

Wycliffe NEWS

A piece of the puzzle...

Emese Láng was among the first of our Wycliffe Hungary missionaries to serve overseas for the next step in her missionary service in Africa. While she is home we have taken the opportunity to share with our readers about her previous service and future plans.

How did you first hear about Wycliffe? How has your involvement with the organisation developed?

Since the age of eight, I have wanted to be involved in missions, and as I got older, I became more and more drawn to overseas missions. When I was 17, one of our church members, knowing that I was interested in missions, told me about an organisation, whose members worked on far-off islands translating the Bible into the languages of different people groups. This woman gave me the telephone number of the Wycliffe representative who gave me lots of information about the organisation. The first thing she did was invite me to the first Wycliffe Mission Camp in 1991. That's where my journey with Wycliffe started. In order to prepare for my mission work I studied for a degree at the Baptist Theological Academy. During that time, I felt more and more drawn towards one of the key ministries within Wycliffe – literacy. I applied to the organisation, was accepted as a member, and in the autumn of 1998 I left for a two-year short-term placement in East Africa.

I encountered lots of difficulties in my place of assignment. It wasn't easy to adjust to the culture, the climate, the absence of those I love, but at the same time I experienced and learnt many new and good things. At the beginning I was just an observer

at the various workshops, but as time went on I was given more and more responsibility and was allowed to work on my own. I really liked this as I was working directly with people and I could see the results of my work straight away – I really appreciate this kind of instant feedback.

'When you first look at the pieces individually, they don't tell you much... but when it's finished, you can see the big picture and the importance of each individual piece. In this way the work of Wycliffe and to a larger extent the work of the Church fits into God's plan.'

After two years I returned to Hungary and from September 2001 I worked in the Wycliffe Hungary office for almost a year. In October 2003 I returned with new enthusiasm to the African mission field. Until the summer of 2005, I worked in Uganda, again in the field of literacy.

From about December 2004 onwards, I became interested in the ministry of Bible Translation.

In the Ugandan Centre the work of both literacy and Bible translation was carried out side by side and I was able to sit in on some of the local translation work sessions. During this time I became surer that I ►

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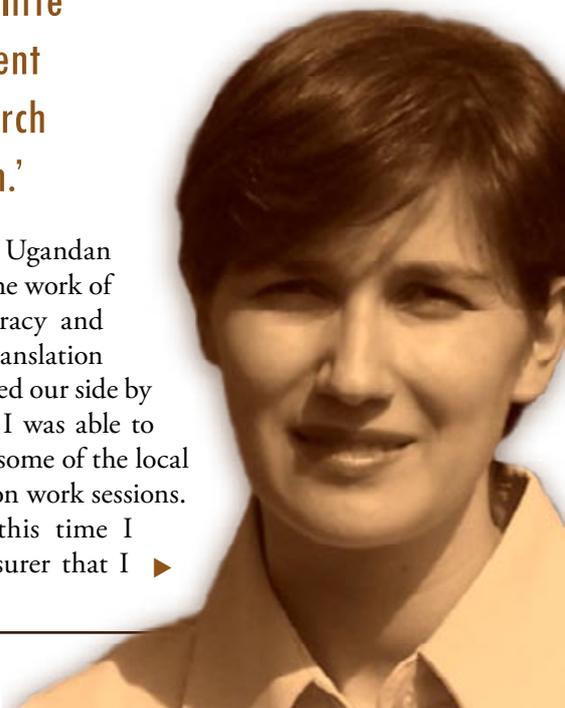
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► would like to be involved in this work. I am very grateful that Wycliffe is a big, flexible organisation, with opportunities to change assignment should the member want to.



Of course, the change was not automatic. I needed further training and decided to do that at an African University, which had started a linguistics and Bible translation course, especially for Wycliffe Personnel. This school is in Nairobi, Kenya. Here I was take a high quality course in an African context, alongside African students.

Do you think the two-year course was adequate to prepare you for translation work?

Yes, it's enough to get you started. At the same time I know that I will need continual, ongoing training as well as working alongside experienced translators in order to achieve good results. ***I do my best and pray that I will be able to do a good job.***

I am serving the King of Kings, and it is natural that we should want to do the best we possibly can in our service for Him. Since it is the Bible, God's Word, that we are translating, we have a great responsibility to do good work. Actually it is one of the principles of our organisation that we should model excellence in academic work. Many of our members are very highly qualified, many have a PhDs. Within Wycliffe, truly well-qualified people do the work and experienced teachers teach the translators-to-be.

What do you think about literacy work now?

I still have a high respect for literacy work. This work is very important and those that work in this field are also well-qualified and achieve great results with their work. In many places, without literacy, the many years spent in translation work would be pointless.

You finished your studies in August, what's next?

I am staying in Hungary until February during which time I have invitations to speak in many

churches and Christian groups. After that I would like to return to Africa to continue my ministry in a new country. I plan to leave for Nigeria at the beginning of February where I will work in the local SIL centre in the town of Jos.

Why Nigeria?

Because this is one of the countries in Africa with the greatest needs – it has the greatest number of languages needing translation. I will also have the opportunity there to work alongside experienced translation consultants.

Exactly what kind of work will you be doing in Nigeria?

I will be a trainee translation consultant. Within Wycliffe it is most common for the translation itself to be done by national translators, since they are the ones who know their own language and culture best. In this way the work is much more effective than if someone goes to a people group and learns the language and does the translation – with this method the work might take 10-15 or even 20 years to reach completion. In this way a consultant coordinate the translation work on five or six different languages at once. This makes the work more effective and also brings it in line with our international Vision 2025 goals.

For you personally, why is it important to translate into minority languages? How does this affect the local people?

I have seen that many people use the Bible that has been translated into their mother tongue. In many parts of East Africa, for example, the mother tongue is very important. They want their language to survive, they use it and they give it an important place in their education system. Of course, sadly, this is not always so. In Kenya I saw that many would rather use the English Bible even if they understand it less than that in their own language. Our attitude to the people is very important. You can't force people to use a translation. They need to feel the need for it and to understand its importance for themselves. However much our efforts are initiated by love, if we force Bible translation or the use of the Bible onto people, then we will most likely achieve the opposite effect.

What would you say to young Hungarian Christians who are interested in missions?

This work is very important – there are still more than 2,000 people groups waiting for the Word ►



We would like to wish all our readers a happy Christmas!



We really do have a reason to celebrate, the Word came to us on this earth and through him we can know God's love and his plan for us. Thank you for joining with us in our ministry so that many other people groups will be able to hold with their hands and receive into their hearts this wonderful gift.

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

(John 1:14)

► of God in their language. At the same time, it is not an impossible ministry for an ordinary Hungarian girl either – I'm a living testimony to this! We need to recognise that, wherever it may be, the work of the church can only be complete when it has access to the Bible in the language that the people understand best, in which they read. This is essential for conversation and spiritual growth too. As well as Bible translation, there are many other opportunities for service within Wycliffe.

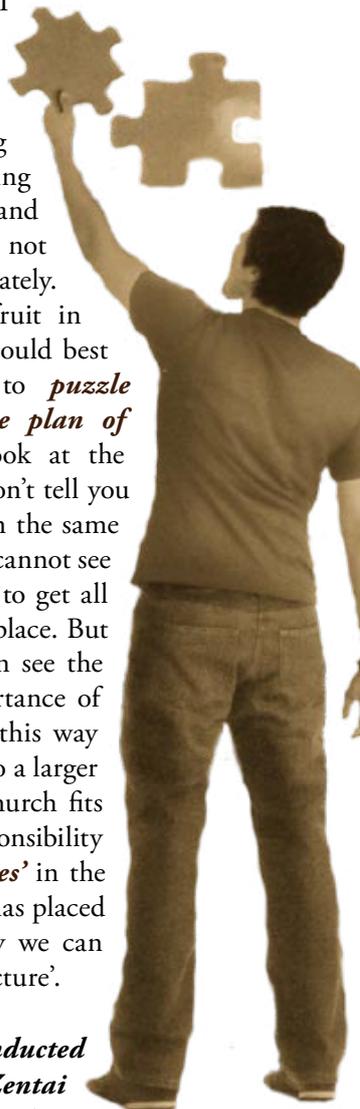
How can we support you and your work from Hungary?

One possibility is to pray – there is always a need for prayer! It is a great privilege for me to know that so many people are praying for me. This is an example of support and encouragement especially as there are many difficulties and spiritual attacks to face on the field. Another way to be actively involved in my ministry is to support me financially. I am thankful to God that recently more and more people are standing with me in this. The staff in the Wycliffe Hungary Office would be happy to give more information about this. You can also get information about the dates, places and times of my forthcoming presentations on the Wycliffe Hungary website (www.wycliffe.hu). I would love to meet all those who are interested in my ministry.

Finally a difficult question, but one that interests many of us: During your ministry, have you ever had the privilege of seeing concrete results of your work in someone's life?

In my literacy work I have seen real examples of this, and I am sure that I will see the results of my translation work too. However, the results of someone starting to read their Bible, getting to know Jesus personally, and growing spiritually, are not always easy to see immediately. This ministry bears its fruit in the long term. Perhaps I could best compare this ministry to **puzzle pieces in the worldwide plan of God**. When you first look at the pieces individually, they don't tell you much about the picture, in the same way the ordinary observer cannot see every detail. It takes time to get all the pieces into their right place. But when it's finished, you can see the big picture and the importance of each individual piece. In this way the work of Wycliffe and to a larger extent the work of the Church fits into God's plan. Our responsibility is to remain faithful '**pieces**' in the ministry into which God has placed us, when we get to Glory we can delight in the 'complete picture'.

The interview was conducted by Zsuzsanna Zentai and Attila Kovács.



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