

## Celebrating 5 Years of the Nigerian Missionary Staff Programme



In Nigeria we have more than 500 languages, out of which 38 have a complete Bible, 69 have just the New Testament. 195 are working towards scripture in their language but a further 194 have no scripture and no translation work started yet. In the past most of the technical roles in language development and Bible translation were filled by foreign missionaries; there were few or no indigenous Bible translation consultants, vernacular media experts, mother tongue literacy advisors, language technologists or surveyors.

In 2015, we started an initiative to recruit and train national missionaries to serve in these roles, raising prayer and financial support from the Nigerian Church through personal partnership development, and corporate partnership opportunities. At several points we received very low support, and even considered forsaking the initiative. But thanks be to God, today we have 19 Nigerian Missionary Staff (NMS) serving in key technical roles!

Our long-term goal is to develop more sustainable financial support for our Nigerian Missionary Staff as they serve in long-term ministry, and to recruit more servants for God's vineyard. Staff who will reflect His love, advocate, build capacity, and work with local communities to advance meaningful language development, Bible translation, education, and the promotion of Scripture engagement in people's heart languages.

## Coronavirus Testing Provides a Scripture Engagement Opportunity

Last month my neighbour tested positive for Coronavirus. Everyone in the community was asked to get tested. At the COVID-19 testing centre I greeted a woman who was chatting with friends. As we got to know each other she found out I worked with SIL Nigeria and she asked "do you have the audio Bible in my language?" We agreed to meet a few days later so I could give her the audio Bible on a memory card. Hearing this, her friend asked, "do you also have the Berom audio Bible?" I replied "yes!" so she brought her teenage son with a mobile phone so we could download it together, and they were so excited.

Even though the world is shut down, God's word is not. When people have access to God's word in their language, it gives them a clear understanding of who He is, and His love for them, and they grow in their love for him and others.

We want to thank you, our partners, for your prayers and financial support, for all you're doing so that Nigerian Missionary Staff can continue serving in Language Survey, Literacy, Vernacular Media Services, Bible Translation, Scripture Engagement, and more, giving more people access to God's word.

– Aku Agbam, NMS Programme Coordinator

## Meet some of our Nigerian Missionary Staff:



**Yakubu Danladi:** Yaks was teaching mathematics and computer studies in a private secondary school when his aunt challenged him to consider being a missionary. As a Language Survey Specialist, Yaks helps pave the way for Bible translation in languages that have no Scriptures.

- *Prayer Points:* I'm planning to get married next year in March. Please pray for God to provide all that is needed for the success of the wedding.



**Julius Dabet:** Julius studied Linguistics at the University of Jos and completed a Master's degree in Linguistics. He serves on the Language Survey team, conducting social and linguistic research to determine which language groups need a Bible Translation project to begin.

- *Prayer Points:* Pray that I will be closer to God—that God should keep me closer to Him with more grace to serve Him humbly. And to be closer to men—for God to help me positively impact lives for Christ.



**Janet Abai:** Janet serves the Lord by working with the Human Resources team recruiting, building and sustaining a called, equipped and healthy multicultural team who are working effectively together in God-honouring ways towards SIL Nigeria's vision. Currently she is doing an MA in the US in trauma healing.

- *Prayer Points:* I'm praising God for ongoing wisdom, grace, and favour both now and beyond, and for His ongoing blessings during this season of my MA studies and beyond.



**Iliya Yakubu:** Iliya leads the Vernacular Media Services team. He is committed to providing audio Scriptures to people, recalling, "My grandmother had the whole Bible in her mother tongue but had no opportunity to use it because she had not learned to read it, and it was not available in audio format."

- *Prayer Points:* Pray that I have a good work balance with my family and spiritual vitality, and that my family will experience God in growing together and in meeting our needs.



**John Azomo:** As a Vernacular Media Services Specialist, John is committed to seeing the Word of God get into the hands of Nigerians in their own language and in a media form they can make use of. John is also training to become a Scripture Engagement Consultant.

- *Prayer Points:* Pray that my role with the Duya community will be fruitful as we work toward establishing a Scripture Engagement movement in Duya-land, and that I may encounter God in new ways as I critically engage and analyze materials in my study time.



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• Cheques may be made out to Wycliffe Bible Translators and sent to the address below. Please include a note specifying the name of the person you wish to donate to, followed by the words "Nigerian Missionary Staff".

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