A few months ago I visited Akwaya sub division, a beautiful, but very isolated part of the country. We went there to visit a SIL team that was just assigned to work there. I was struck again by the dedication it takes for anyone to work in an area like that, where walking is the only way to travel around. We met with some church leaders and many of them had taken between 4 and 10 hours to track in, just for that meeting! We talked with them about language development and it was clear to everyone that this also is something that will take time. But everyone, the SIL team and the local people are in it for the long haul.

This long term commitment is characteristic of the approach of SIL. We don’t come in to quickly do something and leave again. We know that language development takes time and commitment. I myself worked for a number of years in the East province, among the Makaa people. We helped set up Mother Tongue education in the schools, a literacy program.
in the villages and we produced all kind of books for cultural preservation and development. But education and literacy are an ongoing concern. It is not something you do for a year and then leave. It takes an ongoing commitment. Since 1980 we have people working among the Makaa people who show that long term dedication.

In this report you will see more examples of that. It is this commitment that has allowed us to be in Cameroon for 40 years now. That is reason for celebration! During that time we worked hard to encourage people to value their language and helped them to use it in written form. As a result the language becomes a more effective tool. Language connects people.

It connects them to their culture, but also to each other, to education, to practical and spiritual development. Without the right language, communication breaks down and people will be isolated. SIL has been happy to help people make these connections better. I hope that this report will make these connections clear to you too.

Nelis van den Berg
General Director SIL Cameroon
The life expectancy in Cameroon is not that long. We can humbly say that most people who have lived for 40 years have spent more than half of their life time. It is expected that the account such a person will give of his past years would be full of important events that have marked his history. In 40 years in Cameroon, some milestones have marked the history of SIL:

**1975** SIL became more recognized in Cameroon. A new ONAREST (Office National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique) for linguistic research was established in Cameroon. That later became DEGERST (Délegation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique) and later became MINREST.

**1976** In July and August the first Writers Workshop [with 10 languages involved] and the first Primer Workshop [5 languages] were organised at Nkol Nda.

**1978** SIL is recognized as a Cameroonian association by the Ministry of Territorial Administration.
1978 The land to build the Cameroon Training Centre is purchased.

1980 The first Discover Your Language training is given to Cameroonians mindful of developing their own mother tongue.


1991 The Rain Forest International School was started to provide an accredited high school level of education to the children of SIL members.


1989 By the end of the eighties, SIL played a very important role in the creation of two national organizations; NACALCO to help local initiatives for language development and CABTAL to help churches with Bible translation.

2002 In April 2002 the Ministry of External Relations and SIL signed a headquarters’ agreement.

In 1976 the first series of training courses were held at Nkol Nda.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Director/Administrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967 - 1974</td>
<td>John Bendor-Samuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972 - 1972</td>
<td>Ron Thwing (administrator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973 - 1974</td>
<td>Ron Gluck (administrator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 - 1979</td>
<td>David Maranz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 - 1981</td>
<td>Karl Grebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 - 1986</td>
<td>Clinton Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 - 1989</td>
<td>Ed Ubels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 - 1994</td>
<td>Bob Creson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 - 1998</td>
<td>Bob Chapman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 - 2000</td>
<td>Paul Haken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2008</td>
<td>George Shultz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 2009</td>
<td>Nelis van den Berg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 Years in Cameroon

Group picture of Translation Principles Course in 1977.
From Biafra civil war to Cameroon

In mid 1967, civil war erupted in Nigeria. Three SIL teams were working in languages in South East Nigeria, which were also spoken in Cameroon. They had to leave as they were in the war zone. John Bendor-Samuel who since 1960 has investigated the linguistic needs in Africa starting in Ghana, was in Cameroon a year earlier to attend the West African Languages Congress in 1966. He came again in October, this time to seek permission for these teams to continue their work from Cameroon but also in Cameroon. The three languages were: Ejagham, Mambila and Yamba. He was able to have then the first agreement with the Federal University of Cameroon. Just after that agreement, new teams were assigned to Cameroon to do linguistic work in specific languages. These included: Lamnso’ in Kumbo, Dowayo in Poli and Fali in Pitoa.
‘This is magic’

"This is magic," someone said. "I did not know it could be so easy for me to learn my mother tongue after I did all my education in French. How do you go about this?" The solution is a team effort managed by the training department. Some participants had been involved in a transition manual workshop. To produce a manual destined for readers of French or English who wish to transfer their reading skills to the mother tongue. They developed the feeling that their "transition manual experience" would stand them in good stead for the primer-making task. However, they soon came to realise that the making of a primer for non-literates is a very different process. They needed now to grasp how basic pedagogical principles apply to primer design and production. How different mother tongue literacy looked from the primer angle! How different the language felt! How different the lessons looked! Both the point of departure and the journey itself were different, yet the goal for both manuals was capable readers of the mother tongue.

In short, a primer-making course has great potential for educating the participants. For several it greatly enlarged their sense of the complexity and worth of the primer. It also increased their own self-respect as they saw that they could tackle this task and succeed, thanks to team-work, effort and perseverance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 in Adult Training</th>
<th>11 in Translation</th>
<th>Anthropology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>including a workshop based on five principles of adult education</td>
<td>including translation principles, various epistles and a seminar for high-level translation consultants</td>
<td>Africa Area Conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 46 | na | 22 |

| 54 | 145 | na |

In the chart on the left, the number of language communities is the actual number of communities represented at a given category of course or workshop. The number of participants, however, includes those who may have taken part in more than one course or workshop.
A major milestone in language development is the appearance of a dictionary. Not only does a dictionary serve to guide the native speaker in the proper writing of his language, but it serves as a storehouse of cultural knowledge for those who speak the language and for those who do not.

A dictionary is not simply just a compilation of words in a language. The process takes years and, in a sense, is never completed because the language keeps changing and growing. The Mofu-Gudur dictionary is a case in point. SIL has created over the years different computer programs to collect and organize dictionary data in a systematic way*. Many people were involved in collecting data, checking, commenting, editing, finishing the computer entry and typesetting. With the help of the Kay Williamson Educational Fund the dictionary is finally printed and published.

Recognizing that a dictionary by itself cannot adequately reflect the richness of a language, the Mofu-Gudur dictionary also contains an introduction to the Mofu-Gudur people and their language, an orthography statement, appendices on counting, musical instruments, instructions on how to read Mofu, irregular verbs, and maps.

* The latest software suite is called ‘Fieldworks.’ More info on linguistic software: www.sil.org/computing/catalog/index.asp
Fululde mother tongue literacy classes held during the school holiday in August 2008 proved to be a great success. Three Fulani secondary school students taught the classes. The classes grew in size quickly. So, new classes were formed with late primary school students now teaching their younger brothers and sisters.

Young boys who help care for the cattle discovered that they, too, could read and write about their own interests and experiences. With this new sense of empowerment, they eagerly came to the classes to read their stories written while out with the cows. Using a whole language approach that encourages creative writing, evenings were filled with the youths visiting the elders of the community to gather traditional stories that they could write down and read in the next day’s classes. Rediscovering their own rich traditions, they created excitement among the elders who asked to have their own literacy classes. Who would be the helpers for these classes? The younger children are sitting with their elders in the evening, helping them learn to read. Generations have been bridged together through the power of mother tongue literacy.

In recognition of the 9th edition of UNESCO International Mother Language Day, February 21st, 2008, SIL Cameroon in collaboration with CABTAL and NACALCO stood in favour that “Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.”
It is a well documented fact that the translation of God’s Word into a newly written language has an influence on the written style of that language far beyond any other publication. For that reason SIL requires certain controls for the translations it supervises.

Translation

Exact, Clear and Natural

A good translation is Exact, Clear and Natural. That is, it conveys the exact meaning of the original in a form that is clear and in a manner that sounds like normal, natural speech of the language in which the translation is made. To assure good quality control, those involved in translating scripture into their language need to be able to read and write their language properly and well. They need to have an understanding of the grammar of the language including the discourse grammar. Discourse grammar has to do with the conventions a language uses in telling stories, giving instruction and exhortation, and generally communicating in a manner that listeners respect. Those involved in translation also need to have a good working knowledge of translation principles and they need to seek the advice and review of trained local advisors. Formally published translation needs to be checked by an experienced translation consultant.

That has been the case since 1982 with translation work in the Mofu-Gudur language. In collaboration with Ken Hollingsworth from SIL, a Mofu-Gudur translator worked to produce several short portions. Later on, selected and trained men were chosen to attend courses on translation principles. They also received daily mentoring from SIL members, mostly Jim Pohlig and Ken Hollingsworth. As their ability grew, they produced several Biblical books. The fruit of all this came together on February 16, 2008 when over 5,000 Mofu-Gudur people gathered together in Mokong to celebrate the coming of their New Testament. The whole translation process was backed by the translation committee called ASEMTRAB.
In 2007, SIL initiated the Kom Education Pilot Project (KEPP), a research study on mother-tongue education in 12 Kom primary schools. Enlightening Kom Children 1 is the third book in a series of four anthologies for junior primary school pupils of the Kom language. The curriculum, written in tandem with mother tongue speakers, is designed to make learning as easy and as culturally relevant as possible. In alignment with the national curriculum, the stories are based on subject matter for the instruction of science, health, civics, and moral values.

It is hoped the curriculum will not only teach young children to read their own language, and thereby improve their academic progress as they learn the national languages, but also contribute to the preservation of the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of Cameroon.
Publications

Publications faites par des camerounais sous la supervision de la SIL :

ALLIANCE BIBLIQUE DU CAMEROON. 2008. Les évangiles de Matthieu et de Marc, texte arabe (ajamiya). (The gospels of Matthew and Mark, arabic script (ajamiya)). 123 pp. Yaoundé, Cameroon: ALLIANCE BIBLIQUE DU CAMEROON.

AVIWAI, Philippe; and Jean MOUPHARA. 2008. Lets read the Muyang language 3. 72 pp. Maroua, Cameroon: SIL.


LEKUNZE, Henry Ketu; John Leku LEKUNZE; Joseph AKEM; and Jacob TAKU. 2008. Reading and writing Mundani. 51 pp. Yaounde, Cameroon: NACALCO.


Collaborations entre des camerounais et des membres de la SIL :


FRIESEN, Dianne. 2008. Translating Narrative Peak into Moloko. 65 pp. manuscript


GROVE, Dan. 2007. Bambalang (Chrambo) Orthography Guide. 20 pp. manuscript

HENSON, Bonnie. 2007. The Noun Phrase in Kol. 44 pp. manuscript

HENSON Bonnie J. The phonology and morphology of Kol; 2007; California, USA:University of California; 592p.

HUBER, Carolin. 2008. Stages of Life: Traditions and Rites of the Faaranko’en, a Fulbe clan in the Northwest Province of Cameroon. 105 pp. manuscript


WALTER, Stephen. 2007. Preliminary report on some findings on Primary Education in Boyo Division. 11 pp. manuscript

WELAZE, Jacquis Kongne; Virginia BOYD; Marguerite BITEYA; and Gabriel OKAILIA. 2008. Précis d’orthographe pour la langue Tuki. 14 pp.
Word of the success of the Kom Education Pilot Project has become known and other language groups are asking about extension to their areas. It is hoped that the Bafut and Oku languages will begin formal MLE classes in the coming school year.

"International awareness of the importance of ‘Education for All’ has grown. Yet, the only schooling available in many rural communities uses a language students do not understand or speak. Students who cannot understand what their teacher is saying quickly become discouraged. Multilingual Education (MLE) programs acknowledge the right of all learners to education in a language they speak and understand."

Susan Malone, MLE Consultant SIL International

In multilingual education (MLE) programs, children begin school in their mother-tongue and then add English and French, gradually building competency in all three languages. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of MLE, SIL is conducting a study in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. The Kom Education Pilot Project (KEPP) uses Kom, the mother-tongue of children, as the language of instruction in the classroom. The results from the first year indicate students in the program showed superior performance in every area tested, even English.

"The children in class one are interested in the class work. They take an active part... They can actually read."
Ndifet Simon, Fundong Sub Divisional Inspector for Basic Education

**MLE connects families to the schools**

Often the language of instruction in the school limits the parents’ understanding and participation in their children’s education. In MLE programs the parents are not only able to communicate, but their knowledge is valued as well.

"It is wonderful! My child returns from school and teaches me our own Kom proverbs." Father of a KEPP student
Languages of the World

Founded 75 years ago, SIL International is a faith-based organization that studies, documents, and assists in developing the world’s lesser-known languages. SIL’s staff shares a Christian commitment to service, academic excellence, and professional engagement through literacy, linguistics, translation, and other academic disciplines. SIL makes its services available to all without regard to religious belief, political ideology, gender, race, or ethnic background.

SIL (initially known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics) has grown from a small summer linguistics training program with two students in 1934 to a staff of over 6,000 coming from over 60 countries. SIL’s linguistic investigation exceeds 2,550 languages spoken by over 1.2 billion people in more than 70 countries. SIL focuses on unwritten languages. People who speak these languages often live in geographic, social, and economic isolation. Studying these languages results in practical help for local people and contributes to the broader knowledge of linguistics, anthropology, and ethnomusicology. SIL publishes its research and widely distributes it to libraries, universities, governments, and international agencies. As a leader in the research of the world’s endangered languages through language survey, SIL facilitates language development to prevent the extinction of language and culture. SIL’s premier publication, the Ethnologue: Languages of the World, is a comprehensive catalog of the world’s more than 6,900 living languages.
Language Development

In all Provinces of Cameroon

Yaoundé
Siège et centre de formation de la SIL Cameroun / Administrative office and training centre of SIL Cameroon

Bamenda
Bureau régional de Bamenda / Bamenda Regional Office

Maroua
Bureau régional du Grand Nord / Greater North Regional Office
During 2008 SIL gave consulting, training or logistical support to language development in the following languages:

**Province de l’Extrême-Nord**
**Far North Province**
- Bana
- Buwal
- Cuvok
- Fulfulde
- Gemzek
- Giziga South
- Gavar
- Hdi
- Jimi
- Lagwan (Kotoko)
- Mafa
- Matal
- Mazagway
- Mbedam

**Province du Centre**
**Centre Province**
- Basaa
- Bebele
- Elip
- Ewondo
- Lefa
- Mengisa
- Mbule
- Mmaala

**Province du Nord-Ouest**
**North West Province**
- Aghem
- Awing
- Baba
- Babanki
- Bafanjí
- Bafut
- Bamali
- Bambalang
- Bamukumbit
- Bamunka
- Bangolan
- Bum
- Ngwo
- Esimbi
- Fulfulde (fuv)
- Iceve-Maci
- Kemezung

- Mbuko
- Merey
- Mofu-Gudur
- Moloko
- Musey
- Muyang
- Parkwa
- Psikye
- Sharwa
- Tupuri
- Vame
- Wandala
- Wuzlam
- Zulgo-Gemzek

- Nomaande
- Nubaca
- Nugunu
- Tuki
- Tunen
- Vute
- Yambeta
- Yangben

- Kenswei Nsi
- Kom
- Lamnso’
- Limbum
- Mbembe
- Meta
- Mfumte
- Ncane
- Ngemba
- Noone
- Oku
- Pinyin
- Vengo
- Weh
- Wushi
- Yamba

**Province du Nord**
**North Province**
- Daba
- Gidar
- Karang
- Mambai

**Province de l’Adamaoua**
**Adamawa Province**
- Kwanja
- Mambila
- Tikar

**Province du Sud**
**South Province**
- Batanga
- Ngumba

**Province du Sud-Ouest**
**South West Province**
- Akoose
- Denya
- Ejagham
- Kenyang
- Mundani
- Ngwe
- Oroko

**Province du Littoral**
**Littoral Province**
- Bakoko
- Bakaka

**Province de l’Ouest**
**West Province**
- Ngiemboon
- Ngomba
- Ngombale
- Yémba

**Province de l’Est**
**East Province**
- Baka
- Bangandu
- Kako
- Kol
- Koonzime
- Makaa
- Mpumpong