



Harley Street



Update on Matthew and Rachel Harley
Working with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Jos, Nigeria

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www.harleysinafrica.org.uk

How to start a language project

From Jan-April each year, about half of our Bible translation students are sent out to start up or assist language projects around Nigeria, putting their learning into practice. The students often say that this is the most challenging but also the most rewarding part of the course. They focus on building relationships with community leaders, setting up committees to oversee the projects, and collecting and analysing language data with a view to designing an alphabet and writing a grammar and a dictionary. Here is a brief report on how 2 of our students got on earlier this year:

SOLOMON DAMULAK travelled the 140km back to his home town to work on his mother tongue, Kwalla, one of seven Kofyar dialects spoken by about 100,000 people. He visited the local government HQ to find a map of the area to help him visit all the villages, only to discover that the Kwalla weren't even marked on it! The chief and several church leaders were encouraged to hear about the project and the language committee raised £50 towards his travel expenses and even gave him a motorbike. It helped that he was quite well-known in the area as an accomplished singer, and already had good relationships with many people because of singing at various church and community events.



Solomon in his music video 'So nice'



BENJAMIN GIMBA was the student with by far the most difficult placement. His mother tongue already had a active translation project underway, so he went to work on a related language in a very remote area about 8 hours' drive from Jos. The community were quite suspicious of him at first, but two people eventually agreed to come to a regional language workshop (left) to find out more about the work. At the workshop, they heard people from neighbouring language groups talk enthusiastically about language development and the benefits it brings to a community. On the way back, the two men told Benjamin that they finally understood what he had come to do and would explain to others in the community about the nature of the work. However, the task of analysing this entirely undescribed language is proving more challenging than first imagined, even for the most experienced linguist; so far it seems that the language contains at least 2 sounds that are not known to occur in any other language in the world! News of this discovery has been creating quite a stir among the international linguistic community! (For those of you who are interested in the details - the sounds are probably types of interdental approximants (right), where the tongue protrudes out between the teeth often touching the lower lip).



- Matthew

Being back in Nigeria in January, I felt a new sense of joy and excitement since I was no longer teaching at Hillcrest but working as an ethno-artist. This involved interviewing people involved with Wycliffe projects to see if and how the arts might help add an extra dimension to their work. An example would be to hold Scripture song and storytelling workshops. Then, as well as working towards a written translation of the Bible, language groups could have more immediate access to Scripture through aural stories and songs. Another example would be producing a culturally relevant radio drama that deals with everyday problems and situations, including a character that presents a Biblical viewpoint (hopefully in a less cringy manner than Ned Flanders in the Simpsons!). Bible verses could also be linked to local proverbs.

One exciting potential opportunity arose when the Provost at TCNN, where Matthew teaches, asked me to think about starting up a course in the creative arts. I have been doing some planning for this since arriving back in the UK. With Wycliffe's support, I have also been able to attend a big ethno-arts conference in Singapore, which was truly inspirational. You can read more about my time there on our blog (www.harleysinafrica.org.uk).



- Rachel

JOS CRISIS UPDATE

Many of you have asked us about the religious and ethnic violence that erupted in Jos at the beginning of the year. Things have calmed down quite a bit since then, although we are still hearing reports of minor incidents here and there, and the situation is still tense in some areas. Dorcas, our house-help, has been living in a friend's house since her house was burnt down during the clashes. Right after the crisis, she took me to see what was left of her house. On the way, we drove past many burnt out vehicles, shops and houses. It was so sad. The walls of Dorcas's house were still partly standing but the roof had completely collapsed. It was full of ash and charred fragments of pots and plates. She used to run a chicken business and there were piles of eggs on the floor, all cracked and cooked by the heat of the fire. The pressure cooker that we'd given her for Christmas lay blackened in a corner. We hunted through the ash to see if there was anything she could salvage, and found two pottery mugs which had been a gift from her son's wedding. She would like to pass on her heartfelt thanks to the many of you who kindly gave donations towards helping her build a new house. Your generosity has been a real blessing, both to her and many others like her.

- Rachel



Dorcas in the remains of her house.

Other activities (Jan-April)

- Rachel

GYERO SCHOOL - a group of us have been meeting together to plan the setting up of a school at an orphanage in Gyero just outside Jos. The local school has not been very reliable due to staff strikes and other problems. I've loved being a part of this as it combines two of my passions: educating children and development work. They still need plenty of funds to buy resources and pay salaries. If anyone would like to support this amazing project then just drop us an email or visit <http://nigeriankids.org> to find out more.



RELIEF EFFORT - I spent a day helping a local relief organisation distribute food and provisions to families that were badly affected during the crisis. We visited areas from both sides of the conflict, taking food, clothes and medical supplies. It was wonderful to see people's faces as they received their bundles, and a privilege to be a part of it all. I particularly enjoyed spending time with the children, playing games and having mini counselling sessions.

PARATEXT WORKSHOP - This was a workshop to help train Nigerian translators how to use a software programme called Paratext that formats text and checks consistency as you enter the data. It was a fascinating time for me, getting to know all these people who devote their time to translating the Bible into their own languages. We had a lot of laughs and fun together. Some students did a skit about how to treat your computer, because many computers get damaged. They likened it to a crate of eggs that get broken if you pile things on top of them or throw them in the boot of a car and drive over potholes!



HILLCREST SCHOOL - Although I wasn't responsible for a class, I still spent quite a bit of time at Hillcrest helping out on school trips and spelling competitions, and doing the choreography for the senior school musical - Little Women.

BSF - In January I joined a local Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) group of several hundred women who meet every week to study God's Word. It has been such a rich experience. We've been studying John's gospel and discussing various ways of putting it into practice. One woman was particularly moved as she read about Jesus washing the disciples' feet. She wondered what it had cost him to wash Judas' feet, knowing what was about to happen. Jesus never let anything get in the way of his love for people - even his ultimate betrayal. This lady then told us that since the Jos crisis began, she had not been able to greet her neighbours and had also stopped buying vegetables from them because of their links with people involved in the violence. Now she was asking herself 'What would Jesus have done?' and asked God for the courage to follow his example.

In the U.K. (April-July)

Our time in the U.K. so far has been a melee of all kinds of activities: spending time with our families, visiting our supporting churches, doing presentations, supervising students' theses via email and attending various conferences. In April, we also had a second round of fertility treatment, which unfortunately was unsuccessful. It's hard to put into words the emotions we have experienced over the last few months. One of our favourite songs at the moment, 'Praise you in this storm' by 'Casting Crowns', expresses some of our feelings. We have also been encouraged by all your prayers and heartfelt concern. Although it is still hard, we really do feel that God has been with us throughout this time, and in some ways has been drawing us closer to him. It has also made us more aware of the many things we have to be thankful for.

The next few months

We're hoping to be able to return to Nigeria at the beginning of September. This will give us time to have one final round of fertility treatment (starting at the beginning of August), and also time to continue building up our support network. It will also give Matthew the chance to attend an important Wycliffe linguistics conference in Hungary and connect with other linguistic consultants around the world.

Prayer points

- for Rachel's treatment
- for Matthew's conference in Hungary - Aug. 15-21
- that we'd continue to trust the Lord to provide for all our needs at the right time.
- for Matthew as he prepares teaching material for next semester
- for Rachel as she continues to explore ethnoarts opportunities
- for all those working towards lasting peace in Nigeria

Thanks again for all your encouragement, prayers and support. With our love,

Matthew and Rachel xxx

Praise You In This Storm

Words by Mark Hall

I was sure by now,
God You would have reached down
and wiped our tears away,
stepped in and saved the day
but once again,
I say amen, and it's still raining.

As the thunder rolls,
I barely hear your whisper through the rain,
"I'm with you".
And as Your mercy falls,
I'll raise my hands and praise the God who
gives,
and takes away.

I'll praise you in this storm,
and I will lift my hands
For You are who You are,
no matter where I am
Every tear I've cried,
You hold in your hand,
You've never left my side,
and though my heart is torn,
I will praise you in this storm.

Email: matthew_harley@wycliffe.org
rachel_harley@wycliffe.org
Web: www.harleysinafrica.org.uk
Address (until Sept.): 8 Montclair Drive,
Liverpool L18 0HA
Phone (U.K.): +44 151 722 6539

 **Current
monthly
support
level - 64%**

SUPPORT: If you would like to join our support team, either prayerfully or financially, then please contact us, and we will send you the information you need. Our support has dropped quite a bit over the last year, and so we will need to raise our support level again before Wycliffe will allow us to return to Nigeria.

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Bible translators