

February 2009:

AFRICA COUNTRY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- Updating Least-Reached People Group Lists -
Contact Research use form on left.

Note: MANI's goal is not assessment simply for new statistics. The goal is to mobilize the African Church to reach the least-reached of Africa. New information may help mobilize, but the process of networking and correcting information together is an even bigger part of the assessment and mobilization.

A) Preliminaries

1. Objective: To develop a credible mobilisation tool for the countries least-reached peoples by:
 - a. Eliminating inaccuracies from the Joshua Project list, through the update of spreadsheets provided by MANI. Information received will be entered into the MANI database: EIS (Ethne Information System).
 - b. Establishing follow-up lists of issues or items for research or discussion.
 - c. Updating African data which will be presented at the MANI 2011 Continental Consultation.

2. MANI assessment vision-casting from the National or Regional Coordinator:
 1. Assessment ownership on a country level through National Initiatives, where they exist.
 2. Vision = outcomes... examples of churches among Least-Reached Peoples.
 3. Begin with an update of Joshua Project list by country. Available in excel spreadsheets from:
 4. Focus is on assessing the least-reached, (ie the need in each country).

3. MANI Coordinators: Mobilize the Country Assessment Task Force including a point person in each country, by June 2009.
 - a. Explain how a national point-person is appointed:
 - i. Proposed: combined effort with MANI Coordinators and where available, the Regional Assessment Facilitator.
 - ii. The point person should be accepted on a national level. The person would not have to be a researcher, as researchers can be included on the review team.
 - b. Qualifications for Regional/Country Assessment Facilitators:
 - i. High level computer skills.
 - ii. Internet access.
 - iii. Relates well to people. This person will need to interact with: field researchers, denominational leaders, regional and country coordinators, other assessment facilitators, etc.

- iv. Has research understanding, especially key concepts of people group and language information.
- v. Ability to mobilise assessment efforts with the MANI Coordinator.

B. Overview of the Country Assessment Process

Please note: Most of the following steps are offered as suggestions only. We realize the process in each country will vary. The use of the provided MANI spreadsheets is necessary so that data will be standardized for updates and later reporting. Fully completed spreadsheets are requested by the end of March 31, 2010 or earlier, to be processed prior to the MANI 2011 Continental Consultation. Data received earlier may be offered for mobilization at other upcoming consultations.

The Country Assessment process consists of two phases

Phase I: the assessment of people groups in a given country. At the completion of this phase, information will be submitted to the DATA (Database Advisory Team for Africa) team by September 30, 2009.

- The objective of this phase is to validate the people groups in this country (the number of rows or people groups in the spreadsheet). This may include adding, deleting, merging or splitting of people groups.
- We use the following Lausanne '82 definition for People Group: "For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance." (At this point in time, we are not focusing on social groupings, such as street children, but rather ethno-linguistic peoples. Our definitions are from missiological perspective and do not necessarily correlate with anthropological definitions. See the following website for further explanation: <http://www.joshuaproject.net/definitions.php>)
- In some places, people groups may appear small and insignificant; the test for inclusion may be if they operate as a relevant social network.

Phase II: to complete demographic data for the people groups. Completion by March 31, 2010.

- Populations, percentages etc. (columns in the spreadsheet)

Steps in the Country Assessment Process

1. Mobilization of assessment team for Phase I.
 - a. Potential assessment team members. Those sharing the MANI vision who are an information resource. Ideally these persons should have focus or orientation to the following categories:
 - i. Linguists / translators
 - ii. Mission / church research (missiological researcher may be from missions org, denominational missions)
 - iii. Christian anthropologists

- iv. Demographer (census, migration)
 - v. Church planters
 - vi. Others
- b. The MANI coordinator, Assessment Facilitator, or point person communicates the vision with individuals to mobilize the country Assessment Task Force.
- c. Team meeting to be held to share the process for updating the list of people groups and developing a task force plan for Phase I. Consider others to be included in this process.

2. Background Assessment Phase I – the assessment team may choose to work individually. Possible sources of information. (Please try to use reliable information in country.)

- a. Various libraries
- b. Census or other sources
- c. New version of Operation World (early 2010)
- d. Universities
- e. Anthropological Literature
- f. Churches/denominations, mission organizations
- g. Interviews – knowledgeable people (missionaries, people inside or outside the language group, Christian anthropologists, specialists)
- h. Internet. (Please be cautious with international information. We are trying to use reliable, country information to correct errors reported by global sources.)
- i. Literature
- j. Immigration offices
- k. United Nations
- l. Others

3. Mobilisation of Assessment Team for Phase II.

- a. Potential Assessment Team members:
 - i. Major denominations (for church membership data)
 - ii. Linguists / Translators
 - iii. Mission / Church Research (missiological researcher may be from missions organizations, denominational missions)
 - iv. Christian anthropologists
 - v. Demographer (census, migration)
 - vi. Church planters
- b. The MANI coordinator communicates the vision with denominational leaders to request appointing someone from their denomination to participate with the existing team in Phase II of the country assessment.
- c. Team meeting to be held to share the process for updating the list of people groups and developing a task force plan for Phase II. Consider others to be included in this process.

4. Background Assessment for Phase II. – the Assessment Team may choose to work individually to first discover what demographic and other information is already available. Possible sources of information listed below. (Please try to use reliable information in country.)

- a. Census or other sources for reliable people group estimates
- b. Mission organizations
- c. Denominational sources of demographic data and membership figures to assist with determining adherents and evangelicals.
- d. Interviews – knowledgeable people (missionaries, people inside or outside the language group, anthropologists, specialists)
- e. New version of Operation World (early 2010)
- f. Internet. (Please be cautious with international information. We are trying to use reliable, country information to correct errors reported by global sources.)
- g. Literature
- h. Other

5. Special note about languages:

Potential changes concerning languages or dialects should be discussed with country SIL representative. If there is no SIL person in your country, please report suggested changes to Research, using form above left, as soon as possible. SIL maintains the lists of the world's languages. Official changes require a long process of review and it would be our hope to have the official global lists updated along with Ethne Information System.

6. Finalizing the country assessment.

- a. Updates must be made on the MANI Country Spreadsheet.
- b. For most current spreadsheet contact Research via form above left.
- c. Return updated spreadsheets by March 31, 2010 to the Regional Assessment Facilitator or to Barbara Bills (contact her via form above left).

C. Steps in the Country Assessment Process

1. Possible stumbling blocks or hindrances to the process.

- a. Difficulty obtaining accurate data
- b. Complex data or country issues
- c. The task may seem too difficult for some large and complex countries
- d. Lack of vision
- e. People too busy
- f. Lack of funding

2. Response to stumbling blocks:

- a. The goal is to improve the existing information and have a more accurate assessment.
- b. Informed guesses are acceptable as good evidence for change. Good evidence means a consensus of knowledgeable people.
- c. Large and complex countries may have to be broken into regions.

d. We seek the wisdom and power of the Lord God in order to proceed as He directs. Ephesians 3:20

3. Expected results of the Country Assessment:

- a. A credible country lists which a country can own and use to mobilise mission and church groups for reaching the least-reached
- b. List of topics/needs, for further consideration of country-level research activities

4. Possible post-assessment follow up projects for gathering the further information eg:

- a. Additional research needs for people group or other data in country
- b. Collection of contacts and ministry activity among least-reached people group