, and we need everyone’s help. I hope that the tips we discussed will help and inspire others to find their role and be involved in keeping their mother-tongue translation project moving forward. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you and share with you and your listeners.

MARA:

Delia, could you please close our program in prayer?

DELIA:

I would be happy to pray. Please join me. Dear Lord, Thank you for Your Word and the gift of salvation. Thank You for the privilege of working to translate Scripture into our mother-tongue language. Thank You for those who were inspired by the work already completed. Help us now to stay steadfast in our tasks. We pray that the ideas we shared during this broadcast will be of help. We pray that all will find the role that You want them to play in Scripture translation – as a translator, a community checker, a prayer warrior, or volunteer helper to give a translator extra time to work. We ask this in Your Precious Name. Amen.

MARA:

Amen. Delia, thank you again for being willing to share ideas to help when the translation process slows down. We feel they will be of great help to our listeners as they continue working on their translations. Remember the words of Paul in First Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always abound in the work of the Lord, because you know that your toil in the Lord is not in vain.”

We hope that all of you listening will join us again for our next program. We will be talking about changes that may take place over time to assure the quality of the translation. May God bless you and your communities.

If you have questions about your current project or want to start a project in your own mother-tongue language, please call or text (local country partner info) or send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org.