Scripture Use Research And Ministry

Compiled by

René van den Berg

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SIL International®
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Abstract

This report presents the results, conclusions and recommendations of the SURAM (Scripture Use Research And Ministry) project, which ran from 2014 until early 2017. SURAM investigated the use, or lack of use, of translated New Testaments in eleven languages spoken in Papua New Guinea. The results of the SURAM trips have made it clear that good VSU does not happen automatically after the dedication of a translated NT. The introduction to this report presents background information about the country of Papua New Guinea, as well as the purpose and methodology of SURAM. Following the introduction are the project results, conclusions and recommendations. The report ends with six appendices.

The summary statements for the eleven trips in Appendix C only give a very cursory view of the diverse and intriguing situations of language and Scripture use in these communities.

This published edition is a slightly revised version of the SURAM Final Report prepared in 2017.

SURAM
SCRIPTURE USE RESEARCH AND MINISTRY

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Within the field of Scripture Use research, SURAM is unique in that it provides empirically-based field data on the actual use of translated Scriptures in a good number of languages using the same methods. I hope this report engenders considerable discussion within SIL, and that others adapt the research method for their world regions. In addition, the novel approach of combining research and ministry makes good use of the natural interest engendered by research. This approach should be tried in other locations. I warmly commend this report to everyone interested in this important topic.

Dr. T. Wayne Dye
SIL International Scripture Engagement Consultant

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Contents

Abbreviations used in this report

BTA	Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SU	Scripture Use
SURAM	Scripture Use Research And Ministry
V	Vernacular
VSU	Vernacular Scripture Use

Preface

It is the deepest desire of anyone involved in the worldwide Bible translation movement to see the translated Scriptures being used and doing their transforming work in people and communities. This study offers a look at the reality of Vernacular Scripture Use in eleven languages spoken in Papua New Guinea, based on research carried out between 2014 and early 2017. The results give pause for thought and will hopefully lead to considerable discussion and change within the international Bible translation community.

With an open attitude and a humble spirit, we offer this study to all our colleagues across the world, realising that after three years of research we have learned much, but still have only a few answers to our many questions. There is much that remains to be researched. Over the course of the SURAM project, one lesson that has surfaced clearly is that there are never any guarantees that translated Scriptures will be well-used. However, it should also be acknowledged that there is room for improvement and change.

Let it be clear that it is not our intention to point fingers and assign blame where projects have not been 'successful', as is it impossible for us to evaluate the full effect of the projects that were researched. Instead, it is our hope and our prayer that God will continue to use efforts to translate his Word, and that translation agencies will have the wisdom and courage to make the necessary changes in the way they operate. It is our desire that this report would play a part in that process.

This published edition is a slightly revised version of the SURAM Final Report prepared in 2017. This report does not do justice to the wealth of data that were collected during the course of SURAM. The summary statements for the eleven trips in Appendix C only give a very cursory view of the diverse and intriguing situations of language and Scripture use in these communities. Each of those stories really deserves a full chapter. Also, the statistical analysis in section 2.3 is incomplete and preliminary, and given the small sample it may not even be significant. Throughout this report we use pseudonyms for the language groups that were visited.

SURAM was a team effort from start to finish, involving a total of some 47 people. Photographs were taken by the report team, and used by permission. Janell Masters deserves special mention for her role in the research design, while the following people made contributions to the final report:

Luke and Marjan Aubrey	Katie Freedman
North Cady (design and layout)	April Hope
Jed Carter	Lydia van den Berg
Crystal Davis	

As the principal investigator and the compiler of the final report, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a part in SURAM, to Wycliffe Netherlands for funding it, to the SIL PNG directorate for allowing this 'painful' examination, and to our colleagues and supporters for their encouragement and interest.

Soli Deo Gloria.

René van den Berg
Ukarumpa, May 2019

1. Introduction: PNG, SURAM and Vernacular Scripture Use

1.1 Background information about Papua New Guinea

- Papua New Guinea (PNG) lies north of Australia, occupying the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. Its population is around 8.2 million[1]; urbanisation is low and most of the population lives in rural areas. The terrain is rugged and there are few good roads. Much transportation is limited to air travel.

- Officially, 96% of the population identify themselves as Christian. There are churches in almost every village in the country. Other religions, such as Islam, are virtually absent. Nominalism is common; traditional beliefs and practices, including sorcery, are widespread.
- Many pastors and church leaders have had limited training, especially those among the numerous small evangelical and charismatic churches.
- In spite of a wealth of natural resources and a growing mining sector, PNG continues to rank low on most economic and human resource indicators. In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it has a country ranking of 179. Figures on health care, number of university graduates, and doctors per 1,000 inhabitants are also consistently low.

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[1] http://www.countrymeters.info/en/Papua_New_Guinea/. Accessed 02-05-2019.

- There are some 850 indigenous languages spoken in the country; the median size of a language group is 1,270 speakers. English is the language of education, media and government. The most widely spoken language is Tok Pisin, an English-based creole, which serves as the country's lingua franca.
- The official literacy rate is 64%. Independent research indicates that 15% is a more realistic figure.[2]
- Almost all communities in PNG are multilingual; people often use two or three languages on a daily basis.
- Church services often also feature the use of multiple languages, with, for example, songs sung in various languages, Bible readings from Tok Pisin or English and preaching in a mix of Tok Pisin and vernacular. This is unusual from a Western perspective, but completely normal in PNG.
- SIL started language work in PNG in 1956 and has been engaged in over 400 language communities. As of early 2017, 205 vernacular NTs have been completed. Work is currently underway in another 150 languages.
- The language projects visited by SURAM were mostly traditional SIL projects, in which an SIL expat couple lived in a village, learnt the language and the culture, produced literacy books and linguistic articles, and worked with a local team of translators on Bible translation. Projects typically lasted some 20 years. Since the late 1990s, PNG has seen the rise of several multi-language translation projects, as well as local translation projects assisted by SIL. In all these cases, the role of Papua New Guineans is much broader than in traditional projects.

> **SIL PNG statements:**
>
> **Vision Statement**
> God's Word, in every language, in every life.
>
> **Mission Statement**
> Knowing that God's Word transforms lives, we will work together to strengthen the Papua New Guinean Church by supporting sustainable Bible translation, promoting Scripture engagement and fostering language development.
>
> **Impact Statement**
> We desire to see Papua New Guineans knowing and living God's Word, leading to changed lives and transformed communities.

> " As a Papua New Guinean, I'm proud of my country and its enormous diversity in languages and cultures. However, we also face many challenges. The need for the Gospel to penetrate beneath surface levels is enormous, and while the doors for missionaries and Bible translators are still wide open, I challenge SIL to make itself more relevant in the 21st century by making every effort to ensure that translated Scriptures actually have a transformational effect.
>
> **Andrew Kwimberi, lawyer, mediator and SIL International Board Member**

1.2 What was the purpose of SURAM?

SURAM (Scripture Use Research and Ministry), which was largely funded by Wycliffe Netherlands, attempted to address the following three questions.

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[2] The official literacy rate of 64% is based on UNESCO estimates for 2015, as reported in http://wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_literacy_rate. The research arriving at 15% was carried out by ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education) and PEAN (PNG Education Advocacy Network), as reported in The National newspaper of 15 September 2011. The full report is available at http://www.aspbae.org/sites/default/files/pdf/PNG%20Education%20Experience%20Survey%20and%20Literacy%20Assessment.pdf

- To what extent are vernacular Scripture translations in Papua New Guinea (PNG) actually used?
- What are the crucial factors that help or hinder Vernacular Scripture Use (VSU) in a given language community?
- What can SIL PNG (and other entities and organisations involved in Bible translation) learn from these findings, leading to better practices/strategies and more effective and sustainable outcomes?

These three questions were addressed by means of the following research methodology:

- From January 2014 to November 2016, eleven **village visits** were made to selected language communities scattered across Papua New Guinea. These visits were made by teams consisting of 6–16 people, both expatriates and Papua New Guineans. The eleven language communities were selected on the basis of the following criteria:
  - o a NT dedicated after 1998;
  - o geographic locations spread across the country;
  - o a reasonable representation of various denominations;
  - o a wide array of high or low Scripture use, based on informal reports;
  - o accessibility.
- Village visits lasted **10–12 days**, always including two Sundays, so that various church services could be attended. The team started in the village where the expat translators used to live, and then moved on to one or two other villages for the second weekend.
- Various **research tools** were developed, including fourteen Scripture Use factors (see section 1.4) with accompanying scales and probes, church service observation sheets, and various questionnaires.[3]
- Both Vernacular Scripture Use and the fourteen Vernacular Scripture Use factors were ranked from 1 (low) to 5 (high). All rankings were reached through team discussions and represent **team consensus**.
- Data gathering in villages was combined with **ministry** to the communities. Ministry activities included Bible lessons, reading fluency lessons, Sunday school training, games, quizzes and more (see section 2.2).
- A database was set up with Scripture Use information relating to the many languages with a NT that were not visited. (See Appendix D for details.)

> We in Wycliffe Netherlands heard about unused NTs in PNG and wanted to get some hard facts. We now have them. The big question is: how do we implement the recommendations?
>
> Bram van Grootheest, Director Wycliffe Netherlands

There are many limitations to the SURAM research methodology. These include the following, further discussed in Appendix A:

- SURAM did not look at the impact of translated Scriptures on the community.
- SURAM did not consider the use of Scripture in languages such as English or Tok Pisin.
- There are several likely pertinent Scripture Use factors that were not directly assessed by SURAM.
- SURAM was not a thorough, in-depth investigation into country-wide Scripture Use; the sample was small and the visits were relatively brief.

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[3] All documents related to the SURAM research methodology can be obtained from languagesurvey_png@sil.org.

1.3 What is Vernacular Scripture Use?

For the purposes of this research, Vernacular Scripture Use (hereafter VSU[4]) is defined as people in Papua New Guinea reading or listening to the Bible in their own local mother tongue, hence excluding Tok Pisin and English. The most common VSU activity for people in PNG is hearing vernacular Scriptures read during a church service. Outside church, VSU may occur in women's groups, weekly fellowship meetings, family devotions, or personal devotions. Some other ways for people to engage with vernacular Scripture include memorisation, dramatisation, Bible study and Bible storying. Most of this kind of activity usually takes place outside of church services. The two indicators of VSU in church and VSU in other contexts are the foundation of the SURAM rankings.

Listening to an audio recording of the Bible was also considered to be a form of VSU, but SURAM did not specifically include the use of audio Scriptures as part of its research goals. Although audio recordings have gained considerable popularity in PNG (partly triggered by technological advances, but also by more emphasis from administrators), only four of the eleven language communities that were visited also had the NT in audio form. In those four cases, the use of the audio NT was investigated and incorporated into the VSU scores. (For some results, see question 3 in Appendix F.)

1.4 The fourteen VSU factors

Fourteen factors were identified that may help or hinder Scripture Use.[5] These factors guided the SURAM research in its efforts to discover why VSU varies so much. The fourteen factors are listed in the table below, with two of them (6 and 11) split into two parts. They are presented both as factors and as hypotheses. The expression of the factors as hypotheses provided sharper focus to the research, as some of them are quite specific about the type of correlation between the factor and VSU. Notice that some of the hypotheses are formulated in a positive way ("… correlates with higher VSU"), others in a negative way ("… is a great hindrance to VSU"), and yet others in a neutral way ("… correlates with VSU").

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[4] In this report the traditional term *Scripture Use* will be used, rather than the broader term *Scripture Engagement*. The main focus of SURAM has been on the use of the printed translations, and only to a limited extent on audio recordings and other ways in which people engage with the Scriptures. In the recommendations the term *Scripture Engagement* is used.

[5] These fourteen factors are informed by and derived from Dye, T. Wayne. 2009. The eight conditions of Scripture engagement: social and cultural factors necessary for vernacular Bible translation to achieve maximum effect. *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26/2: 89–98. Available at http://www.ijfm.org. Dye's eight factors have been modified to fit the particular situation in PNG. Some of them have been split, others have been given a sharper focus, and two were excluded. For more discussion, see the appendix to the document 'SURAM hypotheses, scales and probes', available from languagesurvey_png@sil.org.

Table 1: VSU factors and hypotheses

	Factor	Hypothesis
1.	Language use in church	Language use in church is a major indicator of VSU.
2.	Language vitality	Language shift towards a language of wider communication is a major obstacle to VSU.
3.	Dialect unity	When there is a complex dialect situation, overall VSU in the language community is low compared to VSU in non-complex situations.
4.	Orthography	A poor orthography is a great hindrance to VSU.
5.	Quality of translation	There is a direct correlation between quality of translation and amount of VSU.
6a.	Reputation of expat translators	The reputation of expat translators (either positive or negative) and their relationships within the community have an effect on VSU.
6b.	Reputation of local translators	The reputation of local translators (either positive or negative) and their relationships within the community have an effect on VSU.
7.	Schools and literacy	The presence of schools and some literacy is an important factor in VSU.
8.	SU activities	Scripture Use activities and use of vernacular church materials early in a project correlate with higher VSU.
9.	Distribution	Lack of distribution of vernacular Scripture materials after the NT dedication hinders VSU.
10.	Spiritual climate	The overall spiritual climate in an area correlates with the level of VSU.
11a.	Denominational support	Firm denominational support is essential for VSU.
11b.	Local church support	Firm support from local church leaders is essential for VSU.
12.	Vernacular-speaking leaders	The presence of local church leaders who do not speak the local language hinders VSU.
13.	Community involvement	There is a direct correlation between community involvement/empowerment and the level of VSU.
14.	Project design	Projects that are designed and implemented by a local church or a local/national partner with assistance from SIL produce translations that are significantly more used than projects completely run by SIL.

Each factor was carefully investigated, assessed and discussed during the course of the village research. A ranking of 1 (low) to 5 (high) was assigned to each factor. For example, Factor 2 (Language vitality) has the following five levels, taken from EGIDS.[6]

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[6] EGIDS stands for Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, a tool developed to grade language status and language vitality. See http://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status for details and literature.

1. The language is **moribund** (about to die, EGIDS 8a): the only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.
2. The language is **shifting** (EGIDS 7): the child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
3. The language is **threatened** (EGIDS 6b): the language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.
4. The language is **vigorous** (EGIDS 6a): the language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations, and the situation is sustainable.
5. The language is **developing** (EGIDS 5): the language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardised form being used by some, though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.

The negative formulation used for the hypothesis for factor 2 proposes that a vital language (at level 4 or 5) does not necessarily guarantee good VSU, but that language shift (level 3 or lower) is definitely an obstacle to VSU and will therefore correlate with low VSU. The same rationale holds for the other hypotheses that have been formulated in a negative way. A data confidence score of A (high), B (medium) or C (low) was added to each ranking.

2. Results

2.1 VSU results of the eleven SURAM trips

For each of the eleven visits, the actual amount of VSU was ranked on a scale from 1-5 (with 1 low and 5 high). In each case, the following three VSU scores were assigned.

- **Amount of VSU in church services** for the village where the expat translators used to live.
- **Amount of VSU in other contexts** than the church, limited to the same village (e.g., women's groups, family devotions, personal devotions).
- **Reach of VSU** in other villages. This third score is an attempt to quantify VSU in the wider language area beyond the one village, which is described in the first two scores. The reach of VSU incorporates first-hand observations from villages visited by SURAM team members, as well as reports about VSU from other villages.

The VSU results of the eleven trips are as follows (language names are pseudonyms). One-page summaries of each trip are given in Appendix C.

Table 2: VSU rankings

Trip	VSU in church	VSU in other contexts	Reach of VSU
1. Ude	4	3	*
2. Niak	2	1	1
3. Biuk	1	1	1
4. Tano	1	2	1
5. Osi	4	2	4
6. Komi	3	2	3
7. Kisa	2	2	2
8. Doni	5	4	5
9. Dolu	5	2	2
10. Loks	1	1	1
11. Lomi	1	2	1

* Information on reach is not available for Ude, as the concept of reach had not yet been developed as a separate issue at that early stage of the project.

The same information is shown in the following bar diagram: blue marks the amount of VSU in church; brown marks the amount of VSU in other contexts; and green marks reach of VSU.

Table 3: VSU rankings - line graph
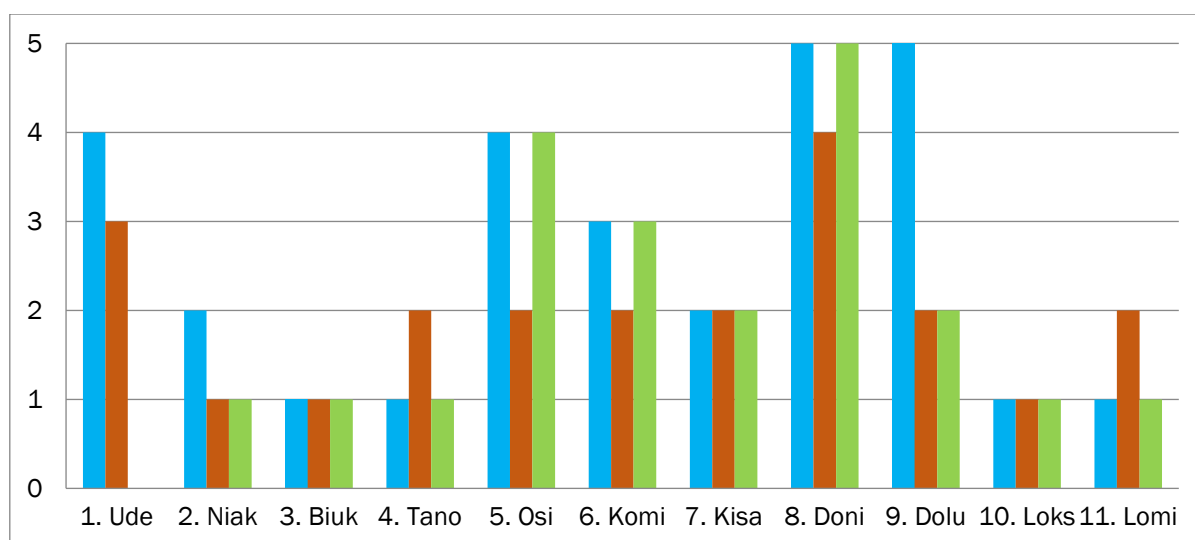
The diagram above shows considerable variety among the eleven language groups that were investigated. It can also be seen that within a single language, the scores are not necessarily uniform among VSU in church, VSU in other contexts, and reach of VSU. At the risk of oversimplifying these complex situations, the following tentative tripartite classification for overall VSU (good, fair, low) can be made on the basis of averaging the three VSU scores for each language. (More precise definitions of the three categories are given in Appendix D.)

Good overall VSU:	3 languages (1 Ude, 5 Osi, 8 Doni)
Fair overall VSU:	2 languages (6 Komi, 9 Dolu)
Low overall VSU:	6 languages (2 Niak, 3 Biuk, 4 Tano, 7 Kisa, 10 Loks, 11 Lomi)

In order to put the detailed results of these eleven trips in a larger, country-wide perspective, information on VSU was also sought for all of the 200+ languages[7] in which a NT translation was facilitated by SIL or its national partner organisation BTA (PNG Bible Translation Association). Information for this VSU database came from a variety of sources, including current and former translators, Papua New Guinean SIL employees, local pastors, missionaries from various organisations and non-SIL linguists. In this database the same three broad VSU rankings are utilised: good, fair and low.

Out of the 200+ NTs that have been printed, information was available for 162 languages. For some 38 languages, no information could be obtained. Of the 162 languages for which information was collected the division in VSU is as follows:

Good VSU:	48 languages = 30%
Fair VSU:	51 languages = 31%
Low VSU:	63 languages = 39%

For more information on this larger VSU database (including data sources, VSU rankings, data confidence, and provincial tallies), see Appendix D.

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[7] The exact number of translated NTs as of early 2017 varies around 205, depending on whether one includes mini-NTs and dialect adaptations. In this report the number 200+ is used; the current VSU database contains exactly 200 language names.

2.2 Ministry

Combining research with ministry activities in the community proved to be a very positive experience during each of the eleven SURAM trips. Team members, both expats and Papua New Guineans, taught Bible lessons, facilitated reading fluency exercises, trained Sunday school teachers, taught Bible background lessons to church leaders, gave guitar lessons, organised children's games, visited schools for Bible lessons and activities, and held ministry nights with worship, Bible dramas, Bible memorisation, Bible quizzes, as well as personal testimonies. Obviously, not every activity happened during each trip, but there was always quite a variety. All of these activities were well received and greatly appreciated by the local communities. In this way team members did not just come to observe and collect data, but also to bless and minister to the communities.

These ministry activities were also relevant for the research, in that they helped establish and bolster personal relationships, crucial in the context of PNG. In addition, several activities involved reading Bible verses (either in English, Tok Pisin or the vernacular), which gave team members insights into general literacy and fluency levels, and highlighted possible issues in the orthography and the translation.

Various creative SU approaches were tried out during the trips, which fed directly into the recommendation about re-engagement (see section 4.1). For some local people, this was the first time they were exposed to the vernacular Scriptures. Their interest was piqued, a few barriers were somewhat reduced, and it is likely that several SURAM trips have actually had positive effects on VSU in communities where it was low.

In short, ministry was a wonderful supplementary activity to research, beneficial to both the community and to the research results, and in some cases leading to renewed interest in the vernacular Scriptures, underlining the relevance of some of the recommendations mentioned in section 4.

2.3 Analysis of the VSU factors

Table 4 on the next page shows the VSU scores for each of the eleven trips. The rows represent the trips; the columns show the three VSU scores, as well as the ranking for each of the fourteen factors.

2.3.1 Statistical analysis

The limits of analysing a small sample were known from the beginning. The nature of the numbers themselves – quantifications of what is mostly qualitative data – also impacts what can profitably be done with them.[8] Statistical results should therefore be treated cautiously and always considered in the context of knowledge gained through experience.

SURAM utilised five-point Likert scales to quantify findings and to make statistical analysis possible. After completing the data-gathering phase, SURAM sought the assistance and advice of leaders within SIL in the areas of statistics, Scripture Use, and research. Significant efforts were made to conduct analyses, and some preliminary conclusions were produced using simple and multiple regression. For example, it was found that local church support correlates strongly with all three types of VSU. Another statistically significant correlation was between distribution and reach of VSU. However, in the eleven case studies that were done the values of several factors do not show

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[8] The SURAM research is best considered an example of case study research using qualitative data that have been quantified. See Robert K. Yin. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods,* Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: Sage.

enough variation to be able to test the SURAM hypotheses that they represent. Hence, a detailed statistical analysis is of limited value. Even so, the raw scores are presented in Table 4 for those who wish to conduct further analysis.

Table 4: VSU and fourteen factor rankings

SURAM Trips	VSU Rankings			14 Factor Rankings															
	VSU in church	VSU in other contexts	Reach of VSU	1. Church language	2. Language vitality	3. Dialect unity	4. Orthography	5. Translation quality	6a. Reputation (expat translators)	6b. Reputation (local translators)	7. Schools and literacy	8. SU activities	9. Distribution	10. Spiritual climate	11a. Denominational support	11b. Local support	12. V-speaking leaders	13. Community involvement	14. Project design
1. Ude	4	3	-	5	4	5	4	5	4	-	4	3	5	4	4	5	5	2	2
2. Niak	2	1	1	3	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	2	3	2	4	2	1
3. Biuk	1	1	1	1	2	4	4	3	4	-	4	1	2	2	4	2	3	2	2
4. Tano	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	5	3	3	4	1	2	3	3	2	5	1	3
5. Osi	4	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	5	3	2
6. Komi	3	2	3	2	3	5	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	2	2
7. Kisa	2	2	2	1	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	2
8. Doni	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	4	5	5	3	2
9. Dolu	5	2	2	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	1	2	2	3	4	5	2	2
10. Loks	1	1	1	2	4	2	4	3	4	4	3	2	2	2	4	2	5	3	2
11. Lomi	1	2	1	3	4	3	4	4	5	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	5	2	2

2.3.2 Significance and influenceability of VSU factors

The following table lists the estimated degree of significance for each VSU factor, based on group discussions and informed by experiences during the eleven SURAM trips. It also shows the degree of influence expat translators may have over each of these factors. (The notion 'necessary, but not sufficient' is explained below.)

Table 5: Significance and influenceability of VSU factors

Factor	Significance for VSU	Degree of influence-ability by translators
1. Language use in church	high	no or limited
2. Language shift	high	no
3. Complex dialect situation	high (for reach of VSU)	no
4. Orthography	necessary, but not sufficient	yes
5. Quality of translation	necessary, but not sufficient	yes
6a. Reputation of expat translators	necessary, but not sufficient	yes
6b. Reputation of local translators	high	limited
7. Schools and literacy	some	limited
8. Early SU activities	low	yes
9. Distribution	high (for reach of VSU)	yes
10. Spiritual climate	high	no or limited
11a. Denominational support	necessary, but not sufficient	no or limited
11b. Local church leader support	high	limited
12. Vernacular-speaking church leaders	necessary, but not sufficient	no
13. Community involvement	low	limited
14. Project design	low	limited

Below are some additional and explanatory comments on each factor.

1. Language use in church. This factor shows a very wide range of variation (scores of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), and preliminary analysis suggests this factor is statistically significant. Experience also confirms that significance. However, the influence of expat translators over language use in church services for singing, praying, preaching, and reading Scriptures is very limited. Therefore, this factor should be carefully considered when initiating new translation programs, as well as during the monitoring of existing programs.

2. Language shift. This factor shows a wide range of variation (2, 3, 4 and 5). Its importance for VSU is high, since there is low motivation to use vernacular materials when a large part of the younger population no longer speaks the language. One difficulty with assigning a single score per language for this factor is that language vitality can vary considerably within a single language community. While some villages are shifting to Tok Pisin, the vernacular may still be quite vital in villages only a few miles away, as was

found in Biuk and Tano. Though expat translators can have no direct influence over language shift, they should try to respond in appropriate ways. This includes helping communities understand the signs and effects of language loss, and tailoring their work to meet the particular needs of these communities. This could involve starting with oral approaches such as Bible storytelling, in combination with language documentation.

3. Complex dialect situation. This factor shows a wide range of variation (2, 3, 4 and 5). Preliminary analysis suggests that there is a correlation between dialect situation and reach of VSU, but this remains to be confirmed. In several cases, including Niak and Loks, dialectal differences represented a major barrier to VSU. Although expat translators have no influence over a dialect situation, they can respond to the presence of multiple dialects in varying ways. For example, the translators and the community can decide that a separate translation (or adaptation) is necessary for one or more dialects.

4. Orthography. This factor shows a limited range of variation (only 4 and 5). Because only high scores were found for this factor, the corresponding hypothesis 'A poor orthography is a great hindrance to VSU' cannot be tested. However, decades of experience by translators and literacy workers across the world and in PNG consistently point towards the importance of a good orthography for the use of vernacular materials. Hence this is described as 'necessary, but not sufficient': the condition of a good orthography needs to be met, but in itself is not enough to guarantee VSU.

It is also worth pointing out that several of the level 4 scores are situations where the orthography is excellent from a linguistic standpoint (level 5), but local people perceive issues with the orthography and cite this as a barrier to using vernacular print materials. This was the case in Biuk and Loks. In retrospect, the orthography scores for these languages could have been lower (3 or even 2), if the scale that the SURAM team employed to rank this factor had given more weight to the local viewpoint. Cases such as these highlight the importance of community input into alphabet design for acceptability.

5. Quality of translation. This factor is similar to the previous one in that it also shows a fairly limited range of variation (3, 4 and 5) and no low scores. The hypothesis 'There is a direct correlation between quality of translation and amount of VSU' can therefore again not be tested. Like orthography, this factor is necessary, but not sufficient, based on best practices in the history of Bible translation. It is encouraging to see that translation quality has generally been high in the projects that SURAM visited (to the extent that SURAM was able to assess this factor), but it is sobering to realise that an excellent translation does not automatically lead to good VSU.

6a. Reputation of expat translators. This factor also shows a fairly limited range of variation (3, 4 and 5), which means that the corresponding hypothesis can again not be tested. It is probably another factor that is necessary, but not sufficient for VSU. In the case of Biuk and Loks, a high reputation coincides with overall low VSU.

6b. Reputation of local translators. This factor showed an interesting range of variation (1, 2, and 4), and the statistical significance of this remains to be worked out. This factor appears to be highly significant for VSU. In several cases (notably Komi and Lomi), the poor reputation of the local translators had a marked effect on the use of the translation in the village where the expat translators used to live, and even in the wider language area. Although expat translators have limited influence on the behaviour of co-translators, the response to issues of moral failure has potentially significant effects. Appropriate decisions, such as a period of suspension or probation, need to be made by

the local church (in consultation with the expat translators and other overseeing bodies). Where these issues are not addressed, the fallout in terms of VSU can be enormous.

7. Schools and literacy. This factor also shows a fairly limited range of variation (3, 4 and 5), and hence the hypothesis 'The presence of schools and some literacy (in any language) is an important factor in VSU' remains untested. Based on experience and common sense, it appears that there is some significance to this factor, but that it is not a crucial one for VSU. This should not be taken to mean that literacy efforts are therefore unnecessary and should not be funded. On the contrary, we would like to underscore the need for more literacy and education in PNG, not only for purposes of VSU, but also from a holistic perspective. Clearly, people who are totally illiterate will not use vernacular Scriptures. However, raising literacy levels in itself is not the 'magic bullet' that will solve low VSU.

8. Early SU activities. This factor shows a wide range of variation (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), and is possibly statistically significant. However, from observations and experience obtained during the SURAM trips, it appears that SU activities in the later stages of a project, and especially after the dedication, are much more important than those done earlier on. Dolu, for example, has a score of 1 for early SU activities, but scores a 5 for VSU in church. In this case, several SU courses were held after the dedication. SU is an area where SIL, in partnership with local churches and other organisations, has a key role to play.

9. Distribution. This factor shows a reasonable wide range of variation (2, 3, 4 and 5) and is possibly statistically significant in relation to reach of VSU. Six of the eleven language communities visited by SURAM scored a 2 for distribution, and in each of these situations this posed a real barrier to Scripture access. Again, this is an area where SIL and its partners can (and should) have a major influence.

10. Spiritual climate. This factor shows a fairly limited range of variation (2, 3 and 4) and is possibly statistically significant. The spiritual climate of an area is difficult to assess, and even harder to quantify. However, based on conversations, observations and experience, we feel this is a highly significant factor for VSU that should not be underestimated. Although this factor is not directly influenceable by expat translators, the spiritual climate of an area is not static, and the power of prayer should also not be underestimated.

11a. Denominational support. This factor shows a limited range of variation (3 and 4). This limited range and the lack of low scores mean that the importance of denominational support for VSU cannot be shown statistically. Based on SURAM experiences, it appears that denominational support for VSU is generally positive in PNG, but that denominational leaders offer little or no encouragement or support to local church leaders. It can therefore be considered a condition that is necessary, but not sufficient for VSU. To what extent expat translators and administrators can influence denominational policies (and whether that would have an effect) remains somewhat unclear.

11b. Local church leader support. This factor shows a reasonably wide range of variation (2, 3, 4 and 5) and is probably statistically significant in relation to VSU in church, VSU in other contexts, and reach of VSU. Based on team members' experiences during the SURAM trips, the presence or absence of local church leader support for VSU appears to be highly significant and one of the most important outcomes of the SURAM research. It is admittedly an area where expat translators have limited influence, but the possibilities

for engaging with local church leaders should be carefully explored. The first recommendation in section 4 lists a number of suggestions.

12. Vernacular-speaking church leaders. This factor shows a fairly limited range of variation (3, 4 and 5), with six of the eleven languages scoring a 5. The limited range and the lack of low scores mean that the hypothesis about the importance of vernacular-speaking church leaders for VSU cannot be tested. Based on experience, it can again be considered a condition that is necessary, but not sufficient for VSU. As the assignment and rotation of local church leaders depends on the denominational and local church policies and practices, expat translators have little or no influence on this factor. (But see the end of the first recommendation in section 4 for these situations.)

13. Community involvement. This factor shows a limited range of variation (1, 2 and 3), with seven of the eleven languages scoring a 2. The limited range and the lack of high scores mean that the hypotheses on the importance of community involvement and empowerment for VSU cannot be tested. Based on earlier discussions and references in the literature, higher scores for this factor in situations of good VSU were expected. This was generally not the case. The lack of high scores probably reflects the traditional translation program approach in PNG in rural settings in the 1980s and 1990s, where issues of community involvement and empowerment were not yet seen to be as prominent as they are now, both by expat translators and also by the local people. Within the larger context of the various factors that help VSU, community involvement appears to be of relatively low significance in PNG.

14. Project design. As was the case with factor 13, this factor also shows a limited range of variation (1, 2 and 3), with nine of the eleven languages scoring a 2. Again, the limited range and the lack of high scores mean that the importance of project design for VSU cannot be tested. Most projects that the SURAM team visited were traditional language projects: initiated by SIL, managed and funded by expat translators, although there was also some local input. This system worked to most people's satisfaction (both translators and the local church and community), but seems to have little or no correlation with VSU levels. It is noteworthy that in the only case where project design was somewhat higher (Tano at level 3), overall levels of VSU were low. Within the larger context of the various factors that help VSU, project design appears to be of relatively low significance in PNG.

3. Conclusions

The following sections present the major and minor conclusions of the SURAM project.

1. VSU is very uneven in PNG. This conclusion is based on information obtained for the large VSU database and corroborated by the small sample visited during the SURAM trips. There are many well-used NTs (estimated at 30%), many with fair use (estimated at 31%), but there are also many NTs that are poorly used or unused (estimated at 39%). This is sobering news that should give Bible translation organisations ample reason for pause and reflection. After reflection, it should lead to exploring ways to become more effective.

2. The barriers to start using a vernacular NT have been underestimated. The following five barriers became apparent in most cases of low VSU in language communities that were visited by SURAM teams:

- Lack of support from local church leaders. Attitudes and ingrained habits of church leaders who prefer to use the English or Tok Pisin Bible in their ministry form the main obstacle to VSU.
- Reading fluency issues. People who are literate in English and Tok Pisin often do not become fluent readers in their own vernacular. When this issue was evidenced among church leaders, this was an especially significant barrier.[9]
- Lukewarm attitudes towards the vernacular itself, particularly in written form. PNG is an oral culture, where many people care little or nothing about efforts to develop their vernacular in written form.
- Lack of awareness and lack of distribution of the translated Scriptures.
- The demotivating effect on the community caused by the SIL translators' departure from the language group shortly after the NT dedication. In all cases of low VSU, SIL translators and literacy workers left shortly after the dedication, or had already left the language area before the dedication.

3. Some traditional assumptions need to be reassessed. Such assumptions, widely cherished, and often presented in promotional and recruiting materials, are frequently not borne out by the reality in PNG. They include the following:

- *Assumption:* *Translation agencies can focus exclusively on a quality product (the NT), since the local church will take responsibility for distribution and use after the dedication.*
  Reality: This can be true in smaller language groups with excellent local church support for the translation (e.g., Ude). In many situations, however, and especially in larger language groups, there are awareness and distribution issues leading to situations where many church leaders hardly know that there is a NT in their language. Even if they do know, they do not automatically have the motivation, interest, and enthusiasm to use it.

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[9] Reading fluency (as distinct from basic literacy) was not a factor that the SURAM team specifically set out to research; however the issue came up on many of the eleven SURAM trips.

> " Our goal is not translation but transformation – a tool for taking the Gospel to our people. If people don't change, our translation is not working.
>
> Papuan New Guinean trainer and translation advisor

- *Assumption:* *The job of translators is to give people the Bible in their own language. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.*
  Reality: While it is certainly true that without the Holy Spirit no translation effort will bear any fruit, the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be predicted or assumed. The Spirit's presence and activity through people (either expats or local people) is crucial at all times, both during the translation stage, and after the translation is completed.

- *Assumption:* *Christians are always eager and excited to get and use God's Word in their own language.*
  Reality: This is often true when people hear the Scriptures read in church or where there is a good Scripture Use program. However, in oral societies where literacy is low, books are scarce, and reading is rare, the barriers to reading a difficult book such as the Bible are often higher than highly literate Western Christians might realise.

- *Assumption:* *When the Word of God is available in a person's heart language, it speaks with a richness and clarity that no other language can convey.*
  Reality: This is mostly true for predominantly monolingual people who are spiritually hungry. Multilingual people – the majority of people in PNG – often move freely between two or more languages in their daily lives and may not have one single heart language. A person's heart language may also change over time, especially through education and being away from the home area. In addition, the most efficient language for a person may be tied to a specific domain of use, such as education or religion.

  Factors of language prestige may also play a role here. The religious domain is often associated with Western tradition, thus Tok Pisin and English are often considered the most appropriate media in that domain.

  Finally, there might be a lack of motivation to shift from the familiar (reading in Tok Pisin or English) to the unfamiliar (reading the vernacular), especially for pastors and church leaders who are used to spiritually feeding themselves (and also feeding others) by means of the Tok Pisin and/or English Bibles. The efforts involved in learning to read a vernacular well are greater than any perceived benefits.

- *Assumption:* *The use of the vernacular Scriptures always leads to transformed lives and communities.*
  Reality: There is much evidence to indicate that this can and does happen.[10] However, nominalism and traditional beliefs and practices do not simply diminish or disappear because the NT or portions of Scripture become available in the vernacular. More deliberate action is needed to address these issues. Also, for many committed Christians in PNG, an English or Tok Pisin Bible is adequate to nurture their faith.

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[10] A good example from Papua New Guinea is the story of the Binumarien people in the Eastern Highlands Province, as told in Lynette Oates. 1992. *The hidden people: How a remote New Guinea culture was brought back from the brink of extinction.* Sutherland, NSW; Claremont, CA: Albatross.

4. The effect and outcome of a translation project is never guaranteed. A translation project is a complex undertaking, involving many people and factors which shape the outcome. It is crucial to realise that expat translators have limited or no influence on several of the factors examined by SURAM, as these are simply not under their influence. These factors include language shift to Tok Pisin, a complex dialect situation, the lack of schools and education, a poor overall spiritual climate, and the presence of non-vernacular speaking church leaders. In spite of a quality translation, excellent orthography, and major efforts in literacy, the resulting translation may remain unused. There is no simple formula that guarantees success. Translators should therefore not beat themselves up saying, "If only I had done this, our translation would be better used."

Final note. In response to these rather bleak SURAM conclusions, many people say, "But isn't this true for Europe, Australia and the USA as well? Very few people in those countries are interested in reading the Bible." While this statement is true, the situation in PNG that SURAM has researched is different and cannot easily be compared with Europe, Australia or the USA. One of the three VSU scores in the SURAM research reflects the use of vernacular Scriptures in church services. Regular churchgoers in the Western world will normally hear the Scriptures being read every Sunday **in their own language**. However, in PNG it is often the case that available vernacular Scriptures are not used in church services. Though pastors and church leaders have access to the NT in their own language, many still prefer to use Tok Pisin or English, both in church services and in other contexts.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered in the broader context of translation theory and practice. Various best practices in translation, such as developing a good orthography, literacy efforts, and aiming for excellence in translation quality do not automatically lead to good VSU. Obviously, that does not imply that these factors are no longer important in translation programs and can be ignored. Common sense indicates that these are still key factors for good VSU, and SURAM has not found situations where low scores for any of these factors are accompanied by high VSU. (In fact, SURAM has not found any low scores at all for orthography, translation quality and literacy.) In other words, best practices in the areas of orthography, translation quality and literacy should be considered "Sustain" items (activities to be continued), while the section below focusses exclusively on items in the "Adapt" category (things to be changed in order to be more effective).

These recommendations are derived from the findings about eleven translation programs in PNG, almost all of which had a traditional project design with a large role for the expat translators. They are presented here in the belief that many of the recommendations are also applicable to other types of projects.

> The following recommendations are not intended solely for translators. They are directed towards SIL as an organisation as well as affiliated and partnering organisations, in which all the members, including administrators, language personnel, support workers and Papua New Guinean co-workers must take joint responsibility for their implementation.

4.1 Major recommendations

1. Actively engage with church leaders in current projects.

Rationale. Out of all fourteen VSU factors, the most consistently significant correlation was between VSU and local church leader support. For a variety of reasons, many pastors are reluctant to use the vernacular NT, even when they are native speakers themselves. The most common reasons are: a lack of reading fluency in the vernacular (causing embarrassment during public Scripture reading), being trained in Tok Pisin or English and sticking with what is known and familiar, not being aware of the existence of the vernacular NT, and also (more significantly) a low view of the written vernacular and a high view of the English or Tok Pisin Bible. These attitudes obviously have a demotivating effect on VSU in church, and also on VSU in other contexts, such as family or private devotions, where the use of the vernacular Scriptures is unlikely to be encouraged by most pastors.

In the context of PNG, there are usually many churches from various denominations within a single language area. Members of a translation team do not often include pastors, who already have many other responsibilities. This situation, combined with a system of frequent pastor rotation (common in the larger PNG denominations), results in many pastors and church leaders who are barely even aware of the translation project or the completed NT.

However, pastors are key agents of change within the church. If a translation project fails to engage with local pastors and church leaders, the completed NT will almost certainly not be well-used. Training modules should be developed that help pastors cross the bridge from English or Tok Pisin to the vernacular.

> I found it quite shocking to discover during a SURAM trip that several pastors of smaller denominations in the Tano language area were barely aware of the existence of the NT. Nobody had given or shown them a copy, taught them how to use it, or explained the relevance of the NT in their own language for their ministry.
>
> SURAM team member

Suggestions for implementation. In current projects, translators should be strongly encouraged to invest time in their relationships with local church leaders, regardless of their denomination. PNG is a very relational culture, where face-to-face interaction is paramount for getting anything done. Activities could include meeting regularly for fellowship and prayer, reading Scripture portions together and discussing the relevance of a passage (as well as key terms used in the translation), encouraging pastors in their ministry, and giving practical help. If there are time or family constraints on the part of the translation team that make such activities difficult or impossible, translation agencies should consider sending a Scripture Engagement team to come for prolonged visits and do some of these activities. In addition, maintaining contacts and engaging with denominational leaders at district, provincial and national levels should become normal practice for regional directors and administrators.

A special challenge is posed by situations where pastors are from outside the language area and do not speak the local language. In such cases they will tend to exclusively use English or Tok Pisin in their ministry, and VSU will be low. A case can be made, however, for showing them the value of vernacular Scripture readings in church services (to be done by someone other than the pastor), and for helping them to encourage church members to also obtain and use a vernacular NT, in addition to a Tok Pisin or English Bible. Especially in multilingual communities, choosing between Scripture in Tok Pisin and the vernacular is not an either-or situation; the two can be fruitfully combined.

2. Projects should not be viewed as completed when the NT is finished.

> On the SURAM trip to Biuk, we found that VSU was very low. However, our presence there sparked new interest, and I've been back five times since then. Working in collaboration with the local church and Scripture Engagement teams, we have done song recordings, run two Scripture Application and Leadership Training courses, and most recently two Culture Meets Scripture courses. God continues to work as some 600 Biuk NTs have been purchased since the SURAM visit, and there has been a significant increase in Vernacular Scripture Use.
>
> SURAM team member

Rationale. The results of the SURAM trips have made it clear that good VSU does not happen automatically after a dedication. A concerted effort is needed to ensure that the published Scriptures are actually distributed across the whole language area, and that church leaders are aware of its existence, and are trained and encouraged to use it.

Equipping and encouraging church leaders to use the vernacular Scriptures is the first step in helping church members perceive the value of a vernacular Bible translation.[11]

Suggestions for implementation.

- After the dedication, have a meeting with translators and church leaders (possibly per denomination) to discuss the newly published Scriptures, including opportunities and benefits for its use, as well as possible barriers to its use. Set clear goals for an implementation track for two or three years and ways to address the identified barriers.
- Set up a steering committee that oversees the distribution of the NT and encourages its use. Members of such a committee should include representatives from three groups: denominational leaders, local church leaders, as well as members of translation agencies. Have a distribution plan for the whole language area.
- Establish a training plan for pastors and church leaders to gain fluency in the vernacular.
- As much as possible, involve the local translators in these activities. Provide resources to enable them to carry out such activities.
- Visit dialect areas that are outside of the target dialect in which the translation was done. Find out how people in those dialects react to the published Scriptures, assess possible barriers and discuss ways to overcome them (e.g., substituting sounds or words from another dialect when reading aloud, or considering a dialect adaptation).
- Encourage the composition of vernacular songs based on Scripture.

3. Re-engage with 'finished' projects.

Rationale. Enormous investments have been made by SIL in PNG to accomplish the translation of each NT: on average some 20 years of work (in one case 52 years, by three consecutive teams), and at least 1 million USD in costs. Only an estimated 30% of these NTs are well-used. It is simply good stewardship to check up on such a major investment and help language communities overcome some of the barriers to Scripture use. Barriers in the areas of awareness, distribution and reading fluency are all relatively easy to address.

Poor VSU in 'finished' projects has usually not been addressed by SIL, as the organisation has traditionally been more focussed on starting new translation projects. The idea that the dedication is the end point of a translation project is unrealistic and hard to defend. SIL PNG has a corporate and ongoing responsibility to work towards sustainable use of the translated Scriptures by sending people to do VSU activities in programs with completed NTs.

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[11] A useful reference tool with many practical suggestions is Harriet Hill and Margaret Hill. 2008. *Translating the Bible into action. How the Bible can be relevant in all languages and cultures.* Carlisle: Piquant.

Suggestions for implementation. Re-engagement activities would entail visits by Scripture Engagement teams to a community with a completed NT, focussing on raising awareness of the vernacular Scriptures, helping with distribution, encouraging VSU among church leaders, and engaging in various forms of creative Bible ministries (games, drama, music, etc.). Ministry experiences during the SURAM trips have been very encouraging in this regard, even in language groups where the vernacular NT was barely used.

> During a SURAM trip to Loks, I taught a church leaders' course in Tok Pisin for three mornings, focussing on Bible background and sermon outlines. We used the vernacular NT, which is barely used at all. At the end of the second day, an elder visited the SURAM team and thanked me. He had always felt it was too difficult to read the vernacular NT, and so he only reads the Bible in Tok Pisin. But the vernacular Bible reading exercises we did during those mornings had opened his eyes. He felt he could now read it and he was very grateful! It made me realise how little it sometimes takes to help people cross the VSU barrier.
>
> **SURAM team member**

4. Visit the whole language area regularly.

Rationale. Distribution and awareness were issues in almost every location visited by SURAM teams. In many projects, the translation team members come from one village (or a few nearby villages), and are also limited to one or two denominations. In addition, the team is mainly focussed on the quality of the product. As a result, other villages and other denominations are barely aware of the translation effort, and there is little or no engagement with the wider language community. As PNG is a very relational culture, people want to see and know the expat and local translators. Without this first-hand knowledge, trust is difficult to build up and VSU will suffer.

Suggestions for implementation. Do regular awareness trips throughout the language area (for example, every two years) and use creative Scripture Engagement ideas: fluency training, Bible drama, Bible verse memorisation as a group activity, Bible games, Bible quizzes, Bible background lessons, vernacular song composition, etc. Develop materials and resources for such trips, which could be extended to diaspora

> We regularly visited all the Osi-speaking villages, even though it was a major time investment and sometimes very uncomfortable. I remember walking for hours in heavy rain to the most remote Osi village to attend a women's meeting where I held Bible studies. How happy they were to see me! Years later the SURAM team found that the NT is used throughout the Osi area. These visits surely helped.
>
> **Expat translator**

communities in cities. In large language areas with dozens or even hundreds of villages (as well as several dialects), this is obviously very challenging, but the point nevertheless remains.

5. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of current translation projects.

Rationale. Often translators are so focused on the task of translation that they rarely stop to evaluate whether their language program is actually achieving the intended results. Activities need to be designed to lead to the changes that teams want to see take place, rather than doing activities that have always been done and hoping that VSU will ensue. Monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process that allows teams to adjust activities to

ensure that the desired results are achieved. In spite of the best efforts to engage people and raise interest, it has to be conceded that in certain situations the absence of interest in and the lack of motivation to use preliminary Scripture portions raise valid questions about the advisability of continuing the program and finishing a full NT.

Suggestions for implementation. Use or develop a monitoring tool (such as Results Based Management) that is applied every two or three years in ongoing projects to evaluate project goals and readjust, if necessary. For the process of monitoring there are multiple research tools/activities related to SU that would be helpful. These include:

- Dialect Mapping – to better understand the perceived dialect situation, which affects use of the resulting Scripture products.
- Wheel of Vitality – to better understand the vitality of the vernacular, informing what combination of language and media might be best for the group. While the vernacular may be strong at the start of a project, that is not always the case after several years. (https://www.sil.org/resources/publications/entry/61004)
- Tools found in "The Guide to Planning the Future of Our Language"[12] help to better understand how vernacular is used and where the community wants their language to go.
- Participatory Methods tools related to community goals/values, aspirations, roadblocks, etc.

In situations where there is little or no response and the project is clearly not effective, administrators and translators, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, need the courage to set limited goals or even halt a project. Such closure should not be seen as a failure. It may be better to use limited time on working towards a mini-NT with accompanying audio recordings and spend considerable time on creative Scripture Engagement activities in the community to help people appreciate the message, beauty and relevance of the Scriptures, rather than focus on completing a full NT which is unlikely to be used.

6. Expat translators and administrators have a joint responsibility to remain engaged with the language community after the NT dedication to work on Scripture Engagement.

Rationale. Though it was not one of the VSU factors, there appears to be a strong correlation between time spent by the translators in the community after the dedication and high VSU. In the three cases of high VSU (Ude, Osi, and Doni), the translators returned to the language community and were engaged in VSU activities for one or more years, including raising awareness and organising distribution of the NT. In the six cases of low VSU (Niak, Biuk, Tano, Kisa, Loks, and Lomi), the dedication of the NT happened when the translators had already left the field, and no subsequent VSU activities took place. In PNG, ongoing relationships between a language community and expats are highly valued and often contribute to the success and sustainability of a project.[13] When relationships that have been ongoing for years are suddenly severed, this can have a demoralising and even traumatic effect on the community. Continued engagement can take various shapes: an annual visit of a few weeks by the expat translators, a follow-up literacy or Scripture Engagement course, or a ministry visit from a partner organisation. In cases where the expat translators are no longer able to return to the language area, SIL

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[12] See https://www.sil.org/guide-planning-future-our-language-0

[13] See, for example, Lise M. Dobrin. 2008. From linguistic elicitation to eliciting the linguist: Lessons in community empowerment from Melanesia. *Language* 84: 300–324. This article offers an interesting perspective (by a non-SIL linguist) on why language documentation projects in endangered languages often fail in PNG, and why SIL has been so successful.

should take responsibility for continued involvement with the local church leaders and the community.

The ultimate responsibility for VSU lies with the local community of believers, and in places where there has been strong church support and involvement throughout the life of the project, this recommendation may not be applicable. However, in most places in PNG where a NT has been translated, churches and church leaders would likely benefit from assistance in working towards sustainable VSU.

> " We only knew that Mark and Luke had been translated in Niak, but we never knew that the whole NT had been completed and launched in 2004. When your research team came, we found out and now we are surprised to hear all this.
>
> **Church leader in the Niak language**

7. Use progressive engagement for the remaining 280 languages in PNG without vernacular Scripture.

Rationale. Progressive engagement involves starting a language project with limited goals, taking incremental steps and monitoring regularly. The remaining languages without vernacular Scripture in PNG (currently estimated at 280[14]) should not automatically be considered Bibleless people in need of vernacular Scripture. Based on the results of SURAM, administrators and translators need to be aware of the general barriers to VSU in the country, and also of additional barriers to VSU in very small language communities (with a population between 100 and 1,000). This is especially important for the three provinces of Sandaun, East Sepik and Madang, where 175 (or 60%) of the 'remaining needs' are to be found. It is precisely in these provinces that the use of Tok Pisin is very strong and the use of existing translations low, not high, even in bigger languages. (See Appendix D for provincial figures.) Additional barriers for small languages in these three provinces include the following:

- In small language communities there is often considerable multilingualism, in Tok Pisin and/or in a neighbouring, more dominant language.
- Small languages often face vitality issues, as the language is not passed on to the next generation.
- In small language communities people are more likely to marry outside of their language group. The language of the new household is often Tok Pisin, especially when the vernacular is already weak and shifting.
- In small language communities there is less chance of the vernacular Scriptures being used in church services, as the congregations often encompass members from various other small languages in the area. The pastors are also more likely to be from another language.
- In small language communities there is less chance of the vernacular playing a role in education, as schools serve a mixed population and teachers may not be

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[14] The number of languages with remaining Bible translation needs in Papua New Guinea is a difficult and contentious issue. Much depends on the definition of 'need' (especially in situations of high bilingualism and language shift), and of the definition of language versus dialect. A number of 300 or 280 languages is frequently mentioned, but the actual number of distinct viable languages needing a full written NT remains uncertain at this point. It seems likely that the number is lower than 300 or 280.

native speakers. (This barrier does not take government educational policy into account; that is a different issue.)

Suggestions for implementation. A survey tool for rapid appraisal visits needs to be developed to help determine what the 'need' for a translation really is. Such a tool should focus on language vitality, multilingualism, dialect situation, needs expressed by the community, and interest from local pastors and church leaders. By its very nature, progressive engagement always needs to happen in partnership with the local churches.

4.2 Minor recommendations

> As a newcomer to PNG, I am most impacted by the notion that SURAM's findings should influence publicity and recruiting materials. I joined the organisation with impressions of monolinguals waiting for scripture in their one and only heart language. This is a drastic oversimplification. Multilingualism, which has significant impact on Vernacular Scripture Use, was never mentioned. Now that the reality is becoming clearer to me, I wish I had heard about this earlier.
>
> **Language surveyor and SURAM team member**

1. In **publicity** materials for donors and partners and **recruitment** materials for interested people, it is best to avoid simplistic messages about monolingual, Bibleless peoples eagerly waiting for the Word. Instead, a more realistic picture of the remaining translation needs should be sketched, including factors that are rarely mentioned in PR materials, such as multilingualism, endangered and dying languages, and churches and pastors who are uninterested in the vernacular Scriptures. Increased attention should also be given to the need for survey and Scripture Use work in areas where there is an existing NT, as well as the need for OT translation in areas where the NT is well-used. This will help promote the need for experts in other areas besides translation and linguistics: survey workers, Scripture Engagement workers, language documentation specialists, language project managers, etc.

Apart from affecting recruitment efforts, a shift of focus in publicity materials can also have an impact on funding activities and funding streams. **Donors and donor organisations** are often narrowly focussed on the speed of production in translation, as well as the need to embrace technological innovations. SURAM shows that:

- activities in linguistics and literacy that lay the foundation for a quality translation should be sustained;
- Scripture Engagement efforts during the course of the project and after the NT dedication are an indispensable part of a translation project, not an optional extra;
- continued or renewed engagement with the language community after the dedication is necessary to ensure sustainable VSU;
- various activities of a relational nature are crucial for the well-being of a translation project. Such activities include engaging with local pastors, discipleship training, Scripture Engagement workshops, and reading fluency training, as well as regular awareness trips to all the villages in the area where the language is spoken.

None of these activities directly result in more Scripture verses being translated, but without them a translation project can result in very low levels of VSU, as shown by several of the SURAM trips. By having these non-production facets of a translation

project clearly presented, donors and donor organisations will obtain a more comprehensive picture of what is involved in a good translation project that will hopefully result in sustainable VSU.

2. **Recruit and develop distribution specialists.** SIL has a long history of having technical expertise and certified consultants in the areas of linguistics, literacy and translation. There are few, if any, distribution experts in the organisation. However, distribution and awareness are weak areas in many translation projects, including in six of the eleven that SURAM visited. Translation agencies need to take this challenge seriously by recruiting and developing distribution specialists, as well as by working in partnership with organisations that have expertise in this area.

3. In ongoing and finished projects: organise an **annual celebration day** for the vernacular, in order to raise its status and create a focal point for the community. Examples are the Soskundi Tok Ples annual celebration day in East Sepik Province and the Mandara Celebration Day in New Ireland Province.

4. **Similar VSU research projects** should be carried out in other countries. Stories of unused NTs are not limited to PNG, and the organisation will benefit from finding out about the reality on the ground. While some of the obstacles to VSU discussed here may be applicable to all field contexts, it is almost certain that other countries will face different challenges which should be evaluated and addressed.

5. In projects where the NT is finished: after completing the NT, do not immediately **start with the OT**, even if there is a request and money is available. It is tempting to keep the momentum going, but especially when there are concerns about the use of the NT, it makes more sense to wait for one or two years to see whether the NT is actually used in churches before making further major investments of time and resources. It is more effective to first funnel time and resources into Scripture Engagement activities. If the national translators who worked on the NT are immediately pulled into OT translation efforts, this does not allow them to spend time on marketing the NT and engaging in SU activities which need to happen throughout the whole language area.

> In 2015 some training money was available at a regional centre. Five prospective translators from the Purula language (pseudonym) were sent to a three-week Old Testament introduction course in Ukarumpa, in order to prepare them for work on the translation of the OT. Only then did it emerge that Purula is an endangered language where the children only speak Tok Pisin, and that the NT (published some 15 years ago) is not used at all in churches. This was obviously not a wise use of limited resources.
>
> Language Program Manager

6. Incorporate insights from SURAM into **SIL training**, both prefield and on the field. SIL has traditionally been too narrowly focussed on the technical aspects of linguistics and translation. All prospective SIL translators should take a Scripture Engagement course, and be made aware of the issue of unused NTs and the various factors that contribute to use and non-use. Modules should also be developed for local translators and church leaders to help them monitor and evaluate project goals and encourage VSU in church and in other contexts.

7. **Increase teamwork.** Traditionally, an expat translation team consists of a husband and wife or two singles. They are expected to do language and culture learning, linguistic analysis, translation, literacy, Scripture Engagement, distribution and training local

people, all in addition to the normal demands of life. It is no wonder that at some point there is no energy, time or motivation left to add other activities, such as regularly visiting the whole language area or engaging with pastors and church leaders. Although working in teams has its own challenges, it seems unwise to burden a couple or two singles with such a huge task that requires almost superhuman doses of energy, patience and resilience.

8. SIL PNG should **maintain and update the VSU database** developed for SURAM, as new VSU information becomes available for each of these languages. This will inform future Scripture Engagement ministry trips and also act as a potential resource for partner organisations and PNG churches.

Appendix A. Limits of SURAM

During the development of the SURAM research methodology, a variety of potential factors and questions were considered for inclusion. Stakeholders supported and suggested the inclusion of various research questions. This input helped to refine SURAM to its final form, focusing on the questions stakeholders felt were most crucial. It was clear from the start that SURAM could not (and should not) attempt to answer all possible questions relating to Scripture Use in PNG. This appendix lists some general limitations of SURAM, followed by a number of possible VSU factors that were not explored.

1. General limitations

Like any research project, SURAM has its limitations. These include at least the following.

Sampling. The sample was unrepresentative and inadequate on the following three levels.

o *Country*. With over 200 vernacular NT translations facilitated by SIL in PNG, research from eleven language communities does not provide a full picture of VSU in the country. There are many kinds of projects and communities that were not represented in the research.
o *Language community*. Visiting only two or three villages per language community limited the extent to which SURAM was able to evaluate the breadth and variety of VSU in large language communities.
o *Village*. Interviewees in each location were often chosen for practical reasons: proximity, availability and willingness to participate. This non-systematic approach for selecting respondents led to a non-random sample of interviewees for each trip. It is likely that this introduced some bias into the research.

Time. Each of the eleven trips varied from 10 to 12 days. Given the complexity of the research questions and the difficulties involved in obtaining reliable data on some of the factors, various findings for certain factors are less than robust. This is reflected in the data confidence score assigned to each ranking for VSU and each of the fourteen factors for each individual trip. These confidence scores are not presented in this report, but are available in the detailed reports for each trip.

Staffing. Each trip included staff from core skill areas, including language assessment and (in nine of the eleven trips) members of the Scripture Application and Leadership Training (SALT) team. A total of 47 people took part in the eleven trips, but only a few people went on more than four trips, and none went on all of them. Each trip therefore included a different group of people, but always included at least three who had been on a previous SURAM trip. While this ensured some level of consistency of approach and results, more consistency could have been achieved with greater overlap of team members from trip to trip.

Memory and recall. In general, monitoring and evaluation processes occur during or immediately following a project. SURAM was different in that the data was collected several years after the completion of each translation project. Although SURAM sought to address this issue by researching only projects completed since 1997, it became clear that in some cases little could be remembered about certain aspects of the language project. For example, it sometimes proved difficult to acquire detailed information regarding early SU activities, courses run or the involvement of the community. In various cases, key people had passed away or moved to other places. In the case of Lomi, the

beginning of the translation project was as long ago as 1959. It is therefore inevitable that some data was lost or altered by the passing of time.

Sensitivity. Some aspects of a translation program are private or may be embarrassing to a community, such as the reputation of expats and local translators, the spiritual climate, or the community's involvement and empowerment (or lack of it). SURAM partially addressed this issue by building relationships and trust during the trip and by spending extra time in the main village. Additionally, SURAM made an effort to communicate to each community that its purpose is to aid future generations of translators, not judge past generations. However, ten to twelve days is a very limited window in which to obtain reliable information on sensitive issues. Nevertheless, in some cases communities were quite forthcoming about difficult matters.

Non-vernacular SU. SURAM focused on Vernacular Scripture Use, and did not investigate the use of Scripture materials in other languages, such as Tok Pisin or English. This issue was not completely neglected either, as the use of non-vernacular Scripture in church services was recorded, but the use of non-vernacular Scriptures in other contexts fell outside the scope of the SURAM research. Knowing what a community's overall SU levels are would be very valuable, and this would also bring a better perspective on the spiritual climate.

Audio Bible. Due to the fact that only four of the language communities SURAM visited had an Audio Bible, not much can be said about vernacular non-print media. A few observations on the use of the Audio Bibles in these four languages are made in Appendix F.

Impact. SURAM focused on the actual use of the translated Scriptures. The impact of the translation on society and individuals was not directly researched. Though these questions are of great interest, it was felt that such a broad longitudinal study would require additional research tools and staff well beyond the scope of SURAM.

2. Unexplored VSU factors

The following additional factors (presented here as hypotheses) were considered during the course of the SURAM project as possibly also having an effect on VSU. None of these hypotheses was directly evaluated.

1. VSU is higher in small language communities.
2. VSU is higher in more remote areas. The corollary of this hypothesis is that VSU is lower in language communities that are closer to a provincial town or a major highway.
3. VSU is higher in the non-Tok Pisin speaking areas of PNG.
4. VSU correlates with the denomination(s) in a language community.
5. VSU is higher in strongly cohesive societies than in more individualistic societies.
6. VSU correlates with personal factor X of the expat translators (e.g., age, country of origin, personality, language command, spirituality).
7. VSU is higher when there has been strong prayer support from the community and/or overseas partners.

For a variety of reasons these factors were not explored. Some were left out because they are relatively easy to consider after the data has been gathered (1, 2 and 3). One was left out because it seemed less significant within the country as a whole (5). Other factors involved data that is extremely hard to collect or quantify (7), or relates to potentially sensitive topics (6). Since these factors are not explored, we refrain from giving comments, except that hypothesis 3 is briefly addressed in Appendix D (The VSU database) and that hypothesis 4 is briefly discussed in Appendix E. (Further research)

Appendix B. The fourteen VSU factors and scores

This appendix lists the five scores used for the three types of VSU, as well as the five scores used for each of the fourteen VSU factors. Expanded scores and the probes used to collect data for each of the factors are available upon request from languagesurvey_png@sil.org.

1. VSU in church (in the village where the translators used to live)

1. There is no VSU in church services.
2. There is limited VSU in church services.
3. There is a fair amount of VSU in church services.
4. There is considerable VSU in church services.
5. There is widespread VSU in church services.

2. VSU in other contexts (in the village where the translators used to live)

1. There is no VSU in other contexts.
2. There is limited VSU in other contexts.
3. There is a fair amount of VSU in other contexts.
4. There is considerable VSU in other contexts.
5. There is widespread VSU in other contexts.

3. Reach of VSU

1. There is no VSU in the wider language community.
2. There is (very) limited VSU in the wider language community.
3. There is a fair amount of VSU in the wider language community.
4. There is considerable VSU in the wider language community.
5. There is widespread VSU in the wider language community.

	Factor	Hypothesis	Score
1.	Language use in church	Language use in church is a major indicator of VSU.	1. Vernacular is not used at all in church services. 2. Vernacular is used occasionally in a few domains in church services. 3. Vernacular is used regularly in some domains in church services. 4. Vernacular is used in most domains in church services. 5. Vernacular is used in all domains in church services.
2.	Language vitality	Language shift towards a language of wider communication is a major obstacle to VSU.	1. The language is moribund (about to die, EGIDS 8a): the only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older. 2. The language is shifting (EGIDS 7): the child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children. 3. The language is threatened (EGIDS 6b): the language is used for face-to-face

			communication within all generations, but it is losing users. 4. The language is vigorous (EGIDS 6a): the language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable. 5. The language is developing (EGIDS 5): the language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardised form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
3.	Dialect unity	When there is a complex dialect situation, overall VSU in the language community is low compared to VSU in non-complex situations.	1. The dialect situation is very complex. 2. The dialect situation is complex. 3. The dialect situation is somewhat complex. 4. The dialect situation is minimally complex. 5. The dialect situation is not at all complex.
4.	Orthography	A poor orthography is a great hindrance to VSU.	1. The orthography is a huge obstacle to people reading VS. 2. The orthography is somewhat of an obstacle to people reading VS. 3. The orthography has several problems. 4. The orthography has minor problems. 5. The orthography is excellent.
5.	Quality of translation	There is a direct correlation between quality of translation and amount of VSU.	1. There are many major issues with the quality of the translation. 2. There are a few major issues with the quality of the translation. 3. There are some minor issues with the quality of the translation. 4. There are a few minor issues with the quality of the translation. 5. Quality of the translation is high.
6a.	Reputation	The reputation of expat translators (either positive or negative) and their relationships within the community have an effect on VSU.	1. Reputation of the expat translators was poor. 2. Reputation of the expat translators was unfavourable. 3. Reputation of the expat translators was neutral. 4. Reputation of the expat translators was good. 5. Reputation of the expat translators was exceptional.
6b.	Reputation	The reputation of local translators (either positive or negative) and their relationships within the community have an effect on VSU.	1. Reputation of the local translators was poor. 2. Reputation of the local translators was unfavourable. 3. Reputation of the local translators was neutral.

			4. Reputation of the local translators was good. 5. Reputation of the local translators was exceptional.
7.	Schools and literacy	The presence of schools and some literacy is an important factor in VSU.	1. There are no schools in the area, and virtually everybody is illiterate. 2. Educational opportunities are limited, and the literacy rate is low. 3. Educational opportunities are limited in some ways and some of the population is literate. 4. There are currently schools in the area, and much of the population below 50 is literate. 5. There have been schools in the area for many decades. Most of the population below 50 is literate, and many people own and read books.
8.	SU activities	Scripture Use activities and use of vernacular church materials early in a project correlates with higher VSU.	1. Minimal VSU activities/use of Vernacular church materials occurred at the end of the project or were nonexistant. 2. VSU activities/use of Vernacular church materials occurred towards the end of the project. 3. VSU activities/use of Vernacular church materials occurred throughout the second half of the project. 4. VSU activities/use of Vernacular church materials occurred throughout the life of the project. 5. Extensive VSU activities/use of Vernacular church materials occurred throughout the life of the project.
9.	Distribution	Lack of distribution of VS materials after the NT dedication hinders VSU.	1. There was no distribution after the dedication. 2. There was limited distribution after the dedication. 3. There was some distribution after the dedication. 4. There was much distribution after the dedication. 5. There was full distribution after the dedication.
10.	Spiritual climate	The overall spiritual climate in an area correlates with the level of VSU.	1. There is a strong sense of barriers in the spiritual realm. 2. There is a mild sense of barriers in the spiritual realm. 3. There is neither a sense of barriers nor openness in the spiritual realm. 4. There is a mild sense of openness in the spiritual realm. 5. There is a strong sense of openness in the spiritual realm.

11a.	Denomina-tional support	Firm denominational support is essential for VSU.	1. Denominational leaders oppose VSU. 2. Denominational leaders have a negative attitude towards VSU. 3. Denominational leaders are lukewarm or indifferent towards VSU. 4. Denominational leaders support VSU. 5. Denominational leaders enthusiastically promote VSU.
11b.	Local chuch support	Firm support from local church leaders is essential for VSU.	1. Local church leaders oppose VSU. 2. Local church leaders have a negative attitude towards VSU. 3. Local church leaders are lukewarm or indifferent towards VSU. 4. Local church leaders support VSU. 5. Local church leaders enthusiastically promote VSU.
12.	Vernacular-speaking leaders	The presence of local church leaders who do not speak the local language hinders VSU.	1. None of the local church leaders know the vernacular. 2. The majority of local church leaders do not know the vernacular. 3. Approximately half of the local church leaders do not know the vernacular. 4. A small number of local church leaders do not know the vernacular. 5. All local church leaders know the vernacular.
13.	Community involvement	There is a direct correlation between community involvement / empowerment and the level of VSU.	1. The community was barely involved and not empowered. 2. The community was somewhat involved and minimally empowered. 3. The community was involved and somewhat empowered. 4. The community was heavily involved and empowered. 5. The community was fully involved and completely empowered.
14.	Project design	Projects that are designed and implemented by a local church or a local/national partner with assistance from SIL, produce translations that are significantly more used than projects completely run by SIL.	1. Design and implementation of the project resided exclusively with SIL. 2. Design and implementation of the project primarily resided with SIL, but local partners designed and implemented certain parts. 3. Design and implementation of the project was shared equally between local partners and SIL. 4. Design and implementation of the project primarily resided with local partners, but the SIL team designed and implemented certain parts. 5. Design and implementation of the project resided with local partners.

# Appendix C. Results for the eleven trips in summary form

For each of the eleven SURAM trips, the following information is provided in one-page summaries:

- Language (pseudonym), population figure (from the Twentieth edition of the Ethnologue[15]), province in PNG.
- Year of NT dedication and (if available) of the Audio Bible.
- The denominations in the language area.
- Languages used in the community.
- A bar diagram with the three VSU scores:
  a) VSU in church;
  b) VSU in other contexts;
  c) reach of VSU.
- A bar diagram with the scores for the fourteen VSU factors. For both diagrams, medium and high scores (3–5) are coded in blue, while low scores (1–2) are coded in red.
- A summary of the most influential positive and negative factors in this language community affecting VSU. Any other relevant information that has a significant bearing on VSU is also provided.
- A generally representative quote from someone from this language group.
- A random picture from the trip.

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[15] See Simons, Gary F. and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2017. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World,* Twentieth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: www.ethnologue.com.

1. Ude

- Ude is spoken by around 800 people who live in Western Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2005.
- Denomination: Evangelical Church of PNG (ECPNG).
- Languages used in the community: Ude, some English (in schools, also in church), limited Tok Pisin (traditionally absent in this area, but gradually growing in importance).
- Notes: reach of VSU was not investigated for Ude. Factor 6.2 Reputation of local translators is blank due to lack of data.
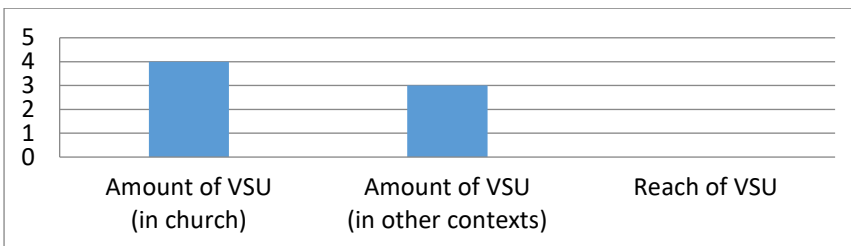
The Ude Bible is clear and easy to understand. English has many difficult and unknown words.

Ude speaker
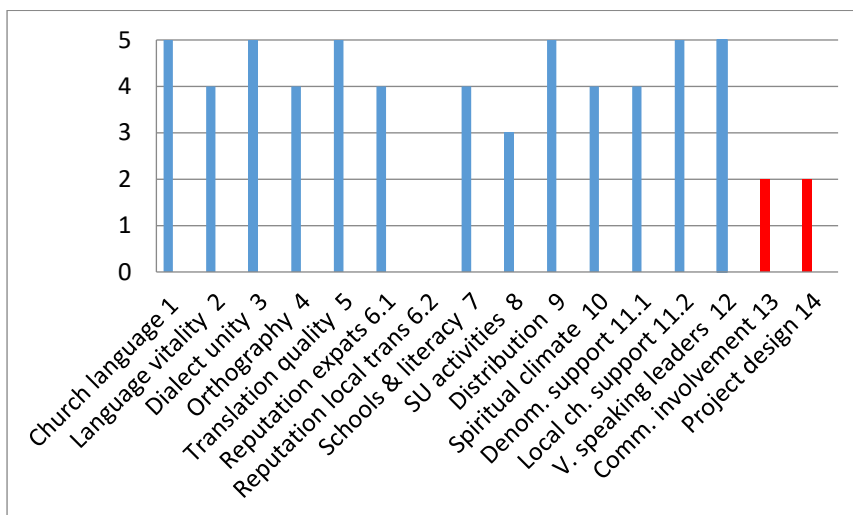
Negative VSU factors:

- **Community involvement** (factor 13) and **Project design** (factor 14) were low. Interestingly, overall VSU was high and appears not to have been affected by these low scores.

Positive VSU factors:

- Ude is a small language community without dialects and with only a single denomination. The small size means that the translators were well-known in the language area and that distribution was straightforward. Most people who were interviewed owned an Ude NT.
- Support from local church leaders for the vernacular NT was strong. They used it consistently in services, as well as for personal devotions.

Literacy levels appeared to be relatively high, and many people were fluent readers. SURAM team members attended a church service in which nine people, with prior notice from the preacher, read selected Ude verses aloud to the congregation.

2. Niak

- Niak is spoken by around 8,400 people who live in East New Britain.
- The NT was dedicated in 2004.
- Denominations: Roman Catholic (majority), Association of Local Churches (ALC), Revival Centres, Reformed International Fellowship, Seventh-day Adventists (SDA).
- Languages used: Niak, Tok Pisin (almost everyone the SURAM team encountered was fully bilingual), some English (in schools).
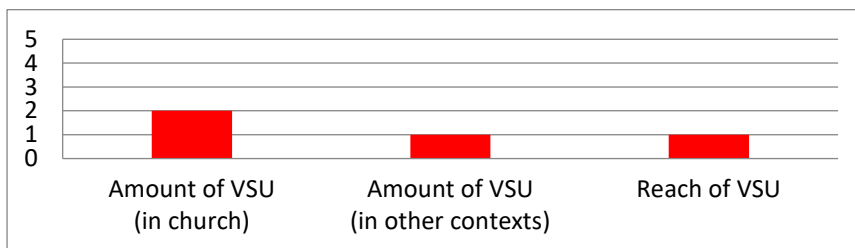
*No church leaders encouraged us to read the Bible in the Niak language.*

Niak speaker
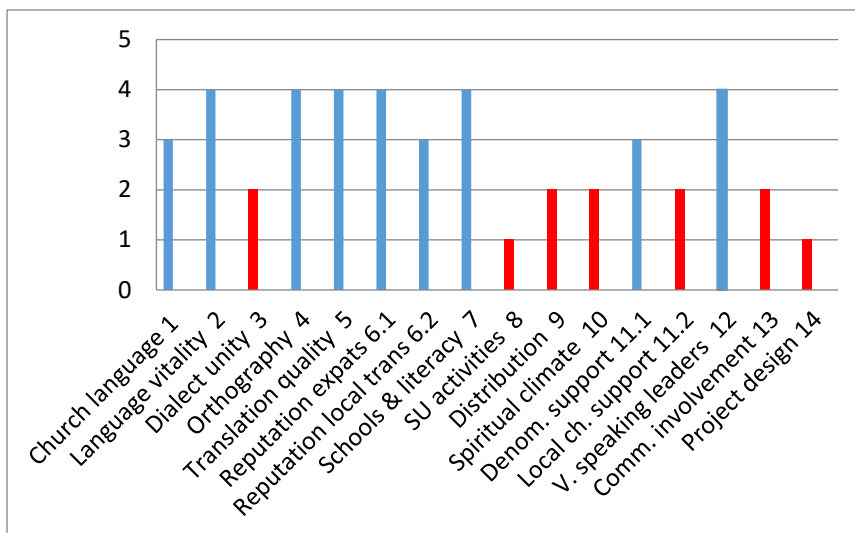
Negative VSU factors:

- There were **no awareness or distribution** efforts after the dedication. The SURAM visit in 2014 was also the first time SIL reconnected with this language community after the 2004 dedication.
- There is little or **no support** for VSU from local church leaders, except for the ALC.
- The **dialect situation** is complex. Major distinctions between the three Niak dialects (possibly large enough for them to be considered separate languages), meant that the translation does not reach two of the dialects. (It was possibly not intended to do so.)
- The **spiritual climate** was rather poor. There was an active cargo cult in the area, as well as evidence of animism.

Positive VSU factors:

- The language is **vital**, and there is a very positive attitude towards the vernacular. Teachers requested more school materials in the vernacular.
- **Literacy levels** in Niak, Tok Pisin, and English are good.

3. Biuk

- Biuk is spoken by around 5,300 people who live in Madang Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 1998.
- Denominations: Lutheran (majority), Roman Catholic, Foursquare, Christian Revival Centres (CRC), Apostolic, Assemblies of God, Governing Church (break off from Assemblies of God), Church of Christ, Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). Also: Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormon.
- Languages used: Biuk, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).
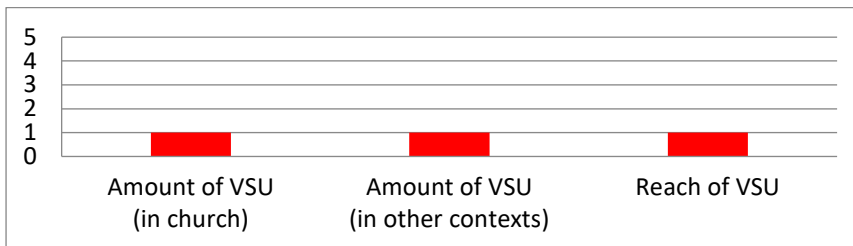
I don't feel that there is a problem with the translation of the Bible. The problem is that we have failed to use it.

Biuk church leader
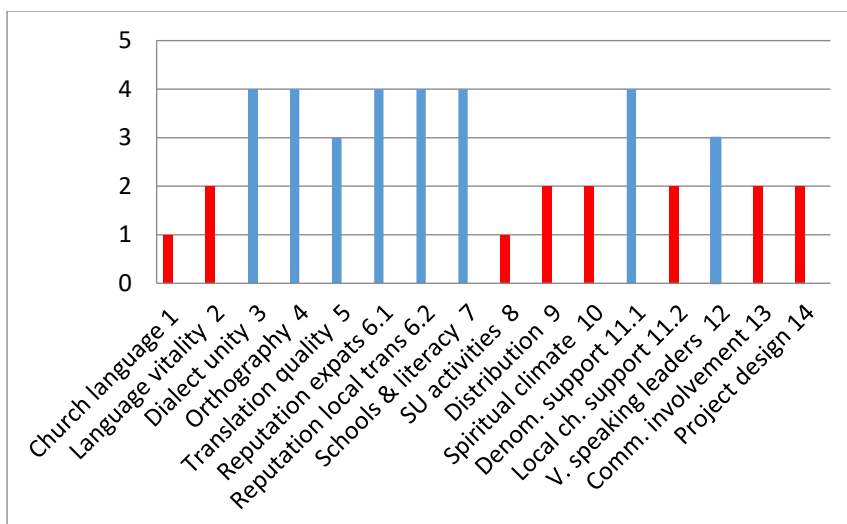
Negative VSU factors:

- **Awareness and distribution** efforts were minimal. During ministry activities organised by the SURAM team, many people reported that they had never seen the Biuk NT before.
- **Language use in church.** Despite Biuk being used in church services in the past, Tok Pisin is now used for the majority of domains in church services.
- The language is in the process of **shifting** to Tok Pisin, especially in areas closer to town. Many children are no longer learning Biuk as their first language.
- Many Biuk speakers feel the NT belongs to the Lutheran church, and some view it as belonging exclusively to the Lutheran church in the village where the expat team used to live. Many **denominations** that are now in the area came after the dedication and did not have the opportunity to give input into the translation.

Positive factors:

- There are only minor differences between Biuk **dialects**.
- **Schools** have been in the area since the 1930s, and there are **good literacy levels** in both Tok Pisin and English.

4. Tano

- Tano is spoken by over 115,000 people who live in the Simbu province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2008. The Audio Bible was produced in 2010.
- Denominations: Roman Catholic and Lutheran (majority denominations), Foursquare, Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), Evangelical Brotherhood Churches (EBC), Christian Life Centre (CLC), Nazarene Church, Baptist churches, various Pentecostal churches.
- Languages used: Tano, Tok Pisin (widely spoken), some English (in schools).
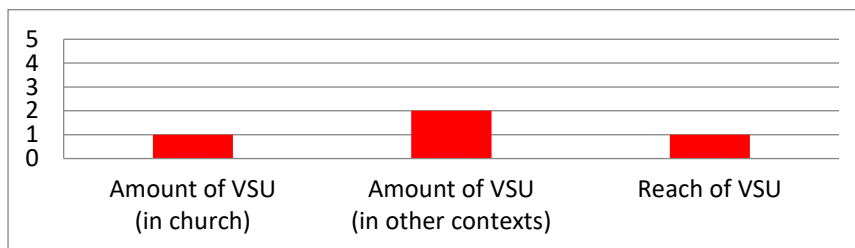
If we do not work on awareness and distribution, the Tano Bible will be a historical book that stays in the archives.

Tano church leader
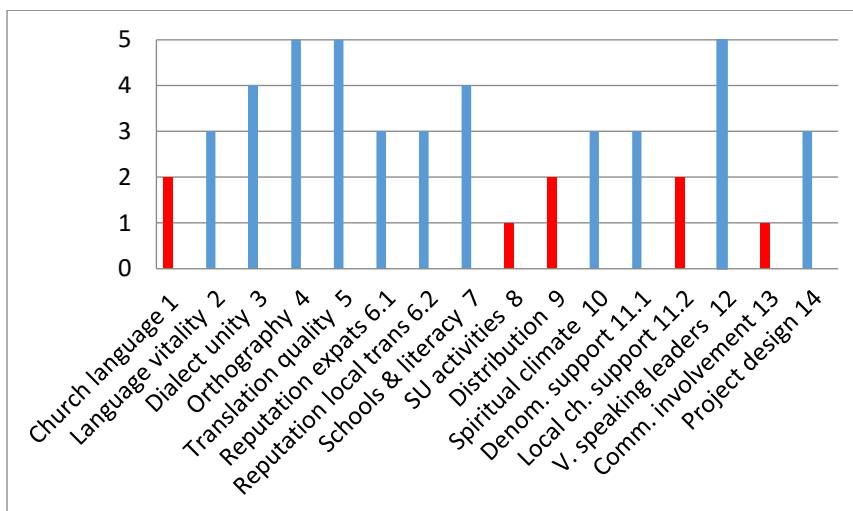
Negative VSU factors:

- There is **little interest** in the written vernacular, including the NT. Pastors prefer to use Tok Pisin or English Bibles (translating orally into Tano), and parents want their children to be educated in English.
- The **language used in church** is mainly Tok Pisin, though Tano is also used in preaching.
- There is a **lack of reading fluency** in Tano among pastors (as well as the general population).
- There is some **language shift** to Tok Pisin, especially in places near the highway.
- **Distribution efforts** following the dedication have been very limited, partly because of the large language area and the mountainous terrain.
- The Tano community was **barely involved** during the translation programme.

Positive VSU factors:

- The translation **project** started at the request of the two largest denominations and was run by SIL in collaboration with these churches and the Bible Society of PNG. The churches were very supportive and contributed funds, personnel and office space.
- There are only minimal differences between Tano **dialects**.
- **Schools** have been in the area since the 1930s, and there are **good literacy levels** in both Tok Pisin and English

5. Osi

- Osi is spoken by around 3,000 people who live in Milne Bay Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2009.
- Denomination: Anglican Church.
- Languages used in the community: Osi, some English (in schools, also in church), increasing use of Tok Pisin (traditionally absent in this area), also some neighbouring languages.
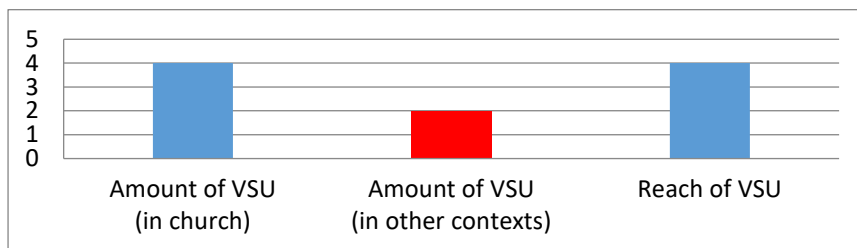
For so long the translation was in Wedau, the old church language. It is really a privilege to now have it in Osi, instead of having to read another language.

Osi speaker
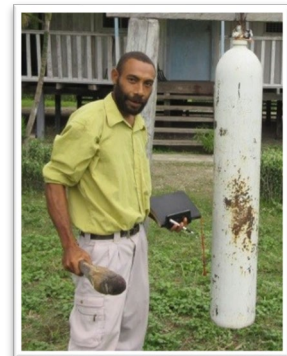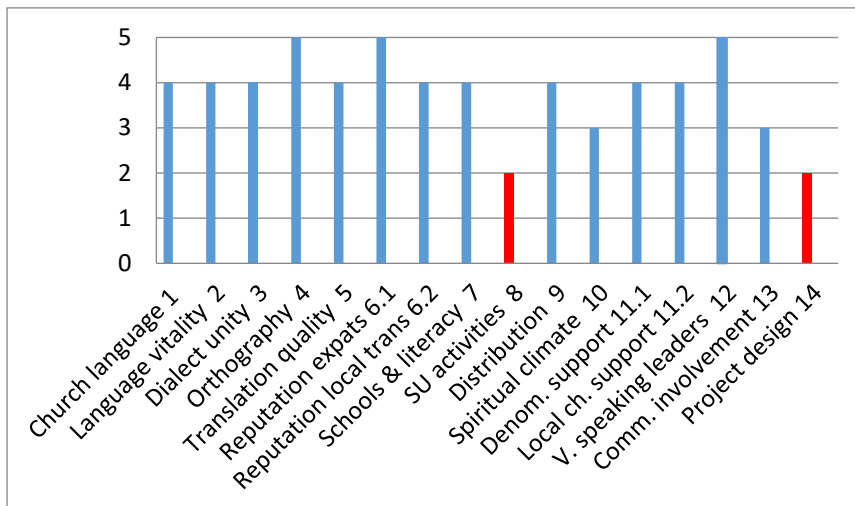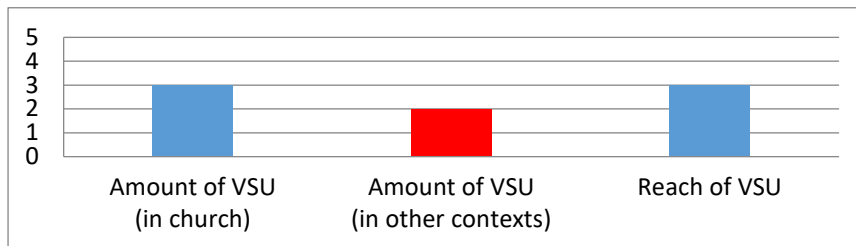

Negative VSU factors:
- **VSU outside of the church is low**, as family and personal devotions are not commonly practised.
- **SU activities** were somewhat limited. A translation of the liturgy into Osi was produced, but it failed to replace the long-standing English liturgy.

Positive VSU factors:
- There is strong **support from local church** leaders for the vernacular. All NT readings in church services are normally done in Osi, either by the parish priests, evangelists or laymen.
- **Language use** is vigorous throughout the community.
- **Distribution** was good, and the NT is sold out. Saturation of the Osi NT throughout the language area is high, and everybody is aware of its existence.
- **Literacy levels** appeared to be relatively high, and many people are fluent readers. Schools have been in the area since 1904.
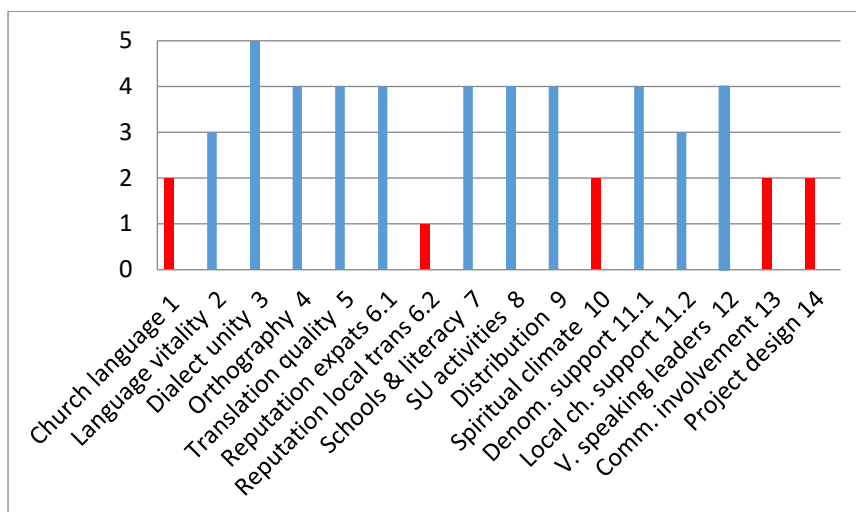
6. Komi

- Komi is spoken by over 1,500 people who live in East Sepik Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2004.
- Denominations: Evangelical Brotherhood Church (EBC, majority), Lutheran, Christian Revival Church (CRC), Word of Flame.
- Languages used: Komi, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).

Chart: bar values — Amount of VSU (in church): 3 (blue); Amount of VSU (in other contexts): 2 (red); Reach of VSU: 3 (blue). Scale 0–5.

The actions of one man removed the blessing from this book [Komi NT].

Komi speaker

Chart: factor ratings (scale 0–5)
- Church language 1: 2 (red)
- Language vitality 2: 3 (blue)
- Dialect unity 3: 5 (blue)
- Orthography 4: 4 (blue)
- Translation quality 5: 4 (blue)
- Reputation expats 6.1: 4 (blue)
- Reputation local trans 6.2: 1 (red)
- Schools & literacy 7: 4 (blue)
- SU activities 8: 4 (blue)
- Distribution 9: 4 (blue)
- Spiritual climate 10: 2 (red)
- Denom. support 11.1: 4 (blue)
- Local ch. support 11.2: 3 (blue)
- V. speaking leaders 12: 4 (blue)
- Comm. involvement 13: 2 (red)
- Project design 14: 2 (red)

Negative VSU factors:
- The poor **reputation of local translators** was a major issue. One of the national translators had repeated moral failures, which the community knew about and took seriously.
- The **spiritual climate** was rather poor. There were a lot of relational tensions between individuals, clans, and denominations during the time of the SURAM visit. Additionally, there were reports of sorcery practices still happening.

Positive VSU factors:
- There are three Komi **dialects**. One of the dialects has a translated NT produced by another mission, and there are minimal differences between the other two dialects.
- **Distribution** was good. The first printing of the NT sold out shortly after the dedication, and a second printing was done. Most Komi people know that NT copies are available at the EBC office.
- The majority of local **church leaders are Komi speakers**.
- Many **VSU activities** happened during the translation project. Bible verses, corresponding to the EBC calendar, were translated each week and given to pastors before that week's service. There were fellowship groups where people had the opportunity to study the Bible and practice reading.

7. Kisa

- Kisa is spoken by over 4,000 people who live in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.
- The NT was dedicated in 2005.
- Denominations: Roman Catholic (majority), Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), Christian Life Centre (CLC), Christian Revival Crusade (CRC), United Church and Christ for the Nations. Some cults practicing ancestor worship are also active in the area.
- Languages used: Kisa, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).
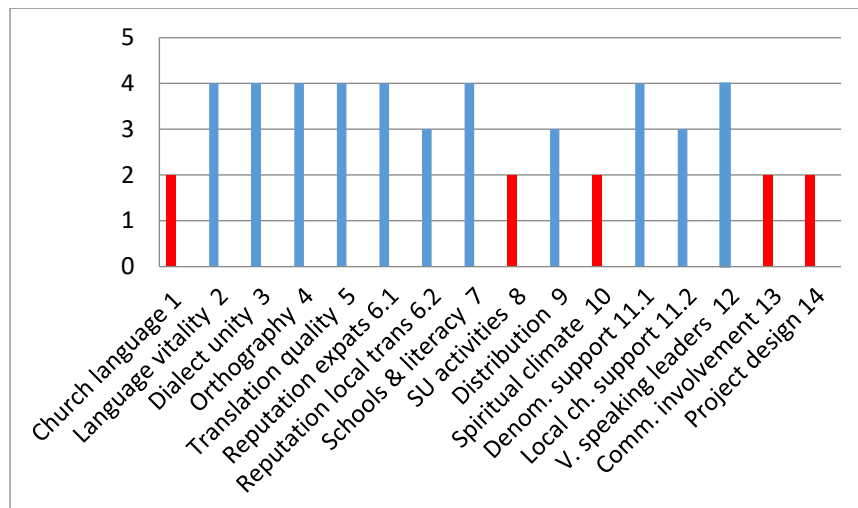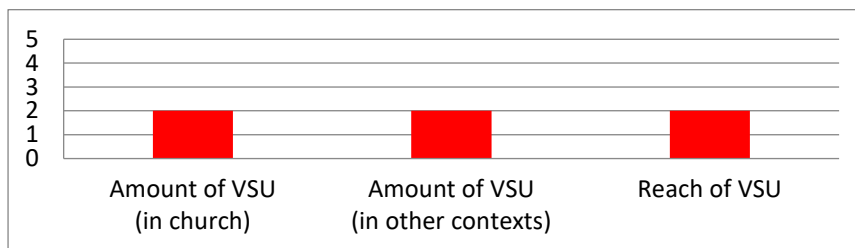
The problem is not with the letters or the Bible; the problem is with the people who are unwilling to put in the effort to learn to read fluently.

Kisa speaker

Negative VSU factors:

- Tok Pisin is the **language used in church** for most domains, including Scripture reading.
- In general, literacy levels were reasonable, but reading Kisa was perceived as difficult, and **reading fluency** was low.
- **Local church leaders** did not have a negative attitude towards the Kisa NT, but neither were they actively using it or encouraging others to do so.
- SURAM team members had a distinct sense of **spiritual apathy** in the village where the expat translation team used to live. There was little interest in church and God's Word, especially among young people. This is possibly linked to the fact that the area suffered as a result of a civil war in the 1990s, and that a revival in the Roman Catholic Church had mostly run its course.

Positive VSU factors:

- Kisa is **vigorously** used for oral communication by all generations.
- **Distribution** was handled well. People knew where they could get a copy of the NT if they wanted one.

8. Doni

- Doni is spoken by over 6,500 people who live in Morobe Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2006. The Audio Bible (NT and Genesis) was dedicated in 2012.
- Denominations: Lutheran (majority), Foursquare, Christian Revival Church (CRC), Born-again Revival Church (BRC), Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), Christian Mission/Restoration.
- Languages used: Doni, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).
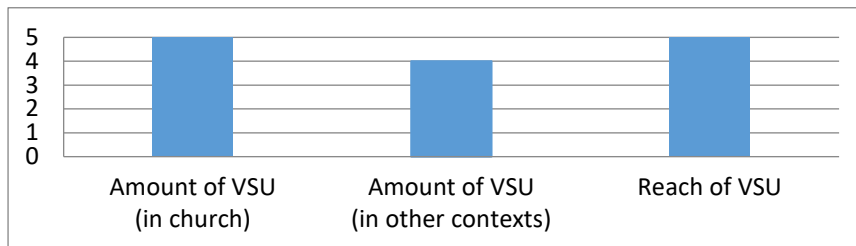
I read the Bible in Doni and it feeds me. Now I know who Jesus is.

Doni speaker
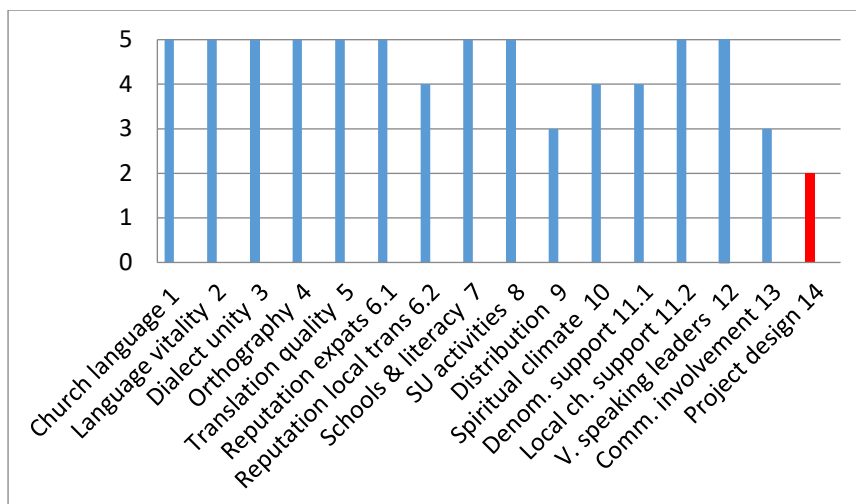
Negative VSU factors:

- It is interesting to note that the only factor to receive a low score was **project design** and implementation (factor 14). The SIL translators made the majority of the decisions and presented them to the local translators and the community. The local translators and the community reported that they were happy and in agreement with those plans.

Positive VSU factors:

- Extensive **Scripture Use activities** took place throughout the life of the project. This included a Bible study called "The New Covenant", which was taught in all 21 Doni villages after the NT dedication.
- **Awareness** was high. The SIL translators visited all the villages multiple times. Many Doni people commented about the translators having visited their village.
- There have been **schools** in the area since at least the 1950s. The vast majority of Doni people are literate in at least Tok Pisin and Doni.
- Doni is used in all domains for every **church service**.
- The language is **vital**. All children learn Doni as their first language; bilingualism in Tok Pisin is limited among young children and some of the older generation.
- After the dedication of the NT, the expat **translators continued working** in the language area doing VSU activities and OT translation.

9. Dolu

- Dolu is spoken by around 6,900 people who live in Madang Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2009 (Genesis in 1998). The Audio Bible was released in 2015.
- Denominations: Lutheran (majority), Church of Christ (COC), Baptist, Evangelical Brotherhood Church (EBC), PNG Revival Church, International Revival Church.
- Languages used: Dolu, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools and some churches).

	Amount of VSU (in church)	Amount of VSU (in other contexts)	Reach of VSU
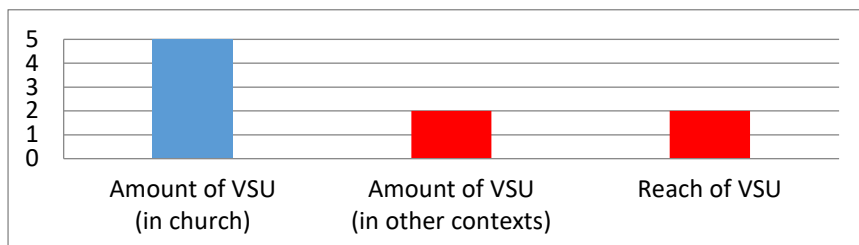
If we were interested in it, it would be easy for us to read the Dolu Bible.

Dolu speaker
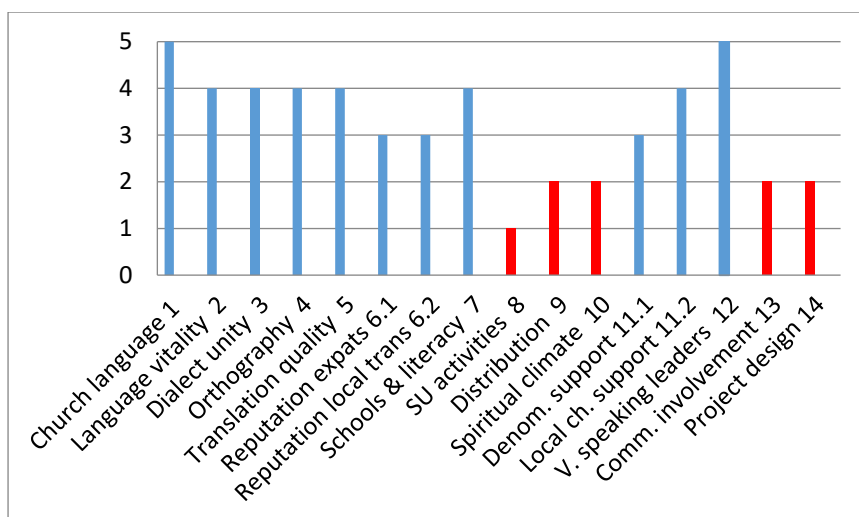
Negative VSU Factors:

- There is no system of **distribution** or organised awareness effort in place. No one interviewed had purchased a Dolu NT since the dedication. Rough terrain and lack of roads make travel and communication throughout the language area difficult.
- Some of the translators have a mixed **reputation** in the community, which has negatively affected some people's view of the translated Scriptures.
- Significant denominational division contributes to an overall poor **spiritual climate**, which seems to have an effect on VSU outside of the church context.

Positive VSU Factors:

- **Language vitality** is high, with children learning Dolu as their first language.
- **Literacy levels** in the area are also fairly high, and those who read VS during church services did so fluently.
- The **local church leaders** are native speakers of Dolu, and it is standard practice to conduct church services in the vernacular.
- Although very few people carry vernacular NTs to church with them, **a supply of NTs is kept permanently in every church** in the two villages where the expat translators lived, for congregational use during services.

10. Loks

- Loks is spoken by around 4,400 people who live in Sandaun Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2001.
- Denominations: Christian Brethren Churches (CBC, majority), Revival Centres of PNG (RCPNG), Revival Centres International (RCI), Assemblies of God (AOG), Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), Roman Catholic.
- Languages used: Loks, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).
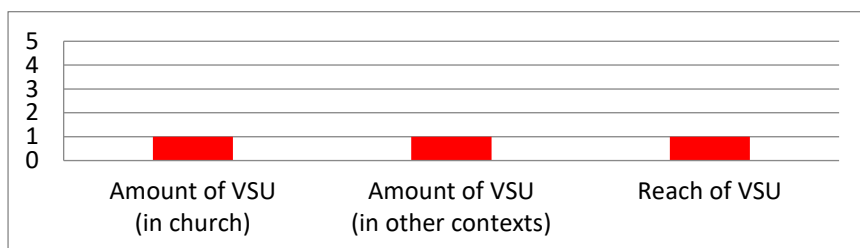
We are not using the Loks Bible in church.

Loks speaker
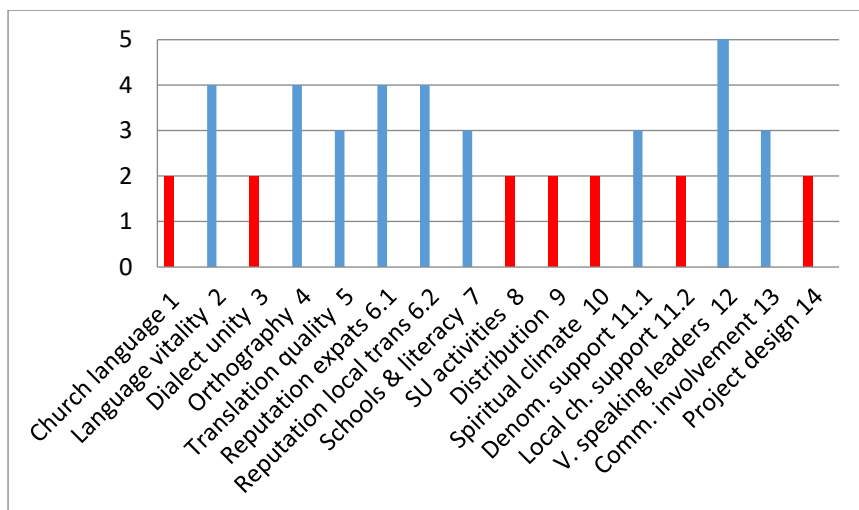
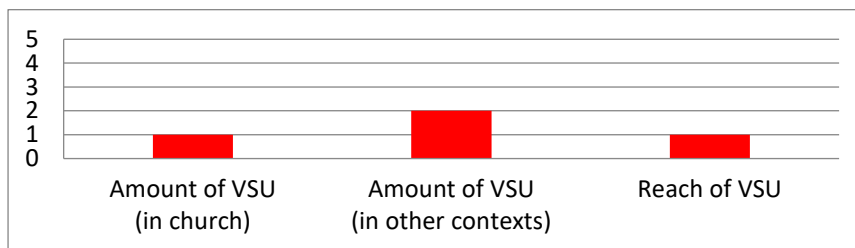

Negative VSU Factors:

- Tok Pisin is the main **language used in church** services, including for Scripture reading.
- **Literacy** does not seem to be highly valued in the Loks area.
- Though the orthography has no real problems, Loks is perceived as **hard to read**. The team found very few fluent readers. There is no training in reading the vernacular.
- The **dialect situation** is complex. For speakers of the western dialect of Loks, the eastern dialect used in most of the translation is a major obstacle to its use.
- **Distribution** or organised awareness efforts were limited, especially in the western dialect area. Even in the translators' village, not everyone was aware of the presence of the Loks NT.
- **Translators' departure**. Several church leaders stated that the expat translators should have stayed after the dedication to help people read and use the Loks NT.
- The **spiritual climate** was rather poor, with considerable spiritual apathy. Animistic practices, such as sorcery and love magic, are reportedly still quite common.
- **Local church leaders** appear to have a lukewarm attitude towards the written vernacular.

Positive VSU Factors:

- Loks appears to be a **vital language**, though the vitality was lower in one of the three villages that the SURAM team visited.

11. Lomi

- Lomi is spoken by around 27,000 people who live in the Eastern Highlands Province.
- The NT was dedicated in 2011. The Audio Bible was also released in 2011.
- Three main denominations: Seventh-day Adventists (SDA), Evangelical Brotherhood Churches (EBC) and the Lutheran Church. Salvation Army and the United Church are also present.
- Languages used: Lomi, Tok Pisin, some English (in schools).

The Bible is a holy book, and holy and faithful men of God should have been the ones translating it.

Lomi pastor
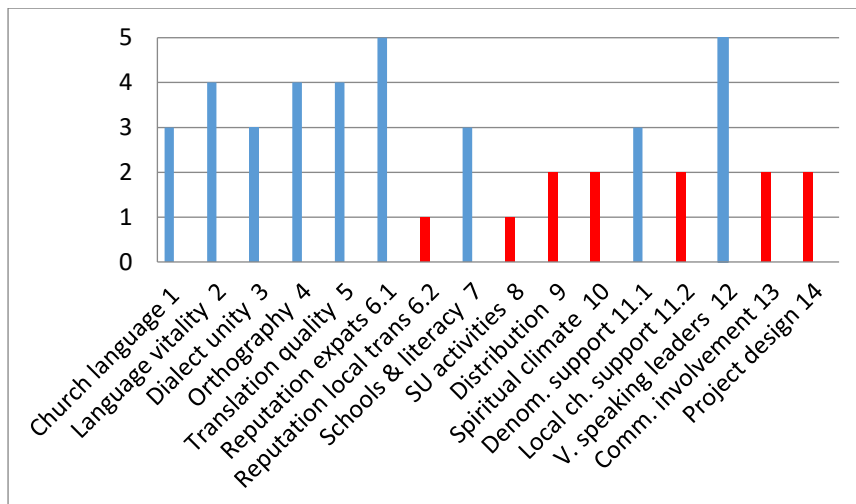
Negative VSU Factors:

- Several of the local translators had **moral failures** that were known to the community, and this continues to influence some church leaders' willingness to use the Lomi NT.
- **Literacy levels** appeared to be relatively low in the Lomi area.
- Lack of vernacular **literacy training** and reading practice were cited as major obstacles to VSU.
- **Distribution** efforts after the dedication were very limited. Almost nobody outside of the main village had ever seen a Lomi NT. Of the 2,000 Lomi NTs that were printed, 1,300 were still in storage at the end of 2016 at the SIL centre in Ukarumpa.
- The **spiritual climate** was rather poor, with evidence of legalism in church, as well as drug use and promiscuity in the wider community.
- **Local church leaders** do not promote the use of the Lomi NT, though a few are reportedly using it for personal devotions or sermon preparation.

Positive VSU Factors:

- Lomi appears to be a **vital language**, though its vitality is not as strong in villages nearer the highway.
- The **dialect situation** is not very complex.
- Most local **church leaders** are Lomi speakers.

Appendix D. The VSU database

Information on VSU was also sought for all of the 200+ languages in which a translation of the New Testament was facilitated by SIL or its partner organisation BTA (PNG Bible Translation Association). The table on the next page shows the results. Information for this large VSU database has come from a variety of sources, including the following:

- Correspondence with current and former translators.
- Interviews with SIL regional directors.
- SIL members who have spent time in the language area (e.g., survey visits, village allocations during the Pacific Orientation Course, SU courses, SURAM trips).
- BTA members, co-translators, course participants at the Pacific Institute for Languages, Arts and Translation (PILAT) in Ukarumpa, local pastors, Papua New Guinean SIL employees.
- Missionaries from various organisations.
- Non-SIL linguists.

In this database the following broad VSU rankings are distinguished.

- **Good**. The NT is frequently used in church services in the village where the translators lived, as well as in other villages, though possibly not in the whole area, due to dialect issues. There is considerable use outside of church (e.g., family devotions, personal devotions), and many people own a copy of the NT and use it.
- **Fair**. There is some use of the NT in church services, but it is either infrequent, or irregular, or limited to a smaller denomination. Use of the Scriptures outside the church context is limited. Alternatively, there is good use in church, but there is little or no use in other contexts.
- **Low**. There is either no use at all, or use is very limited (e.g., very occasional use in one or two churches in the area or reports about some people using it for devotions). The vast majority of church-going people do not hear it being read in church and do not use it themselves.
- **Unknown**. Due to lack of data, nothing is known about the use of the NT in this language group.

Each VSU ranking (Good-Fair-Low) is accompanied by a data confidence level. Three confidence levels are employed in this database: A (confident), B (not so confident) and C (best guess). Of the 162 languages for which information was gathered, the division in VSU is as follows:

- Good use: 48 languages = 30%
- Fair use: 51 languages = 31%
- Low use: 63 languages = 39%

Table 6: VSU estimates for languages with a NT

Province in PNG	Good VSU	Fair VSU	Low VSU	Unknown	Total number of NTs
Bougainville (ARB)	1	3	4	0	8
Central	3	1	0	1	5
East New Britain	0	3	2	0	5
East Sepik	1	4	5	8	18
Eastern Highlands	3	3	12	1	19
Enga/Jiwaka/Western Highlands	0	1	5	1	7
Gulf	0	0	2	0	2
Madang	1	11	6	6	24
Manus	1	2	0	0	3
Milne Bay	12	3	1	2	18
Morobe	14	8	5	6	33
New Ireland	0	5	2	2	9
Oro	7	0	0	4	11
Sandaun	2	1	7	3	13
Simbu	0	1	4	0	5
Southern Highlands/Hela	0	1	3	3	7
West New Britain	0	3	2	0	5
Western	3	1	3	1	8
Total:	48	51	63	38	200

Caveats:

- The information obtained for many language groups is quite impressionistic and therefore potentially unreliable.
- The average dedication year varies considerably for each province. In the Eastern Highlands, Simbu and Western Highlands, for example, many NTs were dedicated in the 1970s and 1980s. Translations dedicated several decades ago are less likely to be still used, due to language change. This issue was not specifically investigated for the whole database.
- The rankings reflect the current situation. In several cases, VSU may have been higher in the past (e.g., in the years directly after the dedication).

Appendix E. Suggestions for further research

1. Correlation between VSU and province

Appendix D shows that VSU scores are unevenly spread across the country of PNG. In the province of Milne Bay, for example, 12 of the 18 translations have high use, and only one has low use. However, in Eastern Highlands Province, 12 out of the 19 NT translations have low use, and only three have high use. Other provinces where VSU is higher than average are Oro, Central and Morobe. Provinces where VSU is consistently lower than average are Sandaun, East Sepik, Madang, as well as the other highlands provinces: Enga, Jiwaka, Western Highlands, Southern Highlands, and Hela. In other provinces, the figures are more even, or the numbers are too small to draw conclusions.

The exact reasons for these observed trends in VSU remain to be investigated, though the presence of Tok Pisin as a lingua franca is an obvious candidate. Since Tok Pisin is largely absent from Milne Bay, Central and Oro, this would appear to be a significant factor for the good VSU scores in these provinces. However, the fact that Tok Pisin is widely used in Morobe, a province which has 14 cases of good VSU out of 33 NTs, shows that other factors must also play a role. It is also worth pointing out that Sandaun, East Sepik and Madang are the three provinces where language shift to Tok Pisin is the most prevalent. In cases of high VSU, positive regional factors may include the use of a church language in the past, denominational support for VSU, language attitudes and spiritual climate. Low VSU in provinces such as the Eastern Highlands and Sandaun also deserves further study, as do the few exceptional cases of high VSU in these provinces.

2. Correlation between VSU and denomination

The denominational make-up of Papua New Guinea is complex and multifaceted. A language community typically has one major, traditional denomination (Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican or United Church), as well as a number of smaller denominations that are of more recent origin. These denominations differ widely in their forms of worship, use of the Scriptures, language policy or habits, pastor training, pastor rotation, etc. There are indications that there might be a correlation between VSU and the denominations that are present in a language community. In general, the SURAM team has the impression that in some communities VSU is higher in more traditional denominations. This is especially the case in churches that follow the liturgical practice of having three Scripture readings during a Sunday church service. In effect, this can mean that VSU in those communities is high in church services, but that VSU in other contexts is low. This was the case, for example, in Osi (trip 5) and Dolu (trip 9). In contrast to these traditional churches, more recently arrived denominations of a charismatic or pentecostal persuasion tend to have shorter Scripture readings in church (sometimes only one or two verses), and also lower VSU, as they prefer to use Tok Pisin or English. These are broad generalisations, and the SURAM team also found various exceptions.

Another factor that plays a role in the language(s) used in church is the educational level of the pastors. The higher someone's level of education in PNG, the more he or she tends to prefer English, both orally and in written form. It has been observed that better-educated church leaders often like to explain the Scriptures by resorting to English words in their Tok Pisin preaching. Often there seems to be a note of superiority that goes along with this use of language, but it does not enhance understanding of the Bible by the regular church goers.

Another denominational factor which plays a role in VSU is the frequent rotation of pastors or priests among traditional denominations. Church leaders in these denominations often serve in places outside of their own language areas. In smaller and more recently arrived denominations, pastors tend to originate from the local language area. Because the attitude of local church leaders towards the translated NT is known to have a significant impact on VSU, it would be worthwhile to further explore the effect of denomination on VSU. Based on the results of this research, it might be possible to arrive at specific recommendations to promote VSU geared towards various denominations.

3. Language attitudes

Conclusion 2 in section 3 mentions lukewarm attitudes of language speakers towards their own vernacular, especially in its written form. Language attitudes are not easy to investigate, but since they drive the processes of language shift and the acceptability of a written vernacular translation, this issue should be investigated further, possibly within the larger context of language ideologies and culture change. It might also be helpful to separate people's attitudes towards the oral use and written use of their language. It is evident in Papua New Guinea that some people value their vernacular highly as an oral language or dialect, but prefer to use another language for reading the Bible. This situation can be compared to the case of native speakers of Swiss German in Switzerland, or speakers of Frisian or Dutch dialects in the Netherlands. Most Christians in these language communities prefer to read the Bible in either High German or standard Dutch, even though there are Bible translations available in Swiss German, Frisian and various Dutch dialects. The exact factors underlying such choices deserve further research, as does the question of whether or not audio recordings would be met with more enthusiasm in such situations.

4. Reading fluency

Another barrier to VSU mentioned in conclusion 2 in section 3 is reading fluency, as distinct from literacy. Even people who are very literate in Tok Pisin or English can have major difficulties when first trying to read their vernacular aloud, and hence may feel embarrassed and decide the effort is not worth the potential benefit.

More research needs to be done into this factor, which appears to be largely understudied. This should include practical suggestions on how this barrier can be addressed and overcome in current and completed translation projects.

Appendix F. Questions and answers

1. Are the SURAM findings in PNG relevant for other countries?

Concerns about the poor use of translated Bibles are not limited to Papua New Guinea. Based on conversations and presentations made by SURAM members, it is clear that this issue is also at play in various countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific. In spite of decades of work in these places, much is still unknown about the actual use of translated Scriptures. Existing information about VSU is often unsystematic and anecdotal; systematic research into VSU has rarely been carried out. The SURAM team believes that similar research in other situations will help Bible translation agencies to get a broader perspective on VSU worldwide and make the necessary changes to become more effective in each context.

2. Can the SURAM research methodology be readily used in other contexts?

Though the SURAM methodology must obviously be adapted to the local situation, a number of key elements that have made SURAM successful are potentially readily implementable in many other contexts. These include the following:

- visiting a language area for at least a week;
- covering more than one village;
- visiting with teams of at least five members, combining expats and nationals;
- combining research and ministry;
- investigating actual VSU, as well as factors that help or hinder;
- quantifying VSU and the VSU factors.

The biggest need for localisation is probably in the choice of the various factors that help or hinder VSU. For example, within the context of Papua New Guinea – a country with complete freedom of religion – Condition 7 (*Freedom to commit to Christian faith*) of Dye's eight conditions is not a relevant factor in VSU research. In other contexts, this factor might be of great importance.

3. What did the SURAM team find out about audio recordings of the NT?

Four of the eleven language communities visited had an Audio Bible in addition to a printed vernacular NT: Tano, Lomi, Dolu and Doni.

In **Tano** the Audio Bible was produced a few years after the print version of the NT. Some copies of the Tano Audio Bible had been given for free to church leaders, but ordinary church members did not have the opportunity to buy or get one. Very few people who were asked about the Audio Bible were aware that the item actually existed, and even fewer had one. Only one church leader reported using it sometimes at fellowship nights.

In **Lomi** the Audio Bible was dedicated at the same time as the printed NT. Few of the players seem to have reached the hands of the people. In the main village in Lomi, only one person of the 47 people interviewed owned an Audio Bible, which was now broken.

In **Dolu** the Audio Bible was produced five years after the completion of the NT. Distribution was again limited. Over 50 Audio Bibles were sent to the area when it became available, but most were distributed in the village where the co-translator responsible for selling them lives. In the village where the SIL translators used to live most people were aware that the Dolu Audio Bible existed, but they had been unable to obtain any for themselves.

VSU was generally low in both Tano and Lomi. The availability of the Audio Bible had not changed that situation. This may be partly due to challenges caused by distribution, and possibly also the high cost of the device. In general, interest in both the printed Bible and the Audio Bible appeared to be rather low in these three places.

In **Doni** the situation was quite different. VSU is very high in this language community, both in church services and in other contexts, and the use of the Audio Bible was correspondingly high. Distribution of the Audio Bible happened at the time of the NT dedication at a very low price (heavily subsidised), and reportedly each family has an Audio Bible. The players are well used, especially at night, and also by people who cannot read. Multiple people commented that they use their Audio Bibles every day if there is sun. Challenges that were mentioned were the difficulties charging the solar-powered Audio Bibles, as Doni is an area of little sunshine and frequent rainfall. Some of the players have been destroyed by rain, and the current high price means that replacing them is beyond the reach of ordinary Doni villagers.

If any conclusion can be drawn from these four cases, it is that the Audio Bible is potentially a helpful VSU tool, but that the barriers for using it must not be underestimated. Critical areas that need careful attention in this respect are awareness, distribution, pricing, and replacing broken items. As with print translation, just producing a quality product is not sufficient to ensure its use.

4. Can the language shift to Tok Pisin be considered a positive and helpful development in PNG, as this means less work for Bible translators?

The answer to this question depends very much on one's perspective. Many linguist-translators will regret language shift and the accompanying loss of vernacular languages. Various studies have shown that each language offers a unique perspective on the human mind and a unique way of interacting with the natural environment.[16] When a language community shifts to a language of wider communication, such as Tok Pisin, and ceases to use the vernacular, there is much that is irrevocably lost. From a Christian perspective, it can be said that diversity is the hallmark of God's creation, and that care of creation involves protecting what is weak and vulnerable, including not only flora and fauna, but also marginalised societies and endangered languages. A world with only a few types of trees, a dozen or so birds, and a handful of languages is not the world that God intended.

From a pragmatic viewpoint, however, there are indeed benefits to language shift and language loss, since diminishing numbers mean that the task of language development and Bible translation becomes less overwhelming. Good survey tools that focus on language vitality, language attitudes and the aspirations of the local community will help decide what can and should be done in a particular situation. Sometimes the community realises that their language is dying, and a translation organisation is requested to produce a Bible translation in order to save the language. Such requests are largely misguided, and there needs to be an acceptance of situations where the community has consciously shifted from vernacular to Tok Pisin. There is very little point in starting to produce a written Bible translation for a small ethnic group where everybody speaks Tok Pisin and the remaining fluent speakers of the vernacular are all 60 years or over.

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[16] See, for example the following three studies: Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine. 2000. *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's languages.* Oxford: OUP; D. David Harrison. 2007. *When languages die: The extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge.* Oxford: OUP; Nicholas Evans. 2011. *Dying words: Endangered languages and what they have to tell us.* Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

In summary, Bible translation organisations need to balance a positive attitude towards language diversity with a realistic attitude towards what can and should be attempted.

5. Where can people find more details about SURAM?

Further information on SURAM, such as the methodology document and various questionnaires, can be obtained by sending an email to the Language Survey Department of SIL Papua New Guinea at languagesurvey_png@sil.org:

- the SURAM methodology document (background, hypotheses/factors, rankings);
- various questionnaires, research tools and observation sheets;
- the eleven SURAM reports (25-30 pages each);
- various PowerPoint presentations.

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