

## What do we need to get the job done?

Coordinate was invited by Bible Society Australia and SIL Pacific region to attend an Oceania Gathering in Sydney with the theme 'What do we need to get the job done?' They asked us to present on this theme from our local context, so Margaret Miller and I put together a Power Point presentation with stories that Yurrandjil had given us permission to tell. Here is an outline of what we presented:

Our ongoing relationship with Nungalinga is pivotal in developing and providing training for translators and Scripture in use workers,

Developing relationships is essential to ensuring that projects are effective and sustainable. It is more important and more productive to start by developing relationships than to start with outcomes in mind,

All our projects need people with expertise in areas such as linguistics, teaching, project management and Scripture engagement,

Being able to provide safe, affordable and sustainable accommodation in remote communities is a desperate need if we are aiming to have workers immersed in the communities where these projects happen,

We are in need of administrative and logistical support to enable our goal to pay our translators and Scripture workers for their labour. The complexities of setting up a payment system that has accountability, can support people who have limited access to the internet and digital technology, whose first language is not English are all barriers to this happening.

'Fly in and fly out workers' is not an ideal model for translation and Scripture engagement projects

Cross Cultural competency is essential in everything we do. The fresh water and salt water story as told by yurranydjil dhurrkay uses the wisdom of metaphor to explain the need for cross cultural competency. Sometimes the fresh water arrives at the mouth of the river and to find the salt water is not there to meet them. It's like the tide is way out and the sea has dried up! The first task is to come

together as the fresh and salt waters do and build relationships, becoming culturally competent together, before doing all the other work needed to decide the translation tasks that are needed to work on.



**A PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS AND THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA NORTHERN SYNOD**



All successful projects start with relationships. Content and products will follow.



Cross Cultural competency is essential in everything we do



## all the pieces, cont.

I organised another meeting for the consideration of a larger group of Mayali speakers. This stage in the process is called a community check. So we combined addressing the consultant questions with the community check to make sure that the draft was both accurate and sounded natural and comprehensible to other Mayali speakers. Thankfully the first issue to address was the mistake I had made. Sometimes in translation work it is difficult to admit that we have made mistakes that a larger group might be able to fix. If I'm the first to admit my mistakes then it becomes easier for others to have their work changed. The translators initially felt the need to squeeze their Mayali into a word order that makes more sense in English than in Mayali. When they realised that they needed to make it sound fluent in Mayali they happily changed a lot of their work. They asked me to read out a verse and everyone started laughing! When I asked what I had pronounced incorrectly they all said no, it sounded just how it should because the words were in the right order. Realising that the laughter was not directed at me but was the sheer joy at hearing the Bible story told in their own language was very moving.

Now that we have polished the Luke 8:22-5 passage it will be published on the Aboriginal Bibles website ([Aboriginal Bibles – Bible and scripture resources in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages](#)) and we can record these verses, print them and distribute them throughout the Mayali speaking communities in West Arnhemland. My studies continue in cold Melbourne as I pine for the warmth of the north and the company of the mother tongue translators in Jabiru. But this little project has shown me that my studies are going to contribute towards a much better quality translation than if I had not started on this journey. I thank God for guiding me on this path.



Linda, Vienna and Julie



# Putting all the pieces of the puzzle together.

SILA Campus in Melbourne



There is a hidden agenda in writing this article! If there is anyone out there who finds this puzzle fascinating perhaps this is a ministry path for you or someone who you know, to explore.

After our dedication of the Christmas story into Mayali which you read about in our last newsletter much has changed in my circumstances, so I'm taking this opportunity to keep you up to date with changes while giving you a taste of all the pieces of the puzzle that go together to create a passage of Bible translation.

The biggest change in my life has been that I have taken on full time linguistic studies at both the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia (SILA [SILA - Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia - Learning to Communicate In Anyone's Language](#)) in Kangaroo Ground and at the University of Melbourne. The former offers very practical subjects that are directly relevant to Bible translation and the latter provides a broader theoretical understanding of linguistics.

In first semester this year I studied online from Jabiru and one of the subjects was 'Principles and Practices of Translation'. My assessment project required me to choose a Bible passage and work through the steps to creating a draft translation with a group of Mother tongue speakers. Thankfully, I had a team of Mayali translators at my doorstep and they were happy to help me out with Luke 8:22-25 – Jesus calming the storm. As is to be expected in an Aboriginal community, there are always competing activities and responsibilities so we eventually combined a fishing trip with a couple of hours of drafting. I sat on the banks of a beautiful local billabong with Julie and Linda and we worked on the passage while the rest of the family fished and swam. I had already created a plain English version of the passage with help from the Plain English Version ([Plain English – Aboriginal Bibles](#)) created by AuSIL members. To get us started we watched an enactment of our passage on youtube so that we could get a sense of what occurred before and after - to put the story in context or to set the scene ([\(4\) LUMO-GOSPEL OF LUKE CHAPTER 8:1-21 - YouTube](#)).

Just to add to our Billabong scene, I had driven everyone to the site in our old red church troopy and managed to get it bogged up to the axles! So we worked while we waited for family to arrive and tow us out. As we grappled with the passage we had to find the word for storm. We'd finished everything else and were trying to find a word that conveyed a storm that was more dangerous than our usual Kakadu deluge. Suddenly God opened



the sky above us, the wind blew and the rains came seemingly from out of nowhere, Vicki and Romeo had just pulled the troopy out and we all ran for shelter. Discussing what word described this sudden and violent storm –  
Mandjewk Kudumurrubang.





# all the pieces, cont.

By Louise Macdonald

Because literacy is an issue for many of our team members I sent our draft off to Rachel Shipp in Maningrida who is a language surveyor working with AuSIL. Ensuring that we are consistent across all the translations that are done in Kunwinjku dialects (of which Mayali is one), it is important that we get the spelling right. This issue is also a motivator in the support that we give to Nungalinga College ([Who are we? | Nungalinga College](#)) to be able to run 'Certificate II in Learning an Australian First Nation's Language.' It is also why next year I will be enrolling in 'Introduction to Literacy' at SILA.

The next step in the process is creating a back translation. Someone who has not been involved in the drafting process needs to translate the draft back into English. I approached Julie who was one of the drafters and she suggested her daughter Vienna. I lined up time with Vienna and with her daughter Keina and together we sat on the grass outside their house and worked through the passage. They did comment that some of the words chosen seemed to be Kunwinjku words rather than Mayali. So as well as creating the back translation we made changes to words and pronunciations to make the passage more true to the Mayali dialect.

The reason for the back translation is to enable the draft to be checked for accuracy against the original Greek. The person responsible for this task is a Bible Translation Consultant. Consultancy is an expertise that requires a significant background in Theology, Linguistics and Biblical Greek and Hebrew often with a PhD in one of these areas. We are lucky to have access to the Bible Society ([Remote & Indigenous Ministry Support - Bible Society Australia](#)) Consultants and Sam Freney was available to consult with us via email. If we had been further along with a draft of the whole of Luke we could have brought Sam to Jabiru for a Consultation workshop. Sam came back to us with a number of questions about our draft. Significantly he questioned the accuracy of the first sentence of the English front translation that I had come up with. Later there was a sentence which we had somehow inserted which was not in the original. Another issue he raised was whether or not it was clear that Jesus had calmed the wind and the rain or did our draft indicate that some other power had calmed the storm. His question came from a linguistic understanding of grammar. In many Aboriginal languages they have pronouns (words such as I, you, he, they...) that mean 'you two'. We don't have this in English so it would be easy for us to refer to the wind and the rain as 'they' but it is important in an Aboriginal language to use the pronoun for 'they two'.

Continue p.4



Abel Linda and Serena



Julie, Tamar and Vicki

Despite living in troublesome times with travel and meeting restrictions, a partnership continues to grow within East Arnhem Land between Coordinate and Global Recordings Network (GRN). Here are two different stories that capture the developments of that partnership.

## GROWING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GRN

by Margaret Miller

Last year GRN recordist, Yousif and his wife Vivian, established a working relationship with Yolŋu translators on Elcho Island, as they recorded Mark's gospel and Christian songs in Yolŋu Matha. (You can read about their experience in Coordinate's Newsletter Issue# 32 )

There has been many efforts over the year to work together remotely, but in the end the Yolŋu readers decided it was too hard, and far better to meet up face-to-face in order to complete the checking of Mark's Gospel and songs.



So this year, Yousif travelled to Darwin on Monday, 11 July 2022 and stayed at Nungalinga College till Sunday, 17 July. Yousif met there with Yurranydjil and her husband Djawut, Yolŋu readers and checkers, who came in to Darwin from Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island.

Together, they completed checks on their recordings of Mark's Gospel in person, at Nungalinga College. Catharine Carpenter, a missionary who lives and works in Yirrkala, arrived at Nungalinga, to provide meals and support throughout the week for the team.

It was an unexpected combination of events that also brought Mälku to Darwin (one of the Djambarrpuyŋu readers from the recording session in 2021). Mälku had arrived in Darwin for family medical reasons! She made herself available to be a part of the checking and hence made an invaluable contribution, completing her recordings.

### **Please pray with us:**

Praise the Lord for the completion of Mark's gospel checking in Djambarrpuyŋu and gospel songs in various languages.

Pray for the final editing process (corrections) and for the programming (production) of the recordings.

Give thanks for our partnership with GRN for all those involved to bring together this 'North-East Arnhem recording group' in Darwin. We are thankful for AuSIL's support, for Nungalinga College making available their studio room and accommodation and for Bible Society who provided financially for this event.



Mälku & Yurranydjil



Yurranydjil & Djawut



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## A NEW DAY DAWNING IN EAST ARNHEM

by Simon Johnston *Recordist and Studio Manager at GRN.*

Coordinate Issue #34 September 2022



As the sun slowly ascended above the horizon in the Gulf of Carpentaria, a new day dawned on the dusty landscape of Gove, NT. Like many a day in the dry season, the weather was perfect. But this particular day was different because it also marked the dawning of a strategically important training course... 6 days of intensive recordist training for missionaries working in East Arnhem Land and its surrounds. This training has been designed to give them the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to the work of providing God's word in oral form to the many people groups in the area.

In the same location three years earlier, GRN recordist spent 2 weeks recording scripture in a couple of Yolŋu languages. It was during this time that some local workers expressed interest in being trained in audio recording. This seemed like a sensible idea given the challenges of GRN staff coming interstate to get recording done in such a limited amount of time.

Plans began to be made and dates proposed for the training course, and as word got out, excitement grew and people from several different organisations expressed interest in attending the training. Although only small scale, the four attendees would form the nucleus of a new wave of recordists creating gospel content in Aboriginal languages.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August marked the beginning of the training, but also the end of much anticipation and planning leading up to this point. Since arriving in Gove the afternoon before, David Sinden (GRN recordist) and I were now set up and ready to deliver the training. The following 6 days training covered audio fundamentals, recording locations, content, performance, editing, adding music, adjusting and balancing sound levels, and exporting, documenting and submitting recordings to GRN. At the end of the week, the attendees left the course eager to take what they had learnt and make use of it in the communities to which they were returning. There are now GRN-trained audio recordists in Elcho Island, Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala and Numbulwaar.

However, with the training complete it was then time to focus on the other reason we were there – recording. Using foam mattresses and thick blankets, the granny flat of a MAF house in Nhulunbuy was transformed into a make-shift studio. Each morning we would pray, then set up our gear and wait to see what the day would bring.



L-R Tim Richards, Prabhu Pothula (Pioneers), Josh McKenzie (CMS), Catharine Carpenter (MAF), Simon Johnston and David Sinden (GRN)

# A NEW DAY DAWNING continued

Corrina Loenen (Pioneers) was responsible for rounding up all those who had previously expressed interest in working with us. Each day God would bring those whom he had chosen to speak a message, sing a song, read a bible passage or share a testimony. The work was slow and unpredictable, but by faith and patience we were blessed by the many stories that were shared. Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August was to be our last full day in the community and we had been expecting a busy day of recording. Sadly, one of the old ladies who had recorded with us in 2019 had passed away a couple of months earlier and the funeral ceremony (which can last weeks) had begun, rendering many people unavailable.

**Yolngu came to record in their languages: Gumatj Gälpu, Dhay'yi, Djambarrpuynu, and Manjalili.**

Marrpalawuy, one of the church leaders, has no translated scripture or audio materials in her clan language, Dhay'yi. She would normally read from the Gumatj bible and preach in Gumatj or English. Her father was a pastor. She fondly remembers seeing videos of her

father preaching in Dhay'yi. "That's what I'm trying to do" she said. "When I was reading this morning, I was praying first of all, Garray (Jesus), you know every language, and even when I am speaking today, thank you for the language you have given me." Marrpalawuy laughed as she recounted how she had made a small practice recording of herself that morning. On hearing it back she said to herself "Yuwalk eh!? (honest/truely) We are right in whatever language we have, we can speak". Marrpalawuy recorded a real time oral translation of Ephesians 4:1-6 from the Gumatj bible into Dhay'yi. Then, still speaking in Dhay'yi, she read out an exhortation which she had written down in English.

GRN would like to acknowledge all of our partner organisations who were involved in the training and recording: Bible Society Australia, MAF, Pioneers, CMS, AuSIL, Oasis church and the Yirrkala Uniting church and Coordinate East Arnhem,. The way we have been able to work together to achieve common goals is a testament to God's goodness.

## **Please pray for:**

- Simon and David as they edit these new recordings.
- These stories and songs as they become available, that God would indeed help and encourage others through them.
- The participants trained in recording and editing, that God would open up opportunities for this to be used for his glory.

You can read more about this new training online in the article 'Training recordists in Arnhem Land to help Yolngu disciple Yolngu' on Bible Society's newspaper 'Eternity'. Go to: <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/training-recordists-in-arnhem-land-to-help-yolngu-disciple-yolngu/>



**Recordings were made of Scripture readings, a Gospel presentation, testimonies, teaching and a collection of songs.**



Yirrkala Kids Club recorded singing 'Dhuwalanna Walu' (This is the day') in Gumatj



# What do we need? By Louise Macdonald



The Turtle Hunt

Cross Cultural competency is essential in everything we do. The fresh water and salt water story as told by yurranydjil dhurrkay uses the wisdom of metaphor to explain the need for cross cultural competency. Sometimes the fresh water arrives at the mouth of the river and to find the salt water is not there to meet them. It's like the tide is way out and the sea has dried up! The first task is to come together as the fresh and salt waters do and build relationships, becoming culturally competent together, before doing all the other work needed to decide the translation tasks that are needed to work on.

The Turtle hunt story is another use of metaphor to explain the three roles that are required to have a successful hunt. Each role carries different responsibilities and expectations of skill and knowledge and all three must collaborate respectfully if the family is to be fed.

From this gathering a smaller group of Australian partners is organising to bring all people involved in Bible translation in Australia together, to find ways of collaborating and addressing needs that will lead to Bible translation work in all languages that have requested this work.

Join with us in this incredible work of the Holy Spirit.



People

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