

Broadcast 06 – Planning Your Translation

OLIVER:

Hello! This is Oliver. Today we are going to talk more about how to keep planning your work on Bible translation. We heard that just two translators, each doing 11 verses a day, can complete the entire New Testament in one year. That may sound easy, but we know that it can be difficult to find the time to work on translation every day. In the last program we asked our guest Ben about this challenge. He shared what he is doing to stay faithful. There is more than one way to do this. We can all benefit from sharing with each other. So today we are going to talk about some other translators and how they are planning their time and what is working for them as they continue their translation work.

First, let me read a verse of Scripture for encouragement and offer a short prayer.

This reading is from the book of Galatians chapter 6, verse 9. “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the right time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.”

Dear Lord, thank You for giving us the opportunity to work to translate Scripture into our language. We pray now for all the translators and their work. We pray that this time of sharing will inspire and encourage us to complete the task set before us. Help us not to become weary in doing this good work, so that we may reap the harvest for You. Amen.

Today Jade is with us again. She participated at the translation workshop with me and often comes to our village for her job as a banker. She was a great help there. Welcome, Jade.

JADE:

Thank you, Oliver. I am happy to be with you today and to participate in this program again. I hope sharing my plan and what has worked for me will be of help to other translators who are listening.

OLIVER:

To start, please tell us a little about how you became involved in Bible translation.

JADE:

I heard about Bible translation workshops in my travels for my job. I talked with some people who had participated. They were so enthusiastic! They showed me their translations and told me how meaningful it was to hear God’s Word in their mother-tongue language. When I heard about the translation workshop being planned for our mother-tongue language group, I knew I wanted to participate.

OLIVER:

We were able to complete a lot of work at the translation workshop, but there is still a lot to do. Tell us about your plan for continuing your translation work. What helps you keep going on your assignments?

JADE:

I find it helpful to stay in touch with others who were at the translation workshop and joined our team after the workshop, like Mara and Siara. And Oliver, you and I talk frequently. We try to keep the closeness we felt at the workshop. If we have difficulties, we help each other.

OLIVER:

Yes, I know it helps me when we talk. I am interested in knowing about the kind of preparation you find helpful when you are getting ready to work on translation.

JADE:

In the beginning, I was very conscious of not having much time to spend on translation, so I would just rush right into the translating. Many times, I found myself not doing a good job that way. I did not take time to focus my mind. What I have found works for me is to first take time to pray and ask for God's help to do a good job for Him. Only after that do I start in with translating.

OLIVER:

If you are working on the drafting steps one through four, how do you do those?

JADE:

I have found the drafting steps easy to do on my own at home. Even at the translation workshop, we were working on our own for most of those steps, so there was not much that changed. I read the chapter in the national language, which is step one, then I need to VERBALIZE by talking on the phone or sometimes I will just say it aloud at home by myself. I tried skipping the VERBALIZE step because it was difficult to find someone to verbalize with, but it did not work well. I missed the depth of understanding that comes from saying it aloud in our mother-tongue language.

OLIVER:

Thank you for sharing that experience. How about steps three and four which are CHUNK and BLIND DRAFT?

JADE:

Those steps are easy to complete alone. I have a chapter that I have been assigned and once I break it down into CHUNKS, I make a schedule for myself so that I have a goal to complete the chunks. I find that completing eight or nine chunks a week, that is about 20 verses, is a good number and helps me continue moving forward. First, I pray. Then I read my chunk. Then I close my source text and write the chunk from memory in our mother-tongue language.

OLIVER:

After that, there are the checking steps. What are your plans for those steps?

JADE:

After I BLIND DRAFT all the CHUNKS in the chapter, what works for me is to wait a day before I do the SELF-EDIT. For example, I BLIND DRAFT on Tuesday and Friday and SELF-EDIT on Saturday. I make any changes that need to be made, then I read through it again to make sure it sounds smooth and natural after making changes. Sometimes we can be so concerned with accuracy and choosing the right word, we make changes that make it sound chopped up and unnatural.

OLIVER:

I agree that BLIND DRAFT and SELF-EDIT are easy to do alone. The challenge for me is finding time to do them.

JADE:

I know what you mean. I found that I needed to write the time on my calendar, just like a business appointment.

OLIVER:

That is a good idea for your busy schedule. Maybe I should try that as well. Step six is PEER-EDIT. How do you approach that because you need someone else to work with?

JADE:

Sometimes I do this in person with another translator, trading the chapters we have done. You and I have been able to do that on a few of my visits. Other times I email my translated chapter to another translator for them to check. They give me their feedback so I can make edits. Sometimes that takes a few days, depending on how busy the other translator is and when they can get back to me.

OLIVER:

How do you decide who to send your work to for PEER-EDIT?

JADE:

While we were at the translation workshop, I worked with several people and we were able to be very productive. I have kept in touch with them and continue to work with them for steps where another person is needed. I PEER-EDIT their translation and they PEER-EDIT mine. There also are a few people in my church who did not attend the translation workshop but who have been trained in the MAST method, so I am able to work with them as well.

OLIVER:

It is good that you have many people to use as resources. There are two other checking steps, seven, KEYWORD CHECK and eight, VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK. What are your plans for those?

JADE:

As you know, in my case I have to travel to be with the group, so I have given myself a deadline to have all of my translations completed to the PEER-EDIT step and when we have our meetings every few weeks, we work together to go over the last two checking steps. It also helps that we meet as a team to pray together, discuss questions and work through the last few checking steps. Especially the KEYWORD CHECK. It helps us identify additional key terms for consistency as we continue the translation.

OLIVER:

Thank you, Jade. It is helpful to know how you are moving forward with your translation work. You have some very good tips. Just a few days ago I saw another translator who shared their approach. He has continued his involvement with translation. It was a great discussion and I learned some new ideas from him.

JADE:

What challenges has he faced continuing his work at home now that the workshop is over?

OLIVER:

Like many of us, it was difficult to find a time and a place to work. When he first got back from the translation workshop, he set up a corner where he wanted to be able to do only translation work. He needed to use that space for other tasks in the household, though. So, what he has learned to do is keep all the translation work in a carrying bag so that he can bring it out when he is ready to work and be sure that he has everything that is needed.

JADE:

That is a good idea. I need to start doing that, because often I spend some of my precious time for translating trying to find something that I need. When does he find time to do his translation work?

OLIVER:

When he first returned from the workshop, he thought he would spend some time working on translation every day. That did not work for him, though. He kept missing times. And when he did spend time, it often was so little time that he felt that he was not getting anything done. He would lose train of thought from session to session, so translating did not seem to flow smoothly. He has found that what works best for him is to do a longer time of translating on his days off work. He starts by reading the chapter. After he has read through the chapter -- he needs to VERBALIZE. To have someone to do that he will usually call a friend. He knows another translator who always VERBALIZES with his children. He said that telling them about the Scripture passage helps him to think in terms of natural and simple conversation.

JADE:

I think it is great that he wants to make his children a part of what he is doing! That is a good thing to remember.

OLIVER:

After VERBALIZE, he can CHUNK the chapter, BLIND DRAFT and SELF-EDIT. His goal is to get through at least 20 verses in each of these sessions. After that, he finds that he needs to take a mental break, or the quality of the work seems to go down.

JADE:

Yes! We all understand that translating can be very intense and mentally challenging work. How does he go about the checking steps that require another translator to work with you?

OLIVER:

His translation team decided that the best way to do these checking steps is to have meetings every month, like our team meets regularly. As many translators as can get together at the church. They bring what they have translated so that they can work together on PEER CHECK, KEYWORD CHECK and VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK. Having this time to come together helps keep the team accountable and they continue to make progress on the chapters they have been assigned. He said they leave each session with a clear understanding of what is done and assignments for what is to be done before the next meeting.

JADE:

That is very organized. We could learn a few things from them! What do they do when people cannot attend those meetings often? How do they handle that? We have had some struggles with this.

OLIVER:

Yes, that happens. They have found that sometimes they are not able to all attend the meeting. When that is the case, they use email to send the work and comments back and forth. For most, it is more difficult than talking with someone face to face. It is important, though, because it keeps their translation work moving forward. That is most important. We are lucky that many of our team members live in the same area and only a few, like you, have to travel to meet with us.

Thank you to for sharing your plans with us today and to those of you who listened. We pray that it has encouraged and inspired you in your translation work. We pray that it helps you to develop the work plan that works best for you. I hope you have a good, productive week of translating God's Word! We look forward to talking with you again!

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.