

2020 Scripture Access Statistics

7360 total languages in the world

Total [world population](#) 7.8 billion people

Languages with Scripture

3415 languages with some Scripture – 7 billion people

- 704 languages with a complete Bible – 5.7 billion people
- 1551 languages with a complete New Testament (some also have Old Testament portions) – 815 million people
- 1160 languages with some translated Bible portions – 458 million people

Languages with no Scripture

3945 languages with no Scripture – 255 million people.

- 738 languages have work in progress – 65.4 million people
- 1193 languages are not vital enough to plan translation work – 20.8 million people
- 2014 languages need translation (or preparatory work) to begin – 167 million people

Bible translation need

1.5 billion people, speaking 6656 languages, do not have a *full Bible* in their first language.

167 million people, speaking 2014 languages, still need translation work to begin.

- Africa - 597 languages, 20 million people
- Americas – 120 languages, 2.6 million people
- Asia – 836 languages, 141 million people
- Europe – 60 languages, 2.9 million people
- Pacific – 401 languages, 0.44 million people

Bible translation in progress

2731 languages in 167 countries with active translation or preparatory work begun – 6.2 billion people



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Wycliffe Global Alliance Involvement Snapshot 2019

- Alliance Organizations are working in at least 2130 languages.
- Alliance Organizations are involved in work in at least 132 countries.
- Alliance Organizations have been involved in the translation of New Testaments or Bibles in at least 1594 languages.
- Alliance Organizations have been involved in the translation of at least one published Bible book in an additional 824 languages.

Working in community partnerships, Alliance personnel not only assist in Scripture-related goals but also help produce resources for literacy, education, health and other community-based objectives alongside Scripture.

Statistics are rarely as simple as the numbers imply

Scripture access statistics are not as simple as they seem at first glance. We strive to give an accurate snapshot of the main numbers, but the data is actually a bit more complex than that. For example, translation need is not as simple as determining which languages do or do not have Scripture. Most of the languages with only “some Scripture” are in need of more, and even full Bibles undergo revisions from time to time. Also, comparisons with previous annual reports are challenging and sometimes not possible, due to ongoing changes and improvements in data definitions and collecting methods.

A new way of measuring Bible Translation Progress

Statistics provide one lens through which to measure progress in worldwide Bible translation. Progress involves not just publishing translations but changed lives as people encounter God through his Word and as the worldwide Bible translation movement moves toward greater unity in Christ.

Alliance leaders have begun to explore other important measurements of progress such as:

- How are language communities experiencing life-changing impact from Scripture?
- Are churches increasingly taking ownership over the work of Bible translation?
- Are churches, communities, and organizations partnering more effectively to carry out the work of translation together?

These are just a few examples of measurements being talked about. To read more, see: [A missiology of progress: Assessing advancement in the Bible translation movement](#) by Dr. Kirk Franklin.

Wycliffe Global Alliance presentations of Scripture and Language Statistics are compiled from data provided through progress. Bible by Wycliffe Organisations, SIL International, United Bible Societies and many other partners. Data is current as of 1 October 2020. Population data is based on available information about first language speakers in SIL’s Ethnologue. Further stories about people and projects are available at www.wycliffe.net and from your nearest [Wycliffe organisation](#).