



## PROJECT PROFILE

# VITAL Cluster

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

Papua New Guinea, which occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, north of Australia, has long been the scene of sweeping evangelization efforts. Yet today, throughout the majority of communities, people remain enslaved by oppressive spiritual forces—forces that have held sway across generations.

For the gospel to become fully indigenized, and therefore the people and culture to experience powerful transformation, Scriptures translated in the mother tongue is key. Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse nation on earth, boasting 830 languages. This project represents a strategy to accelerate Scripture translation for 15 languages, representing about 50,000 Papua New Guineans.

### THE VITAL PROGRAM

The VITAL program (Vernacular Initiative for Translation and Literacy) successfully and efficiently trains Papua New Guinean translators in Milne Bay Province. VITAL conducts workshops for teams of translators from many languages, not only to leverage the help of consultants and trainers between translation teams, but also to promote healthy teamwork among translators of related languages. In the way that VITAL uses a cluster approach, it meshes well with The Seed Company drive—to accelerate translation, for this generation.

### THE PLAN

Through VITAL, the goal is to rapidly provide the 50,000-plus people with a broad background to the gospel message, so they can know the good news sooner.

Former strategies meant translating the Bible book-for-book. Sometimes people could not own Scriptures until the entire New Testament was completed—a task that often took 10 to 20 years. But the key question now is: can we more quickly provide a broad view of the gospel, through selected translated Scriptures?

From 2009 to 2014, VITAL workshops will assist 41 Papua New Guinean translators in teams, from 15 languages, as they translate key portions of the Old Testament and the entire book of Acts. Although four languages already have the completed New Testament, four new teams will join the others in translating the Old Testament portions.



- **Location:** Papua New Guinea
- **Number of Speakers:** 50,000 in 15 language groups
- **Project Goal:** Old Testament selections and Acts, equal to 2,545 verses
- **Year Project Began:** 2009
- **Expected Completion Date:** 2014



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Together this collection of 2,545 verses will communicate God's redemptive plan through Christ, beginning in Genesis, progressing through the prophets to the incarnation of Christ and the early New Testament church.

Another key part of the strategy lies in the way the verses were carefully selected for this phase. Based on the expressed needs of communities, translators and consultants have selected verses the people may more readily connect with, on a deep level.

Translators will attend three four-week modules of training per year and leave each workshop with a high-quality translated product to distribute and test in villages. Partnerships are in place for local churches and schools to assist in testing the translations and promoting them.

VITAL also seeks to answer the question: how can we make these Scriptures accessible in a variety of forms that match people's needs? The plan is to train and equip translators to produce Bible story booklets, audio recordings of Scriptures, materials to train pastors and Sunday school teachers, and health and education booklets with Scripture verses.

### THE NEED

People here demonstrate beliefs and religious practices based on their culture. Ancestors worshiped evil spirits with fear, wanting to please them. Magic, sorcery and witchcraft became their perceived ways of dealing with life's unknowns. Christianity now has been interpreted by many as one more method in this mix. If prayers to God aren't answered, the people may revert to magic.

This syncretism only reveals that most people do not understand the gospel on a deep level. They don't understand God's redemptive plan for them. They need the security and peace possible through Christ alone.

### JOIN THE TEAM

National translators cannot complete their goals without your financial investment and prayer. Your investment makes translation possible, providing training, adequate computer equipment, translation supplies and living expenses for the translators' families.

Your prayer helps translators and their families face problems like sickness, conflict and spiritual opposition that can threaten their work.

Call The Seed Company toll-free at 1-877-593-7333 or visit [theseedcompany.org/projects](http://theseedcompany.org/projects) to commit to invest and pray for the teams involved.

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