

# Global People Conversation Guidebook



# Introduction

The Global People Conversations took place in 2023. Four of these conversations were regional, held in Germany, Colombia, Malaysia and Kenya, with a total of 120 participants (including Alliance leaders and several guests from other organisations) representing 75 organisations and nearly as many countries. The fifth conversation, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, included several representatives from each regional meeting and most of the Alliance Leadership Team.

The Conversation's GUIDING QUESTION was: *In light of the big shifts the church in general and the Bible translation movement in particular have seen in the past decades, how can Alliance Organisations best participate in the Bible translation movement through the People Stream?*

The Global People Conversations did not seek answers to this original guiding question in new campaigns or novel ideas for how to “do recruitment” (though these continue to be valuable pursuits for many Alliance organisations in their own contexts). It was agreed that the next steps involved exploring new ways of being, not just doing – i.e. of being together with the church and with the local communities.

**It is now your turn to continue the conversation within your organisation.** This short booklet can help you to do that. Depending on your organisation's structure, you may want to include members of your board, leadership or key personnel. We have divided the discussion questions into four sessions, but you can organise them however you want.

If your discussions raise further questions, or God inspires fresh revelations for you and your teams, please share them with us. You can email comments and questions to [info@wycliffe.net](mailto:info@wycliffe.net).

# Session 1: Ecosystem thinking

For more background on ecosystem thinking and how it enabled us to think differently about people's involvement in Bible translation, read the section, Background and Context on pages 3-4 of *Guiding Principles from the Global People Conversation*.

An ecosystem is described as a community or group of living organisms that live and interact with each other in a specific environment, with the goal of thriving.



An ecosystem is more than its structures and environments. It is the way living organisms contribute to life as they interact with one another in those structures or environments. Ecosystems aren't always perfect. They continually adapt. But they recognise what is possible. They make space for many participants. Even those things that seem insignificant play a vital part in a healthy ecosystem. Even those that appear most successful can not survive without the smaller participants keeping the system in balance.

**Think about how the Bible translation movement works as an ecosystem. Name the various parts. What is seen? What is unseen? How do they work together?**

In an ecosystem, even the smallest microorganisms play an important role in ensuring the health and vitality of the whole environment. Equally, if one element becomes too dominant, it can harm the whole community by damaging the balance.

**Reflect on 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and think about your organisation or team's part in the Bible translation movement.**

**What part does your organisation or team play in the Alliance and the wider Bible translation movement?**

**How do you view yourselves in relation to the wider community? What is your importance to the whole community?**

**Are you harming any areas of the community by being too dominant, upsetting the balance?**

## Session 2: A changing environment

The world in which we work is changing rapidly. The global pandemic highlighted many of the changes we face as societies.

‘The participants of the Johannesburg Conversation recognised the reality of widespread change—in the world, in the church, in Bible translation needs and approaches, and in their own organisations and contexts. There is greater diversity and ongoing change in who is involved in ministry and in ways of working.’ ([Guiding Principles from the Global People Conversation](#), page 8).



**What changes do you see in the way people are involved in the Bible translation movement?**

**What factors are causing these changes?**

**What is your feeling about these changes? (Excitement, fear, optimism, disappointment, etc.)**

**How could seeing the Alliance as an ecosystem affect your view of these changes?**

## Session 3: Expressing our values

Six core themes emerged from the four regional discussions. These captured the pressing concerns of participants and helped shape the conversation in Johannesburg:

- Church
- Generations
- People
- Technology
- Collaboration
- Practical needs (which people are needed where).

As these core themes were explored from the wider ecosystem perspective and in light of Alliance values, a set of principles emerged (pages 4-8 of [Guiding Principles from the Global People Conversation](#)). Please read these principles as a basis for your conversation.

**What stands out to you from these values statements?**

**Are there any that raise further questions? What are they?**





## Session 4: Taking it further



Use these discussion questions to help your team think about the practical implications of the Global People Conversation.

**What processes do we still use, even though they no longer fit the current realities?  
What would it take to stop using them?**

**How can we prioritise needed changes in our thinking and behaviours?**

**To whom, and how, can we best communicate about, and respond to, the fluid and changing contexts in which we serve?**

**What opportunities exist to think and work collaboratively within the Alliance, with the church and with other organisations?**

**How can we help to create space (“set the table”) for building and nurturing relationships?**