**Movement-Led Bible Translation**

Many workers have made great sacrifices to translate the Bible. 724 languages have the full Bible, 1,617 have just the New Testament, and 1,248 have only portions. This is an enormous achievement but there are still 3,799 languages—more than half of the world’s total—with no Scripture.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Many of today’s Kingdom Movements have taken root using trade languages but the movements need the Bible in their heart language to fully mature and be strengthened against persecution.   
  
**Key Challenges**

* The remaining languages have fewer speakers.
* Often, what is classified as a dialect needs its own translation.
* The remaining languages are often in areas hostile to the gospel.
* Governments sometimes oppose the use of these languages to encourage national unity.
* For these and other reasons, traditional translators have accessing the areas and/or offering help to local translators.
* Copyright restrictions keep local translation teams from accessing needed resources.
* Financial models built on Western donors are often not feasible in certain contexts.
* Some existing translations are greatly out-of-date or otherwise unusable.

**God is at Work**

These challenges do not surprise God. In His wisdom, He has used existing trade-language Bible translations to begin multiplying disciples and churches in many of the remaining Bible-less languages. These disciples are positioned inside these language communities and are willing to face life-threatening risks in translation because they deeply yearn to provide the Bible—to both believers and lost people—in their own heart language. God has allowed us to live in a day when we can strengthen and support those who risk so much.

Movements are currently involved in finished or ongoing translation projects of over 200 languages. They are being served by the 24:14 Bible Translation Servant Team (with members from RUN, Unfolding Word, ???)

**Movement-Led Bible Translation** **Process**

1. **A language is selected**. The leadership of a Bible-less movement or family of related movements discerns, through prayer and counsel with the broader 24:14 family, the need for a translation of the Bible in a certain language(s). Bible translations take time, and there are not enough workers to do all the translations immediately, so some languages must take priority over others. After extensive prayer and discussion, a language(s) is selected based on the following criteria:

* commitment of the leaders to complete the translation process and make the best possible effort to distribute and use the translated Scriptures
* current capacity of the translators and outside partners able to assist the process
* security for the translators, which is more workable with a larger group of believers, such as in movements
* existence of other language-related movements in the same or different countries, which can aid in the translation process
* available training, translation tools, and resource texts (the texts from which the new translations will be made)
* the need and possibility of translation into two or more closely related languages or major dialects of a mega-language

2. **A translation team is recruited**. For each language, an initial group of 25 to 30 full-time, mother-tongue bilingual, literate speakers are pre-qualified by their local church leaders. They do not have to be trained career translators.

3. **The team is trained**. A 24:14 translation mentor(s) begins preparing and training the translation team. Self-learning tools and other helpful resources are also provided to help teams address gaps and find opportunities for further learning.

4. **Initial translation drafting begins**. Once qualified by their local church leaders and the 24:14 translation mentor(s), the translation team works full-time collaboratively to define key words and produce quality drafts of Scripture. Each initial draft is reviewed by the translation mentor according to the 24:14 translation guidelines.

5. **Texts are checked and edited**. In a careful process, drafted Scripture portions are peer-checked, local church checked, and then sent to the translation mentor(s) for review. Once approved as an initial draft, the text is community-tested through an approved set of questions to help determine clarity, naturalness, accuracy, and acceptability. Adjustments are made and tested again. An average of 500 people are expected to be involved in this process for each language translated.

6. **A translation-quality advisor provides ongoing coaching**. A series of web-based and offline tools are used to help ensure the same criteria that the community test checked. Concurrently with and throughout the checking process, each language coordinator who leads a translation team has frequent access to full-time translation mentors who have remote access to translation-quality advisors.

7. **The finished draft is evaluated by the larger movement leadership**. Once the texts have been assessed, evaluated, edited, and checked by the local church network and the community, and approved by the translation mentor(s), the drafts are forwarded for final evaluation by the larger movement leadership in the Movement.

Through this process, a translation of Scripture can be developed from an initial group of stories to a finished version of the complete Bible.

By involving at least several hundred people in translating and checking the translation, the community gains a strong sense of ownership, which increases their respect for and use of the Bible. The lives of disciples among this people group will be impacted during the testing process, as they deepen their understanding and application of Scripture and use newly translated passages in discipleship processes:

Newly translated Scripture portions become tools for evangelism, as translators ask local nonbelievers to help by checking whether they can understand the translated passages. This serves as an effective way of sharing the Gospel with family and friends. Often, during this time of asking nonbelievers to participate, the heart of the nonbeliever is softened and turned toward the Gospel. Some come to faith just by reading God’s Word.

Measuring the impact in lives is a critical and often overlooked aspect of Scripture translation and use. Measurement of the increase in both quantity (number of new churches and disciples) and quality (discipleship metrics of transformed lives and communities) serves as the final piece in measuring Scripture impact.

1. “Data - ProgressBible.” *ProgressBible*, progress.bible/data. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)