

There's a good chance you own a Bible. In fact, many of you reading this probably own multiple Bibles. At least one of those Bibles is probably written in your native language. Even if you don't own one, you probably know where you could buy one today. Most of you could even view a Bible online, or download a free Bible app to your phone in less time than it takes to finish reading this story. However, there are still many languages in the world into which the Bible has never been translated. A lot of those languages don't even have a written alphabet. In other places, a village's single written Bible is torn apart into sections and shared among the villagers who live there. These situations all exist in Congo.



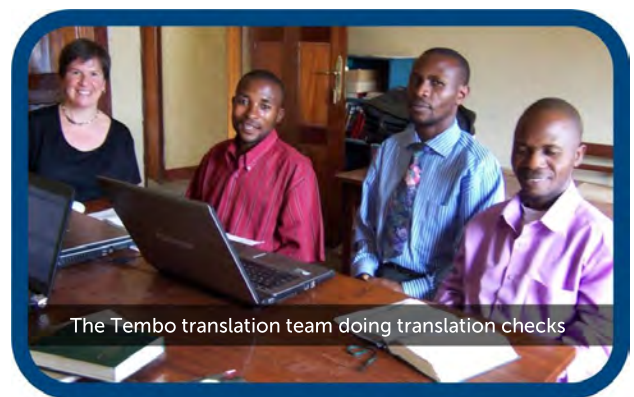
Here, missionaries with SIL International (Wycliffe Bible Translators) are working with local churches to promote Bible translation, literacy, Scripture use, and local language development. However, these Western missionaries aren't the ones doing the actual translation work. Rather, they are training and facilitating the work of Congolese translators.

"My department specifically supports the Université Shalom de Bunia's Bible Translation degree program by focusing on writing systems for languages represented by current and prospective students for that program," said Kent Rasmussen, Linguistics Consultant. "We also work with other Congolese who show themselves willing and available for this work. As was said in our Resolution for Sustainable Movement at our last international conference, 'We want to position SIL in each context for contribution to sustainable, locally-driven movements for Bible translation and language development.'"

The Bible translation office in Bunia is just one of the many clients who use MAF's across-town wireless network to access the Internet. I've also had a chance to help them out with a variety of IT issues. For this team, Internet access and IT support means more than just being able to check email and browse the web.

"IT is necessary for every phase of our work, from administration and planning to teaching and translating," said MaryAnne Augustin, Head of the Language Research and Development Department. "Owen has stepped in a few times to troubleshoot our office network, individual computers, and our battery back-up system. Because of our staffing shortage, he's almost the only locally available IT support we have."

As SIL continues to train and develop local linguists, the need for technology will continue to grow. In the past, translation was either done by a single highly trained linguist, assisted by one or two members of the community, or with large numbers of community members using pencil and paper. This is not the case today; on today's mission field, IT has become a game changer that's allowing translation teams to more quickly and effectively spread God's Word.



"We are developing ways of working with newer tools, which [not only] lower the bar of entrance to computer use, but also allow a broader collaboration for workers in a single project. So we are seeing Congolese people with little to no computer experience able to start working very quickly, typing words into a computer that will store their data for later use. For data storage and archiving, we are using systems developed for writing software, where authors share their changes over the Internet," said Rasmussen. "The result is that each team member can contribute from his place of work, see other team members' contributions, and have a continually up-to-date copy of all project files. This is particularly important as teams become geographically separated...All of these new tools involve heavy correspondence and collaboration with developers in other countries, which would not be possible without the MAF Internet connection." ↪



Stephanie teaches a Tae Kwon Do class



Larinda shares at a homeschool assembly



Our little superheroes out to save the day

Summer was a busy time for our family! Omri is now one, Macy is three, Gabriella is four, and Larinda is six.

It's hard to believe they've grown so fast! We had birthday parties for the girls in July, August, and September. It's during those times we are thankful for large living and dining rooms! The girls all like playing dress-up, and imagining they are characters from their favorite movies. I don't think Omri always has a complete understanding of what is going on (Macy usually casts him as "Prince So-and-so"), but he likes playing with his sisters. We've started a family tradition of going out to eat at the UN club for Sunday lunch.



Larinda is doing first grade this year in homeschool. She's getting good at telling time, addition with two- and three-digit numbers, reading, and writing stories. She especially likes her astronomy course, and always has something new to tell me about the sun, planets, or space when I come home from work each day.

There are a few other missionary kids (MKs) in town, and they get together sometimes for art, PE, or play time.

In addition to keeping the house running, and our lives in order, and homeschooling Larinda, Stephanie has been sorting through boxes of books, repairing damaged ones, and organizing them into an MAF library. She's finding her experience working at the local library in high school is coming in quite handy. Occasionally she can also be found teaching some of the MKs Tae Kwon Do.



Owen in a new tower harness donated by Idaho Power



Climbing to 150 ft. to install a new antenna on the tower in Bunia

When Owen isn't fixing a WIFI antenna, setting up a server, or configuring a router he enjoys watching an NFL game online, or a downloaded TV episode or movie with Stephanie. He accomplishes some of the odd jobs to be done around the house, but after a day of work and getting the kids to bed, a movie and cold Coke from a glass bottle usually wins.



Arwen (our kitty)

One of the churches in town has an English service that we've been attending. It's nice to understand and know some of the songs and speakers.

Our MAF team is great, and we're starting to make friends with other expats and Congolese people as well. Day-to-day life takes a lot of effort, but overall we are doing well in Africa.

Thanks you for your support!

Owen, Stephanie, Larinda, Gabby, Macy, & Omri

Please pray...

- That we'd continue to gain French and Swahili skills
- That Owen would find a new IT assistant soon
- For sufficient rain during the upcoming dry season



Singing at the MAF men's retreat