



# ETEN Data Sharpening Initiative For Signed Languages

Stewarded by ProgressBible<sup>1</sup>

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## Incentive Program

ETEN is inviting implementing partners to join the Data Sharpening Initiative, stewarded by ProgressBible. The goal of this initiative is to support the acceleration of Bible translation by improving data on every language with an unmet All Access goal. The Data Sharpening Initiative proposes an incentive program to encourage ETEN implementing partners and partners at a regional and national level to share data. A pilot program of data collection in 425 spoken languages and 75 sign languages will be launched in October 2023. Project effectiveness will be evaluated through this pilot program to ensure that we are receiving the expected results.

## Main Goals:

For every signed language with an unmet All Access Goal, we desire to have:

- Verification that it does actually **exist** and is distinct from all other known sign languages.
- An assessment of its **linguistic readiness** for translation.
- An understanding of **multilingualism** in both written languages and other sign languages.
- A confirmation of language **vitality and institutional support**.
- A clear statement of need (**expressed need**) for Scripture in the local language from the local community.

A more detailed statement of the questions we are asking is available [here](#).

## Data Requirements

- ETEN partners (and their partners) will be able to express interest in contributing data (current as of 2020 or later) relevant to the above issues. Eligible languages include those that have no known current Bible translation activity and have an All Access Goal Status of “goal not met”, and which have not been assigned to any other contributor. The current list is [here](#).
- You can offer to contribute information and indicate what types of information you can offer by filling in this [initial form](#).
- We will respond to your offer within a week, indicating whether we have accepted it.
- If you are accepted as a contributor, we will include a link to a fillable form with the detailed questions mentioned above, where you can enter your information.
- For your submission to be considered complete (and eligible for the financial incentive mentioned below), you need to follow through on the data you offered in the initial form within nine months. We acknowledge that you may not be able to answer all the questions, but we are very interested in the information you *can* provide.

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<sup>1</sup>February 2024

- Submission of any supporting documentation is encouraged but not required.

### Guidelines on Data Collection

- If you are aware of other organizations and/or church networks doing language development, Scripture engagement, or Bible translation in this language, or even closely related languages, please collaborate with them to ensure the data submission is inclusive of their perspective.
- Ideally, the information should be collected from multiple representatives of the language community, who are in good standing in the community. Be careful about gathering information from hearing people who claim to know about deaf language use; it is best to confirm their information with deaf people directly.
- Our questions are intended to be a guide to describe the information that is desired. We encourage you to ask for the information in the most appropriate way for your context.
- Some organizations may have their own tools for data collection and you have freedom to use what is the best fit for your context.
- We understand that the answer to these questions will vary in different parts of the language community. We are most interested in a response for the people who depend on the language the most.

### Potential Outcomes From Data Collection

- Increased **collaboration**: by improving data within ProgressBible, the ETEN Alliance will be better equipped to learn from one another and avoid unintentional duplication of effort.
- **Accelerated pace**: by having a better understanding of the remaining All Access Goal needs, ETEN Implementing Partners can better prioritize their work. This will result in accelerated progress toward ETEN's shared goals.
- Confirmation of **existence**: Many languages on the list have been assumed to exist and be distinct from all other languages, but we haven't had confirmation. We want to remove spurious languages from the list and get solid information about those that do exist.
- Assess **linguistic readiness** of a language for Bible translation: Some sign languages have come into existence so recently that there is not currently a conventionalized lexicon and grammar. In such situations, further language development must happen before a translation would be usable.
- An understanding of **multilingualism**. If all segments of the community prefer access to Scripture in another language, the language will be marked as *Goal Met - Scripture Accessed via Second Language*. All submissions with high multilingualism will be reviewed by the 55 Table.
- A confirmation of language vitality. If the language community has shifted and is now **low vitality** the language will be moved from the All Access Goals list to the *Every Verse Current* list. Additionally, the extent to which the sign language has **institutional support** (such as being taught in schools, interpreter availability, legal recognition, etc), this will help predict the longevity of the language.
- A statement of need (**expressed need**) from the local language community. This is desired but may take time to understand, so we would prefer no data instead of a rushed or poorly-verified statement.. However, if there is an expressed need, the language will be highlighted for top priority in the ProgressBible database.

### Additional Information

- The incentive program will grant a flat rate of \$2,000 for providing detailed information corresponding to your accepted offer within nine months.
- One offer will be accepted per language/country pair
  - Eligible languages are [here](#).
  - Once an organization's offer of information has been accepted, the corresponding sign language will be removed from the list of eligible languages.

- Disbursement of funds will be sent quarterly from Mission Mutual.
- Funds can be used for direct expenses from the data collection, or in any of the ETEN strategic initiatives:
  - All Access Goal Bible Translation projects
  - Translation tools development
  - Capacity building in quality assurance and strengthening local organizations

### **Contacts**

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