

Call Of **KENYA**

Bible Translation and Literacy (E.A.) Newsletter

January - April 2024

Beyond The Border



The First Beyond Kenya Dedication

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORD FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR 1

THE KIND GESTURE 2

MOTO "FIRE"! 3

2024 TRANSLATION FOCUS 4

THE VISITORS WHO HAVE COME TO OUR 'RESCUE' 5

THE FIRST BEYOND KENYA DEDICATION 7

WE WITNESSED THE FRUIT OF OUR HARD WORK 8



VISION

Transformed lives, by the grace of God, when people use God's Word in the language they understand best.



MISSION

To facilitate sustainable Bible translation, literacy and language development programmes among indigenous language groups, partnering with the Church and others to fulfil the Great Commission.



CORE VALUES:

1. Christ-Centeredness
2. Resilience
3. Integrity
4. Passion for the Unreached
5. Innovation
6. Prudence
7. Excellence in service

WORD FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

When BTL was established in 1981, God gave our founding fathers a vision that one day this great ministry will transcend our borders and reach the rest of the East African region. That is why the organization was registered as Bible Translation & Literacy (E.A). What a joy to see that vision being actualised during our generation! As you interact with this edition of the Call of Kenya, you will be pleased to see that God has opened a great door for BTL to bring transformation to many communities in the region as we provide Scriptures in their heart languages. We recognise that this comes with new challenges and therefore look to God every day to lead us along the way.

On the other hand, this quarter marks the launch of our Strategic Plan for the years 2024 - 2028. I am pleased to note that in past strategic plans, we trusted God to help us accomplish greater things than what was ordinary; and He surely did. In this current Strategic Plan, we are trusting God that we will be able to initiate work in over 25 language groups in the East African region besides our current work in Kenya. This is not by any means a mean task! We totally lay our trust in the God of the impossible to help us accomplish it.

At the same time, I am happy to note that as we continue to establish our presence beyond our borders, we are also making very significant progress in our work here in Kenya. As a result, on 30th September last year, after 38 years of translation work among the Pokomo people, we finally dedicated and launched the Pokomo complete Bible. The next one on the line is the Chonyi New Testament which is currently being printed. We plan to dedicate and launch it this year. Additionally, the Marakwet complete Bible and seven New Testaments which include: Waata, Upper Pokomo, Chuka, Tugen,



Rev. Peter Munguti, National Director, Bible Translation & Literacy (E.A)

Taveta, *Weera and Tachoni are presently in the final stages of translation. We have also just started translation work in 10 new language communities, which we have clustered in an umbrella dubbed, 'Mkondo wa Mwisho.'

As you read through this Issue, I am humbled to note that these strides would not have been possible without your unwavering support. Your prayers and sacrificial giving have enabled us to cast our eyes beyond the horizons for the sake of God's people; so that no one will say that they never heard of Him who saves. We also wish to request you to pray for us and the big task for the Bibleless communities ahead of us.

In this current Strategic Plan, we are trusting God that we will be able to initiate work in over 25 language groups in the East African region besides our current work in Kenya.



Joyful moments during the Laka New Testament handover: BTL's Board Chairman, (front right) BTL's National Director, front (left); ATALTRAB's Board Chairman, (back right), and ATALTRAB's Director, (center back). Also, Kofi back (left) from Wycliffe Togo, BTL's sister organization based in Togo.

THE KIND GESTURE!

By Daisy Kilel

There are 55,100 Laka people living in the Sous Prefecture of Baibokoum, Moundou, Doba, and Ndjamena, the majority being Christians," read the first sentence of the Laka Project proposal dated November 28, 2012. "The Laka community desires to have the word of God in their mother tongue; they have established a translation committee; some pastors are available to do the translation work; but we are limited in resources to start the work." The problem statement read.

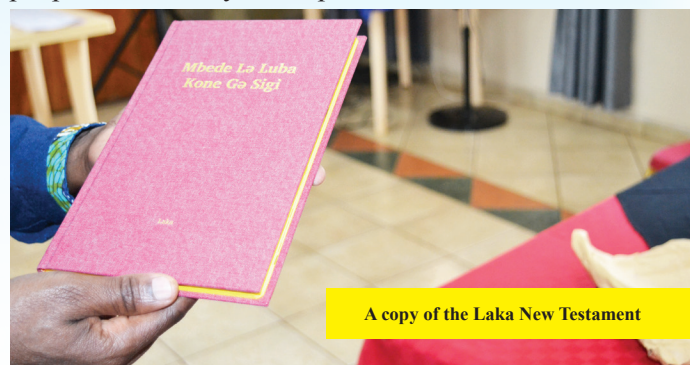
About 10 years ago, ATALTRAB, BTL's sister organization based in Chad, aspired to provide the Scriptures in the heart language of the Laka people. However, they faced a financial hurdle in initiating the translation work and contacted BTL for assistance. In response to this need, BTL funded the initial two years of translation for this project, officially launched five months after the proposal was shared with BTL. During the launch, as shared in the progress report, "translation work starting in the Laka community became a reality because of the grace of God. The Lord sent us His miracle through BTL to allow us to begin the translation among the Laka people."

The eagerness to have the word of God was felt not only by the community but also by the translators. Within three months of the translation work starting, they had drafted

the gospel of Mark. Not only that, they immediately embarked on drafting the gospel of Matthew. They kept the momentum so that by the 10th year since translation work started among the Laka community, the New Testament was dedicated and launched on March 31, 2023, for use in the community. Praise the Lord!

Two months after the dedication and launch, an opportunity arose for ATALTRAB's Board Chairman and the Director to travel to Kenya for the Wycliffe Global Alliance Africa meetings, of which BTL and ATALTRAB are members. As a testimony of God's faithfulness and as a gesture of appreciation and recognition for BTL's support in assisting to jumpstart the translation work among the Laka people, they carried a copy of the Laka New Testament and presented it to BTL's Board Chairman and the National Director. There was so much laughter and joy during the short moments of handing over the Laka New Testament to the BTL's leadership team.

Praise the Lord for the word of God in the Laka language. Pray that this Word brings hope and grace as the Laka people read it. Pray for impact and salvation.



A copy of the Laka New Testament

Translation work starting in the Laka community became a reality because of the grace of God.



A sample of the Gorowa community during the sociolinguistic survey exercise.

MOTO "FIRE"

By Samwel Nyangweso

Gallapo is a serene and peaceful village with lush green paddy fields and bamboo groves. The village is known for its unique mask-making tradition. We are in this village for a sociolinguistic survey of the Gorowa language in the Babati District of Manyara Province in Tanzania.

In our engagements, we meet Mr. Paulo Moto, a 76-year-old man, peacefully seated under a huge green sprawling indigenous tree next to Jesus Healing Miracle Pentecostal Church in Gallapo. His second name is Moto, which means 'fire' in the English language.

After our brief greetings, out of curiosity, I ask the old man why he bears the name 'Moto'. "I am named after this village. My father practised witchcraft and he gave me the name 'Moto' as an association of what happened in this village; where witchcraft, divination, and spiritism

dominated for years." He explained. "No child could go to school because they feared that they would be killed if they studied up to the university level and got a good job." He added

He then whispers, "It was a community feared by many, and mentioning the name Gallapo was utterly dreaded due to the many evil practices it was known for."

"But now I am a transformed person through the saving blood of Jesus Christ. I am a born-again Christian and the 'fire' of the Holy Spirit is moving around Gallapo."

Sadly, he tells me, "I wish we had a Bible in my Gorowa language, I am 76 years old now, and we are over 800,000 Gorowa speakers without a Bible in our language. We use our neighbouring Iraqi community's Bible in the church; however, we do not understand the language so well."

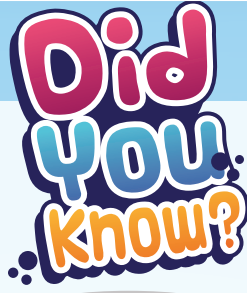
There is however calmness in his voice, "I thought God had forgotten about us. I am thankful to God for your coming to our community to survey our language. I hope that one day, sooner or later, even if I won't be alive then, these children playing outside will get to hear the word of God in their/our heart language." He concluded.

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Mr. Paulo Moto, (right) giving his contribution to the sociolinguistic survey

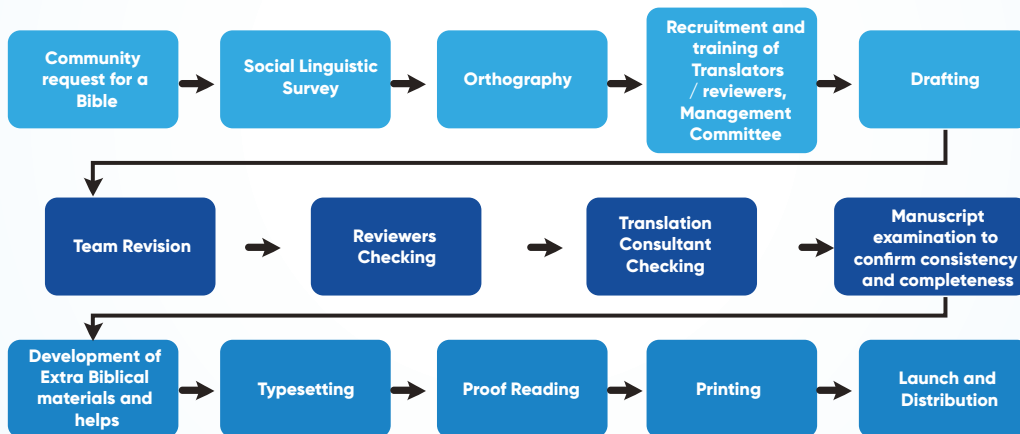
2024 Translation Focus



2024 TRANSLATION FOCUS

- **Chonyi New Testament (NT):**
The NT arrives into the country for dedication and launch
- **Waata New Testament:**
The NT is sent out for printing
- **Upper Pokomo New Testament:**
The NT is sent out for printing
- **Chuka New Testament:**
The NT is sent out for printing
- **Marakwet complete Bible:**
The Bible undergoes typesetting and is sent out for printing
- **Tugen New Testament:** The NT undergoes typesetting and is sent out for printing

TRANSLATION PROCESS SIMPLIFIED



DISTRIBUTION

Once the Scriptures have been published in the form of a book, audio player, or DVD, they'll get placed on board a ship, plane, vehicle, or some other form of transportation headed in the direction of the language group. If necessary, a local agent will be responsible for getting the Bibles through customs and transported to their final destination. Digital Scripture versions can either be placed on a website for people to download or be transferred via cell phone or other storage devices. The community often plans an event to publicize, celebrate, and distribute the new Scripture.





A Sunday service at Sudan Interior Church

THE VISITORS WHO HAVE COME TO OUR 'RESCUE'

By Samson Ngosia

I have been to several missions but this one that I am about to narrate to you is unique, several occurrences made it unique. First, it happened in a foreign land and country; second, the rich culture we encountered; and third the timelines; we were to complete our assignment at this mission field in three days, but three days turned out to be seven days, then fourteen and finally twenty-one days.

The warm welcome

In October 2022, my colleague and I set out to carry out a language survey among the Koma people in the Upper Nile of South Sudan. We chartered a plane as this was the quickest and best means of transport to get to this remote region of the country. Upon landing at the airstrip, we were greeted by a joyous assembly of villagers, who welcomed us with song and dance, expressing their anticipation for the assistance they believed we were bringing. The local pastors and community leaders were particularly delighted, having been informed about the possibility of obtaining a Bible in their native language through our efforts.

The local women graciously assisted us by carrying our belongings to our new home. It was then that we discovered the absence of any means of external communication. Surprisingly, this revelation didn't alarm us. We embraced the idea of three days disconnected from the digital world, relishing the prospect of a blissful period devoid of screens.

In our new home, we were guided to a shaded spot under a majestic tamarind tree, positioned on the fringes of the forest and overlooking a sorghum farm. We pitched out tents for our three-day stay. After we had settled, four elderly women approached us, carrying basins of water. Unaware of their intention, we watched in astonishment as they knelt before us, proceeding to untie our shoes. This



Pitching of the tents that would be home for three weeks

The local pastors and community leaders were particularly delighted, having been informed about the possibility of obtaining a Bible in their native language through our efforts.

Beyond the Border



The ladies washing our feet

act, a part of the Koma tradition, symbolized their warm and respectful welcome. Subsequently, they washed our feet, an unexpected display of hospitality that resembled certain aspects of the Jewish culture, challenging our preconceived notions of African customs.

An unexpected turn

We enjoyed the next three days carrying out the sociolinguistic survey. On the third day, however as we were wrapping up our work, ready to depart the following day, the situation changed. We got a report from the army's call centre that the scheduled aircraft that was to come for us, would not be able to land, due to the airstrip's unsuitability caused by the recent rains. The airstrip required at least one rain-free week to be operational for the plane's safe landing. That meant that we would have to stay on for an additional four days. It wasn't a big issue for us; it gave us more time to interact with the locals, go to their church, and pray with them among many activities that missionaries would engage in. On the sixth day, our liaison went out seeking confirmation regarding the plane's anticipated arrival time. The response indicated a necessity for an additional seven days, yet it didn't provide a definitive confirmation of the plane's arrival.

At this point, we were running out of the supplies we had carried for the three days. We had also not spoken to our families for days. We needed a way out. Several alternatives crossed our minds including walking on foot for six days but none of these ever worked out until the twenty-first day when the aircraft picked us up.

On the sixth day of the timeline that the airline had promised, it rained heavily. Our tents could not sustain the torrents and the flooding water.

At this point, our foodstuff had been depleted and we fully survived on the food provided by our host. One brother, a pastor, made sure that we had food. He would wake up early in the morning to go fishing. We counted minutes, hours, and days that came and went by.

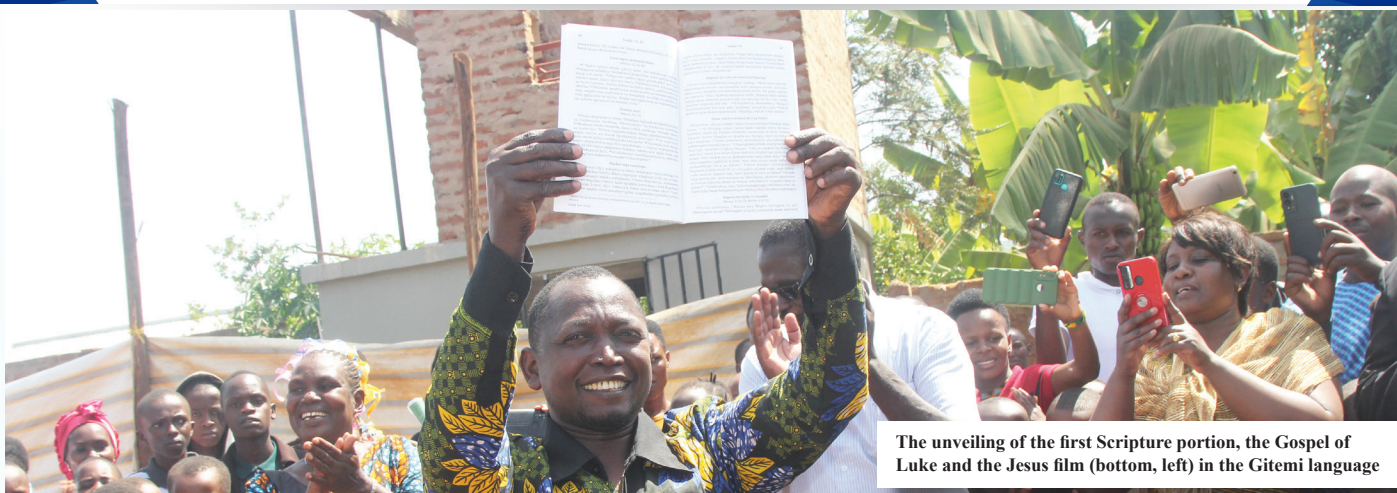
The bigger purpose

At this point, we were convinced that our presence in this land held an ordained purpose. We started house-to-house evangelism. We learned of the gods and the spirits of this land. We shared the gospel and prayed. During one of our house visits, we encountered Lemun who served a god called *Akura Mimis*. Despite having embraced Christianity through the teachings of earlier missionaries, she found herself still tormented by the claims of this god, leading to sleepless nights. We prayed with her and she received her deliverance from this god.

After our task which later turned out to be several more God-assigned tasks, we made it home and handed over a detailed report to Rev. Peter Munguti, our National Director. The report reflected a community greatly in need of the Scriptures.

Praise God for our experience among the Koma people. Praise God for what He did through us. Pray as we embark on a journey back to the Koma people to provide the Scriptures in a language that speaks to their hearts. Pray that God provides resources for this project to commence.

During one of our house visits, we encountered Lemun who served a god called Akura Mimis. Despite having embraced Christianity through the teachings of earlier missionaries, she found herself still tormented by the claims of this god, leading to sleepless nights.



The unveiling of the first Scripture portion, the Gospel of Luke and the Jesus film (bottom, left) in the Gitemi language

THE FIRST BEYOND KENYA DEDICATION

By Evans Abade

The Gitemi project, BTL's pioneering translation for the Beyond Kenya Initiative (BKI), has achieved significant milestones over the past two years. In June 2021, BTL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gitemi Language Development Association (GLDA) of Tanzania, for the continuity of the stalled translation work in this project.

From July 2021, BTL resumed the translation process, eventually leading to the completion and colourful dedication of the Gospel of Luke Scripture portion and the Jesus film on July 29, 2023, in Digodigo, Tanzania. The joyful response from the community showed how much they had long desired the Scriptures in a language that speaks to their hearts.

During the dedication ceremony, Hon. Baraka Philemon, the representative of Digodigo Ward, commended the translation efforts, highlighting their potential not only in facilitating the spread of the gospel but also in revitalizing the Gitemi language, extending its influence beyond the Gitemi community.

"I commend those who initiated this translation and language development; it signifies the initial stride for our religious leaders to promote the Gitemi language beyond our immediate boundaries," he affirmed. "I believe that the

growth we want to see in our leadership depends on the advice of the religious leaders," he added.

As the moment approached for the unveiling of the Scripture portion and the Jesus film, resounding echoes of joy filled the atmosphere, symbolizing the rekindling of a language. Expressions of 'Asante Yesu' (Thank you, Jesus) echoed through the gathering, portraying gratitude of the community.

"The Scripture portion will be read by those who can read and the Jesus film will be watched and listened to by those who can only hear. No one is being left behind."

With high hopes, the Area Chief envisioned a transformed community, delivered from the prevailing vices impacting the Gitemi people.

Incidentally, the Gitemi community is found not far from Loliondo, a place that in the past saw many people trooping into the community to acquire a "miraculous" concoction that was touted to cure many ailments. This time however members from the community trooped in for a different reason, of receiving the miracle of God's life-giving Word in their local language.



Gitemi women reading from the newly dedicated Scriptures

The unveiling of the Pokomo complete Bible



WE WITNESSED THE FRUIT OF OUR HARD WORK

By Shadrack Falama

I stood beside the table, gazing at the wrapped box. It held the precious gift that the Pokomo community had been eagerly anticipating, to see, hold and use for the last thirty-eight years. Just behind me stood the church where numerous meetings on the Pokomo translation had taken place. As a young minister, I participated in some of these gatherings, including community reviews of biblical texts and training sessions. Suddenly, memories of many elders, now departed, flashed through my mind. They had longed to read the Bible before departing for the afterlife. And now, here was the box containing the much-awaited Book, right in front of me.

As I held the pair of scissors ready to open the box that held God's Word, I heard the ululations of my community and I felt like I was in a dream. It all felt too good to be real. The feeling of joy was incomparable. The happiness I experienced was beyond compare. With the pair of scissors, I carefully cut through the wrapping paper and the tape, revealing the black Book inside, its golden

inscription reading 'Bibilia'.

I couldn't contain my excitement any longer; my people had to share in this moment. I raised the Bible high, displaying it for all to see. Slowly, I turned to ensure they all witnessed the outcome of their giving and patience. Opening the Bible, I raised it again, trying to hold back tears of joy welling in my eyes. The fruit of our hard work had finally arrived, bringing a sense of relief.

The 30th of September remains the happiest day of my life. God had set it apart to speak to us in our language and I witnessed it.

The Pokomo language joins the 724 languages of the world that are privileged to have the full Bible in their language. Praise be to God!

As I held the pair of scissors ready to open the box that held God's Word, I heard the ululations of my community and I felt like I was in a dream.



A Pokomo choir makes a presentation during the dedication and launch.



Bible Translation & Literacy (E.A.)

Reaching the unreached
communities with God's
Word in their language

WELCOME TO THE 2024

RUN *for the* BIBLELESS

10 km Run
▼ ▲
5KM Walk



Date **Saturday, 16th March 2024**
Time: 7.30 am

Venues **Nairobi - Carnivore Grounds**
Nakuru - Nakuru High School
Eldoret - Potter's House Academy

**You can also give a donation to the
cause or sponsor others to the Run**

REGISTRATION

ADULTS - Kshs. 1,500
CHILDREN - Kshs. 1,000

PAY BILL NO. 898301
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Bible Translation & Literacy (E.A.)



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SERVING
37
COMMUNITIES



Who we are
To facilitate sustainable Bible translation, literacy and language development programmes among indigenous language groups, partnering with the Church and others to fulfil the Great Commission

Accomplishments

- † 6 Complete Bibles
- † 8 New Testaments
- † 23 projects work ongoing

To Get Involved:

- † Become a prayer partner
- † Subscribe to our social media handles
- † Support BTL financially (Translation cost per verse Kshs. 4,000)
- † Participate in our Annual BTL Run for the Bibleless

BTL KINGDOM BUSINESSES

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