The country of Indonesia is an intricate tapestry of over 17,000 islands. Indonesians come from 700 distinct ethnic groups — each with its own culture and language. The government officially recognizes five different religions among them. Over 400 of these groups lack a translation of God’s Word in the language that touches their hearts.

Our Indonesian partner organization realizes that a sustainable Bible translation movement in their region of the world will involve Indonesians at many levels. Visa restrictions limit the time that foreign personnel can spend in the country. But many highly qualified Indonesians are joining the task of translating God’s Word into their own languages.

Although there are many Bible translation tools available in English, very few are available in a language used by Indonesian Bible translators. In order to produce high-quality Scripture translations, they need access to resources in a language they understand.

Our Indonesian partner organization is translating Bible translation tools into Indonesian in order to equip local translation teams!

They have completed translation handbooks for all the New Testament books, plus four books of the Old Testament.

Originally the handbooks were published in printed form. As demand for the handbooks grew, our partner decided to publish them electronically to lower the cost. This move enabled even more users to access these valuable resources.

Many local translation teams use specialized Bible translation software called Paratext. Adding the handbooks to that software allows users to scroll through their translation draft in one column and view corresponding translation tools in a parallel column.

Nine additional Old Testament handbooks in Indonesian will be added to Paratext this year. The team will also draft handbooks for Isaiah and 2 Kings, and they will prepare the Minor Prophets handbooks for a translation consultant to check.

“The Indonesian Translator’s Handbooks have helped the translation team understand the meaning of difficult words,” reports a translation team adviser. He is encouraged by the impact of the translation tools:

“Even though not all of the team’s questions are answered by the handbooks, they certainly make our work go more smoothly. “They provide examples of different ways a passage could be translated. They also provide illustrations that help the team understand Jewish customs.”

Our partners receive similar feedback from all over the country, indicating that translators find the resources invaluable.

Translation consultants are noticing improvement in the quality of the Bible translation drafts they review.

This project has potential to help reach the remaining Bibleless language communities of Indonesia with God’s Word!

Your prayers and investment will help local translation teams produce high-quality translations of God’s Word for Bibleless people in Indonesia!