



Quality Assurance through Emerging Methods

Trustworthy translation, and the question of who is able to produce it

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At current rates, the movement will not complete the last chapters of the All Access Goals until approximately **2038**, five years past the goal. Quality assurance is one of the factors limiting the pace of Bible translation because it heavily depends on outside expertise. One solution is to increase the number of people and broaden the capacities in which they are able to contribute to quality assurance meaningfully. This paper describes a destination, **Church-Based Bible Translation**, in which the church that speaks a language owns the process of meeting its own translation needs. **Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance** is the road toward it. It responds to the concerns that church-based approaches provide insufficient training by asking directly where competence comes from, and argues that competence is not reduced but redistributed, developed through a translator-directed learning architecture rather than an expert-directed one. Evidence from five projects shows increased pace, measurable impact, and review bodies demonstrating sufficient discernment to return work for further refinement and defer authorization. The paper closes with two requests: recognize this as another responsible pathway, and consider where existing projects might incorporate it.

1. INTRODUCTION

In early 2026, Wycliffe Benin and the ETEN Innovation Lab began planning a project to support 20 languages in translating whole New Testaments within three years. When the team arrived in Kétou, more than 20 translators were waiting, organized into four teams, together with half a dozen leaders serving on the community's Scripture Revising Team. Three months later, the Défi community convened its own launch, and a senior translation consultant challenged them to find more translators than Kétou had. They mobilized 46 translators in six teams.

Two observers from a nearby established project sat through the Défi training. Both were consultants-in-training, university educated, and accustomed to working as a small team. After several days, they returned to their own leaders and recommended adopting the approach, on the grounds that the work moves faster when that many people from the church and community carry it. They were positioned to be skeptical. They held a professional interest in the established method, but they changed their minds on the basis of what they observed.

It is important to emphasize that neither community works unsupported. Experienced translators and consultants-in-training from nearby languages visit and remain in regular contact, and experienced Translation Consultants come on-site quarterly for ongoing training. In each place, the translators contribute their own time, and the community resources the work. This is Bible translation as a ministry of the church, done the way the church does ministry. Justin Codjo, Senior Translation Consultant at Wycliffe Benin, observed of the New Testament his own team had completed:

"[We] took seven years to translate the New Testament. It was [a] written translation. If [we] had had the FIA resources then, [we] would have never taken seven years to translate."¹

That judgment, offered by a consultant about his own prior work, frames the question this paper addresses: **Who is able to produce trustworthy Bible translations and how are they able to do it?**

2. FLEXIBLE AND SCALABLE QUALITY ASSURANCE

Figure 1 adapts illustrations in Stuart Young's 2020 paper *Bible Translation Models: Past, Present & Future*?² In each panel, the shaded circle represents the impact partner, and the two dashed circles represent the technical capacity for Bible translation and the resourcing of the work.

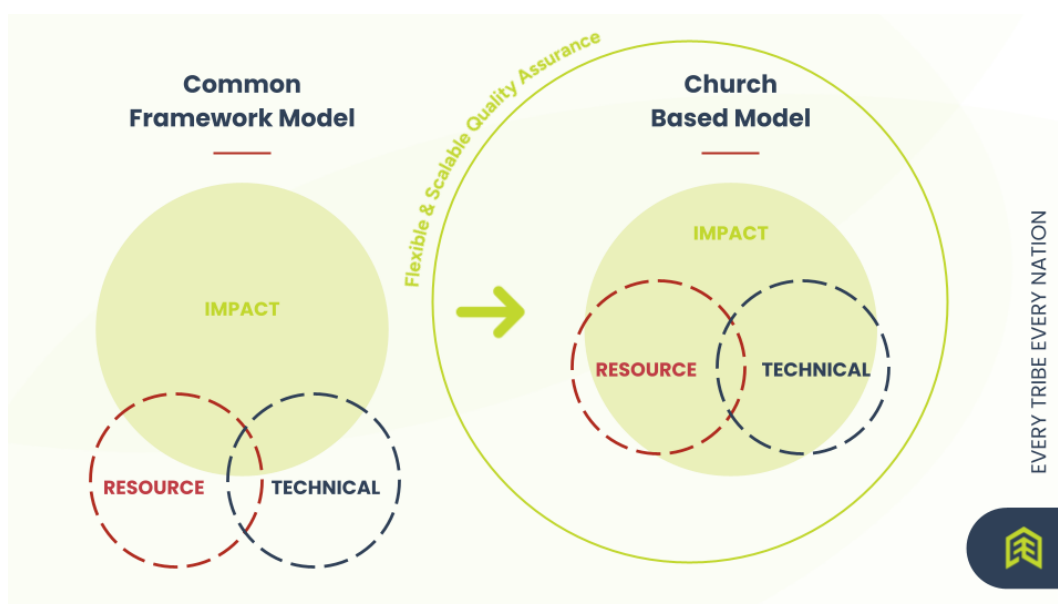


Figure 1: The Common Framework model and the Church-Based model, with Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance as the transition between them.

The difference between the two models reduces to one variable: how far the impact partner (typically, the church in the language community) is equipped to own and lead the work. This is determined by two questions: Does the impact partner have the technical capacity for Bible translation? Can the impact partner resource it? Under the Common Framework, both answers largely sit outside the community. Under the Church-Based model, as the right panel shows, both move inside it.

¹ Justin Codjo, Senior Translation Consultant at Wycliffe Benin. FIA refers to the Familiarize, Internalize, Articulate resources and process.

² Figure 1 adapts Young's model illustrations and adds the transition between them.

Church-Based Bible Translation (CBBT) is a destination. The church that speaks a given language is the effective owner of the process of meeting its own Bible translation needs. Stated plainly: the church decides.³

Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance (FSQA) is the direction of travel toward that destination. It is a vector rather than a state, covering the transitional stages leading up to and including full church ownership.

That distinction matters because communities do not begin from the same place. In Benin, with Wycliffe Benin alongside them, communities moved to a fully Church-Based approach quickly. Elsewhere they may not. Where the most local expression of the church is an evangelistic or church-planting ministry, that community will require substantial early support while its capacity grows. Thus Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance asks Bible agencies to commit, as far as they are able, to equipping the local church and community to own and lead their own translation. It does not ask them to withdraw.

3. SIX WAYS TO RADICALLY BROADEN INVOLVEMENT IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

Quality assurance has long been one of the constraints on Bible translation capacity, because it is the part of the work that depends most heavily on external expertise. Scaling quality assurance becomes possible to the extent that more people can contribute to it meaningfully.



Figure 2: Six ways of broadening involvement in Bible translation.

Figure 2 sets out six kinds of broadening. They operate together, and we hold that each accelerates progress toward the All Access Goals.

³ The abbreviation CBBT is used widely, and by different people to mean different things. In this paper the term refers only to the processes recommended by the ETEN Innovation Lab, which are the processes we can account for and are prepared to defend.

3.1 Agency. Decision-making moves beyond the established Bible translation organizations to include the church, to the point that the church is primary and the translation organizations secondary. Church agency is itself an important factor in Scripture engagement.

3.2 Modalities. Multimodal processes, oral and written together, are more representative of how communities actually work than written-only processes, and they permit wider participation.

3.3 Bible Translation Training. Training extends beyond translators and consultants-in-training to the additional quality assurance roles: reviewers, authentication elders, quality assurance mentors, and the church leaders who serve on Scripture Review Boards.

3.4 Participation in Drafting. More people participate in initial drafting which brings collective intelligence to the task and the increased capacity allows for parallel teams which accelerates progress.

3.5 Quality Assurance Authentication and Authorization. Within a quality assurance community, certified Translation Consultants retain an important role as mentors and coaches to Scripture Review Boards and Scripture Authentication Elders.

3.6 Publication Alternatives. Progressive publication in multimedia replaces the single "final" printed volume that makes ongoing revision and improvement more difficult than it needs to be.

4. TRAJECTORY TO THE ALL ACCESS GOALS

Concerns have been raised about whether this approach is workable: concerns about competency, about evidence, and about quality standards. It is legitimate to have concerns, and they deserve substantive answers.⁴ Sections 6 and 7 attempt to supply them. We ask only that they be weighed alongside the data in Figure 3.

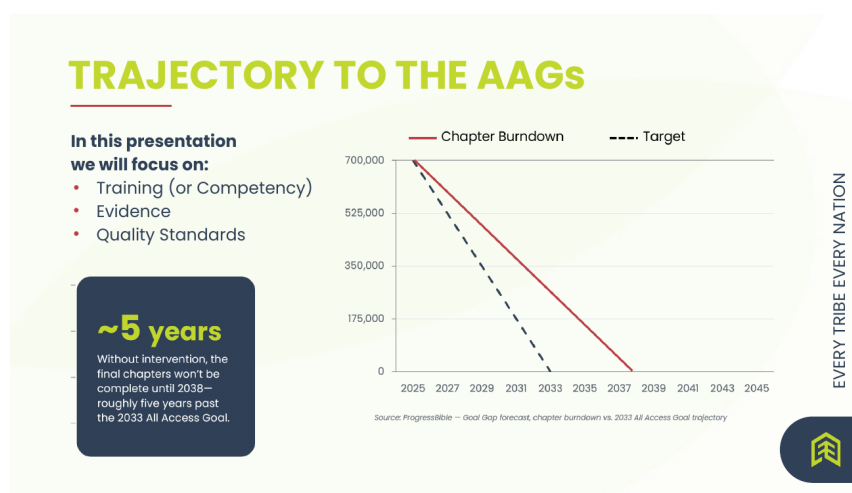


Figure 3: Chapter burndown against the 2033 All Access Goal.

⁴ It is legitimate to have concerns. That is not the same as conceding that every particular concern is warranted, and several of the concerns addressed here rest on assumptions we believe the evidence in section 7 revises.

The vertical axis represents chapters of Scripture remaining to be translated and the horizontal axis represents time. The dashed line is the trajectory required to meet the 2033 All Access Goals; the solid line is the trajectory the movement is currently on. If the current rates hold, **the final chapters will not be complete until 2038**, approximately five years past the goal.⁵ Furthermore, the line shows the average, so many languages will take longer.

We do not present this to alarm, but because it changes the question. The question is not whether established methods produce good translation. They do, and much of the movement's present capacity was built by people who proved it. The question is whether established methods *alone* can reach 2033. We do not believe they can, and if that judgment is correct, something in the system has to be different.

5. WHO? HOW?

Every Bible translation moves through three stages: **Understand → Translate → Refine**. There is nothing novel in them. Every process includes them, and wherever one is shortchanged, quality suffers.



Figure 4: The three stages of translation, with the activities associated with each.

Figure 4 shows the three stages in the inner ring and the activities belonging to each in the outer ring: engaging and internalizing the text under Understand, expressing and recording the translation under Translate, and confirming and authorizing it under Refine. This cycle continues, rather than terminating, which is a claim about the process that will be addressed in section 5.3. The essential difference between different models of Bible translation lies in two questions: “*Who* carries each stage?” and “*How* is it carried?”

⁵

Source: ProgressBible, Goal Gap forecast, as presented in the accompanying deck. The 2038 figure is the completion date implied by the current aggregate trajectory, not a forecast for any individual language.

5.1 UNDERSTAND

“Understand” comes first and is the stage most easily overlooked. When engagement with the biblical text is multimodal and conversational (that is, heard, discussed, and retold rather than only read), understanding grows in more people across the church and community. It ceases to be something a few people hold on behalf of everyone else. That produces capacity which was not previously present: capacity to translate well, to judge whether a draft is right, and to participate at every stage, including quality assurance. Communities do not develop it unaided. The global church supplies networks of mentors and coaches, as well as resources such as FIA that are designed for multimodal translators, and technology that extends their reach.⁶ The church leads the work while drawing on the expertise of the wider body of Christ.

5.2 TRANSLATE

When drafting is multimodal, more people can take part and feedback is immediate: a draft is retold aloud, the room responds, and refinement begins in the same session rather than months afterward. Oral drafting tends to yield a more natural rendering than textual, carrying the rhythm and cadence of ordinary speech, which a purely written process struggles to reproduce. This does not mean that oral drafting necessarily results in an exclusively audio form of the translation. Many communities, even some primarily oral ones, desire a text translation as well and produce one from a transcription of their audio translation.

5.3 REFINE

The “Refine” stage is where concerns about quality usually arise, so it warrants careful consideration. By the time a draft reaches formal review, quality has been accumulating for some time. Improved understanding produced better first drafts, and those drafts were checked by considerably more translators than an established team comprises. **Refinement is not simply a final-stage review; it has been occurring throughout.**

Formal review follows. Trusted church leaders within the community, whom some designate **Scripture Authentication Elders**, carry that work, supported by a network of experienced Bible translators representing the global church, consultants among them. Both the translation and the process are then reviewed and authorized by regional and national church leaders. The cycle then repeats: at each publication, previously published material is refined and republished. The result is *a growing Bible rather than a finished book*.

Barry Funnell states the reason for locating this work with primary language speakers:

“Accuracy in translation is more than just the words and grammar being correct. It includes cultural nuances, suprasegmental elements of meaning, idiomatic expressions, connotative meaning, etc., which an outsider cannot easily access to assess quality especially if they only use back translations.”⁷

⁶ On the pedagogy underlying the FIA resources, see <https://fia.bible/>. The process is described in section 6.3.1.

⁷ Funnell 2026, 60.

This is not an argument against outside expertise. It is an argument for primary language speakers at every level of quality assurance, which raises the question of what equipping them requires.

6. AN EXPRESSED CONCERN

The concern most often raised against Church-Based Bible Translation is insufficient training. The ecosystem for competency development is indeed still developing, and what follows is the Innovation Lab's current thinking rather than a settled account.

Two further concerns underlie the stated one. The first is that translation quality expertise is not important in this approach. **It is, however, vitally important.** The Lab does not hold that every local church or community can produce quality translation without expert support, and it distinguishes between the church in general and the *equipped* church. Church-based projects initiated or promoted without attention to that surrounding ecosystem of expertise are not following the Lab's recommendations. What the Lab proposes is a different ecosystem for that expertise, not its absence.

The second concern is the substantive one: where does sufficient competence come from to produce a trustworthy translation? That is a question about how competence is acquired, and specifically about agency in learning, rather than about quantity of training. From within the established model, it is easy to overestimate the value of workshops when those workshops are not adequately supported, and to underestimate the unintended consequences of retaining quality control in the hands of external experts.

6.1 A CHANGING LEARNING ARCHITECTURE

Neither established approaches nor Church-Based Bible Translation rely on the expertise of one person. Both rely on a community of expertise. What we are calling a **quality assurance community** is such a community, and the knowledge traditionally held by consultants remains crucial within it. What differs is the learning architecture.

Expert-directed learning locates agency with the expert, who identifies the problems and sets the curriculum. Competence develops through individuals with high technical training, advisors and consultants, who direct the learning of teams and transmit expertise through workshops, regular mentoring, and periodic checking. This architecture faces recognized difficulties of scale and sustainability.

Translator-directed learning locates agency with the learner, who identifies problems and directs a search for the expertise that addresses them. Translators are typically adult, oral, and visual learners with substantial competence in their own languages, and the flow of expertise moves under their direction rather than an instructor's.

The shift is not confined to Bible translation. A person who wants to retila a kitchen now watches instructional videos, attempts the work, identifies the errors, and consults a more experienced friend at the point of difficulty. Learning architectures are changing in the world around us, recognising the strength of learner-directed, problem-driven approaches.

Communities under this architecture are equipped with a robust process and grow in competence as they work inside it, supported by embodied learning, quality resources, church

participation, and support networks. **Expertise does not disappear; it becomes distributed, and it is accessed interactively at the direction of the translators and the wider team.**

6.2 BROADENING PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING

Expert-directed systems concentrate learning on a small number of experts and trainees. Translator-directed systems admit far wider participation: translators, reviewers, church leaders, wider communities, Scripture Authentication Elders, Scripture Review Boards, and quality assurance mentors all become active learners. The gain is not simply additional labor. It is additional perspective, additional local knowledge, further opportunity for mutual learning, and more voices speaking into translation quality. The architecture does not require every participant to hold every competence; it gives each one room to contribute from a particular sphere, whether command of the local language, biblical studies, theology, or another area.

6.3 THREE TYPES OF COMPETENCE

A Bible translation ecosystem that produces trustworthy translation requires three kinds of competence:

- **Process competence** – *How?* The ability to follow a robust process.
- **Conceptual competence** – *Why?* The ability to understand why the process works and the principles beneath it.
- **Adaptive expertise** – *What if?* The ability to handle situations the process does not cover.

In traditional structures, these three tend to map onto a hierarchy of roles: translator, advisor, consultant. The claim examined below is that **all three can develop within the local community and translation team.**

6.3.1 PROCESS COMPETENCE

Process competence is the consistent use of good translation practice. Expert-directed learning builds it through workshops, close mentoring, and guided practice with a translation advisor. Church-Based Bible Translation builds it through an introduction to a structured process, reinforced by repeated use of that process in community, in real translation work, with process coaches available. The FIA process carries teams through **Familiarization → Internalization → Articulation → Iterative Refinement**: conversational familiarization with the text, embodied internalization of its meaning through discussion and retelling, articulation in the translators' own language, and iterative refinement in response to feedback. The exegetical resources are the significant investment here, rendering deep exegetical understanding accessible to communities in a manner quite different from the SIL translator's notes or the UBS handbooks, though built upon them. The process is therefore not merely taught but repeatedly enacted, and *competence grows through practice inside the process itself.*

6.3.2 CONCEPTUAL COMPETENCE

Conceptual competence is understanding why translation decisions are made. Expert-directed learning builds it through workshops and mentoring by advisors and consultants, supported by handbooks and exegetical guides. Church-Based Bible Translation builds it through a broader set of inputs: FIA resources that guide reflection on meaning; engagement with multiple

existing translations in widely used languages, examining why each made the choices it did; discussion within the team and wider church, with access to quality assurance mentors, who may be certified consultants redeploying their skills or practitioners developing competence through the process itself; targeted training such as biblical language classes or theological education; and, increasingly, digital tools that surface interpretive options.

Conceptual understanding is thus distributed across resources, community reflection, guided materials, and experts. This is not *less* conceptual competence but a different pathway to it, one relying more on interpreting, comparing, and evaluating existing interpretation than on generating it from first principles. That is possible in many contexts precisely because translations now exist in nearby languages, where the most demanding contextualizing work has already been done.

6.3.3 ADAPTIVE EXPERTISE

Adaptive expertise is the competence to act when the process does not supply the answer.

This is where *both* architectures face their greatest difficulty. Expert-directed learning locates it principally in the translation advisor and consultant, who supply judgment, guidance, and correction when difficult exegetical, linguistic, or theological questions arise.

Church-Based Bible Translation redistributes rather than removes it, resting on the judgment that local communities and churches possess capacity for reflective practice and the wisdom to seek help when they need it. The expertise required to chart a new path is held across quality assurance mentors available on demand; church leaders at various levels who review and authenticate translations, which affirms the church's role as steward of Scripture; structured peer and community review; and specialist networks accessible as needed. Instead of one central point there are multiple access points.

This warrants candor. **The effectiveness of Church-Based Bible Translation depends heavily on whether those support pathways are timely, accessible, trusted, and actually used.** An available learning ecosystem is not necessarily one that is engaged with, and that is among the areas we are continuing to strengthen.

6.4 WHY BROADER PARTICIPATION MATTERS

Broader participation may improve the flow of a project, but efficiency is not the principal argument for it. Broader participation yields more opportunity for learning, More local knowledge of language and culture, more accountability, more discernment, greater ownership, and greater resilience when an individual leaves.

WHY IS THIS NOW POSSIBLE?

The context has changed significantly.



Far more existing translations, resources, and tools due to successful ministries in the past



Translating church and community have higher levels of education



Much more conceptual and interpretive work already available for teams to engage with

This shifts the centre of gravity of competence in many contexts from primarily generating exegetical insight to increasingly evaluating, comparing, and applying existing insight faithfully. In other contexts (Sign Languages, those shaped by dominant religious traditions), significant theological and conceptual reconstruction is still needed.

EVERY TRIBE EVERY NATION



Figure 5: The contextual changes that make quality assurance of Bible translations through emerging methods possible.

6.5 WHY IS THIS NOW POSSIBLE?

This learning architecture is emerging now because the context has changed. There are far more existing translations, exegetical resources, and digital tools than in earlier generations. This is largely because previous ministries succeeded. And, translation-specific resources ensure that a great deal of conceptual and interpretive work is already available for teams to engage. In many contexts, the translating church and community generally hold higher levels of education, and of theological education specifically, than in generations past. That shifts the center of gravity of competence in many contexts, from generating exegetical insight toward evaluating, comparing, and applying existing insight in the local setting.

The limits of this claim deserve consideration. There remain contexts in which substantial theological and conceptual reconstruction is still required. These include sign language contexts, where there is little prior material to build upon, and contexts shaped by other dominant religious traditions. In those settings, more intensive investment by quality assurance mentors is likely to be necessary, particularly at early stages.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS

This architecture is still emerging, and we are still learning what works well, where specialist support is most needed, how the various learning pathways interact, and how competence develops over time. Church-Based Bible Translation does not reduce the importance of competence; it places greater weight on how competence develops, how it is shared, and how it is sustained across a much broader community. The expertise embodied in translation advisors and consultants remains invaluable, particularly as they act as coaches and mentors who strengthen the agency of others. Thus the question is not whether expertise is needed,

but how the movement's collective expertise and resources can best contribute to a learning architecture distributed across relationships, practices, resources, and people.

7. EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

We highlight five projects below, showing encouraging initial evidence of the success of emerging quality assurance methodologies. The standards question deserves direct consideration before the results are reported, because standards are the ground on which claims about quality are adjudicated.

7.1 QUALITY STANDARDS

The Bible translation movement holds a shared standards document in the FOBAI *Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation*. For the purposes of this study, we compared it against the international requirements for translation service providers, and set both alongside the steps as practiced in the established process and in the Church-Based process.⁸ Some steps the movement practices are not named explicitly in the FOBAI document, project management among them; some steps named in one document are absent from the other; and a given step may be optional or may vary by context. We added one step that neither standards document anticipates: **church authorization**. We hold this to be a substantive contribution rather than a local variation, in that it refers to trusted leaders of the church, especially including those who speak the language of the translation, being directly involved in refining and affirming the trustworthiness of the translation.

Quality Step or Function	International Professional Standards (ISO)	FOBAI	Established Process	CBBT Process
Project Management	✓	—	✓	✓
Project Definition (Brief)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understanding the Source	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drafting the Translation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Check (self-check, team check)	✓	—	✓	✓
Verify Rendering Reflects Source Language	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review in Target Language	Optional	✓	✓	✓
Final Verification	✓	✓	✓	✓

⁸ The comparison is drawn against the ISO requirements for translation service providers, which function as the recognized professional standard for commercial translation worldwide. ISO carries no authority for Bible translation, and we do not suggest otherwise. The comparison was undertaken as a self-assessment, on the reasoning that standards developed independently of the movement are a useful external check on the movement's own. A more detailed comparison document is available [here](#).

Quality Step or Function	International Professional Standards (ISO)	FOBAI	Established Process	CBBT Process
Use and Impact Assessment	—	✓	Varies	✓
Church Authorization	—	—	Varies	✓

✓ named or practiced — not named or not practiced Optional / Varies as marked

ISO standards are not authoritative for Bible translation. The comparison is offered as a self-assessment against standards developed independently of the movement. Church Authorization is not anticipated in either standards document.

7.2 PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The cluster in Madang comprises 78 languages and 14 denominations, working by oral drafting and publishing both audio and written products. Before joining this work, almost all of these languages had participated in a different translation model. Their leaders were satisfied with the breadth of mobilization they had experienced and dissatisfied with the quality of the resulting translation. They approached the Lab with one request: *help us to know how we can be confident in the quality of our translation*. They did not lack mobilization. They lacked a process they could trust.

The Papua New Guinea teams completed the full CBBT Quality Assurance training cycle in February 2025, concluding with a Scripture Review Board training attended by **93 church leaders**. A **Scripture Review Board** is a body of senior church leaders at regional or national level who collaborate across denominations, in this case 14, to assess and authorize translated Scripture.

In the eighteen months since, **170 passages have been authorized in 14 languages, 334 more stand in the queue across 28 languages, and 77 of the 78 languages are actively producing**. Asked when he hoped to finish, one pastor answered: "Oh, we hope to never finish. Our people are learning and growing so much, we are going to keep working this way forever."

The most instructive datum concerns confidence. During the training, the Scripture Review Board reviewed 11 passages and then held a formal ceremony authorizing them for publication. **It authorized 10 and returned the eleventh for further refinement**. A board that returns work is evaluating rather than ratifying, and that discrimination is the evidence.



Figure 6: The blessing ceremony in Papua New Guinea, at which the Scripture Review Board authorized approved passages for publication.

Leaders who practice formal vestments wore robes in the color of the liturgical season, because they understood the act to be a function of the church rather than a project milestone. The presiding leader said: "We bless these passages, and we say, this is Scripture." The ceremony has since been replicated across 14 communities.

7.3 NICARAGUA: PACE, IMPACT, AND CONFIDENCE

The Nicaraguan project is a five-language cluster across five denominations, likewise working by oral drafting. One community had appointed translators, purchased a computer, and begun drafting on its own initiative, as self-funded volunteers, working through Psalms and Proverbs. They were pleased with what they had accomplished but uneasy about it, and they brought the Lab the same request in the same words. They did not lack ownership. They lacked a process they could trust.

Training in CBBT Quality Assurance began in August 2025. Within six months, **all five languages had completed Luke** to the final authorization step and had begun Psalms. In the same period, a Scripture Review Board was recruited, equipped, and deployed, and within six weeks of its training it had met, approved, and authorized Luke in the first of the five languages.

Impact followed the participatory process rather than only the published product. The group is largely evangelical, but one translator is Catholic and, in the ordinary course of drafting, invited those around him to participate. The parish priest began attending, now participates daily, and has become one of the strongest supporters of the translation in that language.

Asked how they use the newly authorized text, pastors across the denominations reported using it in preaching, teaching, evangelism, and discipleship. "It is the Bible," they said. The consultant who trained the board recorded this observation of it at work:

"As I observed them, I realized they were performing the same quality assurance functions I would perform as a consultant—while also bringing local relationships and denominational influence that I simply don't have."⁹

Having identified denominational tension at the language level, the board also undertook to visit the villages concerned and secure the cooperation of pastors across denominations, which is not a step available to an outside consultant.

7.4 EURASIA

This project comprises the last two languages in its country without Scripture and is managed by a church planting network operating in a complex region. Church planting and discipleship were built into its design: mature church leaders in the first language carry the newer believers in the second and supply the quality assurance review by way of back translation, while evangelizing and discipling. Drafting is oral, using the FIA materials.

The project launched in November 2023 and completed Mark within three months. The refined process now averages **25 verses a day through all stages**, and the teams have completed Mark, John, 1, 2, and 3 John, all of Psalms, and half of Genesis. Because the committee meets on a regular cycle, Scripture is authorized and published into the community continually rather than in a single release. The teams check every passage against the biblical languages and sustain robust exchanges with the committee until all parties are satisfied. Community reviews are treated as occasions for evangelism.

7.5 LIBERIA

The Liberia project, launched in June 2023, covers 14 languages, all the remaining languages in that country without Scripture, and involves between 50 and 60 named congregations or denominations. Mobilization identified **over 900 named contributors**. Each language fields six translation teams of ten translators and a multid denominational quality assurance team of at least six church leaders, with a **College of Pastors**, the project's equivalent of a Scripture Review Board, conducting final review. All 14 languages have completed every stage short of final authorization for Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

One instance of impact stands out. Two neighboring communities among the 14 had been on opposing sides during the civil war, and told the community mobilizers during project planning that they would not sit in the same room. They now work together, and the reconciliation is attributed to the shared work.

The finding from Liberia is the most instructive of the five, because it is not a straightforward success. The College of Pastors has reviewed all the completed books in all 14 languages and is satisfied with their effect in the churches. **It has nonetheless assessed its own readiness and deferred formal authorization pending further equipping.** A body that declines to authorize until it is confident is exercising precisely the judgment the model requires of it, and the quality assurance mentor team continues alongside them.

⁹ Teryl Gonzalez, on observing the Nicaraguan Scripture Review Board at work. Field observation, 2026.

7.6 NIGERIA

The Nigerian project is a single language, long-standing, written project in which one of the authors served as consultant throughout the New Testament. At the dedication in November 2019, church leaders said in succession that they needed the whole Bible, that they wanted it without a thirty-year wait, and that the work would have to be done differently. A pastor-led quality assurance initiative was organized in response, and **50 church leaders from 17 denominations** attended its launch.

That team has since approved Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Ruth, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah for publication, and the remainder of the Old Testament is drafted. Measured against the same consultant's documented pace on the same material, the team is working **roughly 800% faster** than a single consultant could.¹⁰

The reported effects on the pastors are as notable as the pace. One said: "I used to preach generally, like the story generally. Now I understand the details of the text, and my people need the details." Another reported revival in his church since the work began. They preach from these books with confidence because they know the text is right.

7.7 WHAT QUALITY ASSURANCE LOOKS LIKE NOW



Figure 7: Quality assurance as practiced by a consultant with a single translator, and as practiced by a pastor-led team.

On the left is quality assurance as one consultant practiced it: the consultant and one translator at a screen. On the right is the same function carried by a table of church leaders working through the translated Scriptures together. The standard applied has not changed. The number of people able to apply it has.

¹⁰ Gonzalez's calculation, comparing the pace of the pastor-led quality assurance team against her documented pace as consultant on the same project and the same material. It is a single-project comparison rather than a controlled measurement, and it indicates magnitude rather than a precise multiple.

8. TWO REQUESTS

We are not asking anyone to abandon quality. Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance parallels FOBAI and the established translation processes, and it meets the international standards for translation services. The standard has not moved. What has moved is who is able to be involved in meeting it.

8.1 Recognize. We ask that Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance be recognized as another responsible pathway to trustworthy translation. *Not the only pathway; another one.* Several contexts are demonstrating it as a means of acceleration, and the process requires continued development and use.

8.2 Incorporate. We ask that existing projects consider where they might incorporate elements of Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance. The form will differ in every context. But wherever it occurs, dependence on outside support declines, which means more projects can run concurrently. That is what acceleration consists of. Within that request, we would add this: **were the movement's present Translation Consultant capacity directed toward broadening involvement and equipping the church, the resulting acceleration would be substantial.**

9. CONCLUSION

This paper began with a senior translation consultant's judgment that seven years spent translating a New Testament need not have taken seven years. We have argued that the destination is a church that owns the process of meeting its own translation needs, and that Flexible and Scalable Quality Assurance is the direction of travel toward it. We have answered the concern about insufficient training by asking where competence actually comes from; shown how process competence, conceptual competence, and adaptive expertise each develop across a distributed architecture; and named what that architecture depends on: support pathways that are timely, accessible, trusted, and actually used. Finally, we have set out what five projects have produced: increased pace, measurable impact, and growing confidence in the quality process, including one Scripture Review Board that returned a passage and one College of Pastors that deferred authorization until better equipped.

The constraint on Bible translation has been the number of people equipped to assure quality. A constraint of that kind does not improve by attempting to add more of what is already scarce. It resolves as more people become able to contribute meaningfully, which is work that belongs to all of us. As Barry Funnell puts it:

"How can we as consultants use our time well to equip theologically trained church leaders, who are primary language speakers, to a higher level of competence in the quality assurance of translations which will serve their own language communities better?"¹¹

That is the question we are asking. We would like to answer it together, and evidence for and against the claims made here is warmly welcomed.

¹¹ Funnell 2026, 60.

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