VISITING THE COAL FACE

Posted on January 23, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Minority Language Translation

I spend most of my working life sitting at a desk doing stuff in England that makes it possible for people in other parts of the world to translate the Bible into minority languages.Â However, at the moment, I'm in Burkina Faso with my colleague Phil, exploring ways in which translation work here can be linked into BibleFresh.



Yesterday, Phil and I made a long trip down to the south of Burkina to visit five different translation projects. Four of the projects are run by ANTBA (Wycliffe Burkina) and one by The Burkina Bible Society.Â Each of these projects are managed and run entirely by BurkinabÃ©. The dedication and enthusiasm which they bring to the work is awesome.

In one location, the the translation team are based in a small town, so that they have access to electricity to run their computers and printers. This is fine, but the guys don't earn enough money so that their wives and children can live in the town with them - they are back in their home village. So the guys are faced with a weekly commute on local transport to and from the village area. Take my word for it, this isn't like a weekly commute to and from London! They are not separated from their families because they are pursuing a career or lucrative jobs - they are doing it because they desperately want to see their people read God's word in their own language.

In the town of DiebougouÂ we met with two ANTBA teams who share an office (kindly provided by Christ Church in Belfast). Sadly, three of the five laptop computers, which the team use for translating the Bible and producing literacy materials into two languages, are broken. So, they come in at all hours of the day and night just to get some computer time and to be able to type up their work and produce new reading materials.

Sitting with the teams, the leader of the Dagari project told us about taking their first draft of 1 Corinthians around the area so that people could read it and test how well they understood it. It was really exciting for them when they heard church leaders saying that they could understand what Paul was saying for the first time. Reading in French just didn't do the job! In the Djen project, people are learning to read and write and then following up their literacy classes with practical instruction. The literacy coordinator's eyes lit up as he told us about people learning to read livestock, make

local soap and through these things to start making a small income. The work that is being done is slowly transforming the lives of these communities in time and in eternity. It's exciting stuff.



You can read Phil's thoughts about his first trip to Africa here.