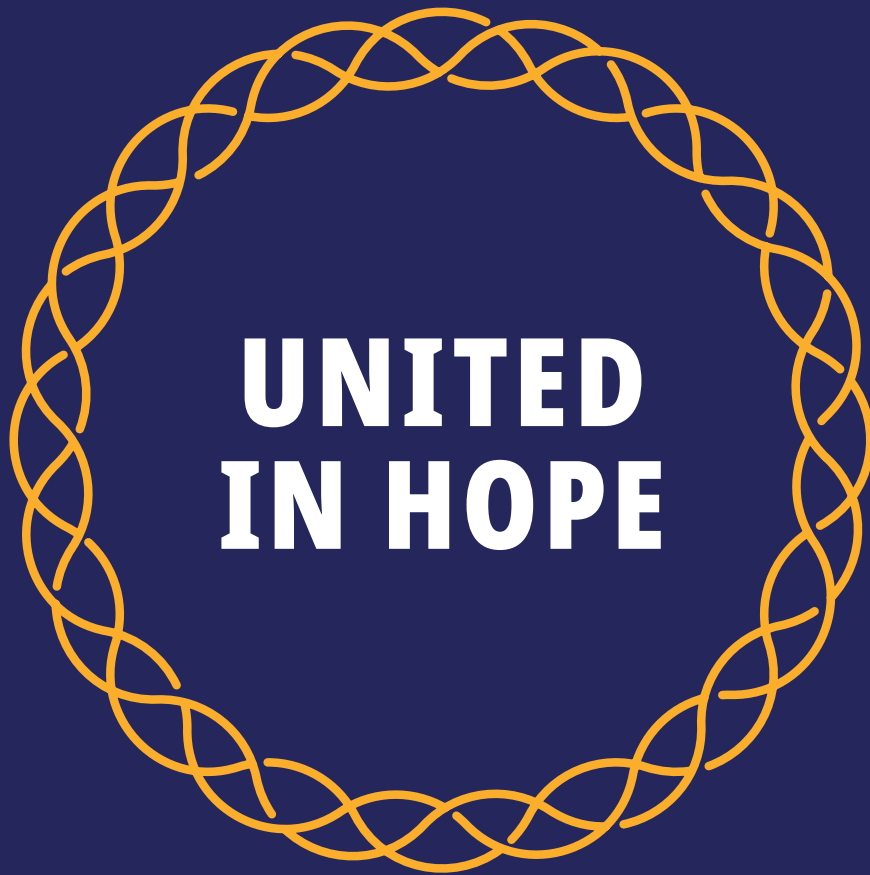
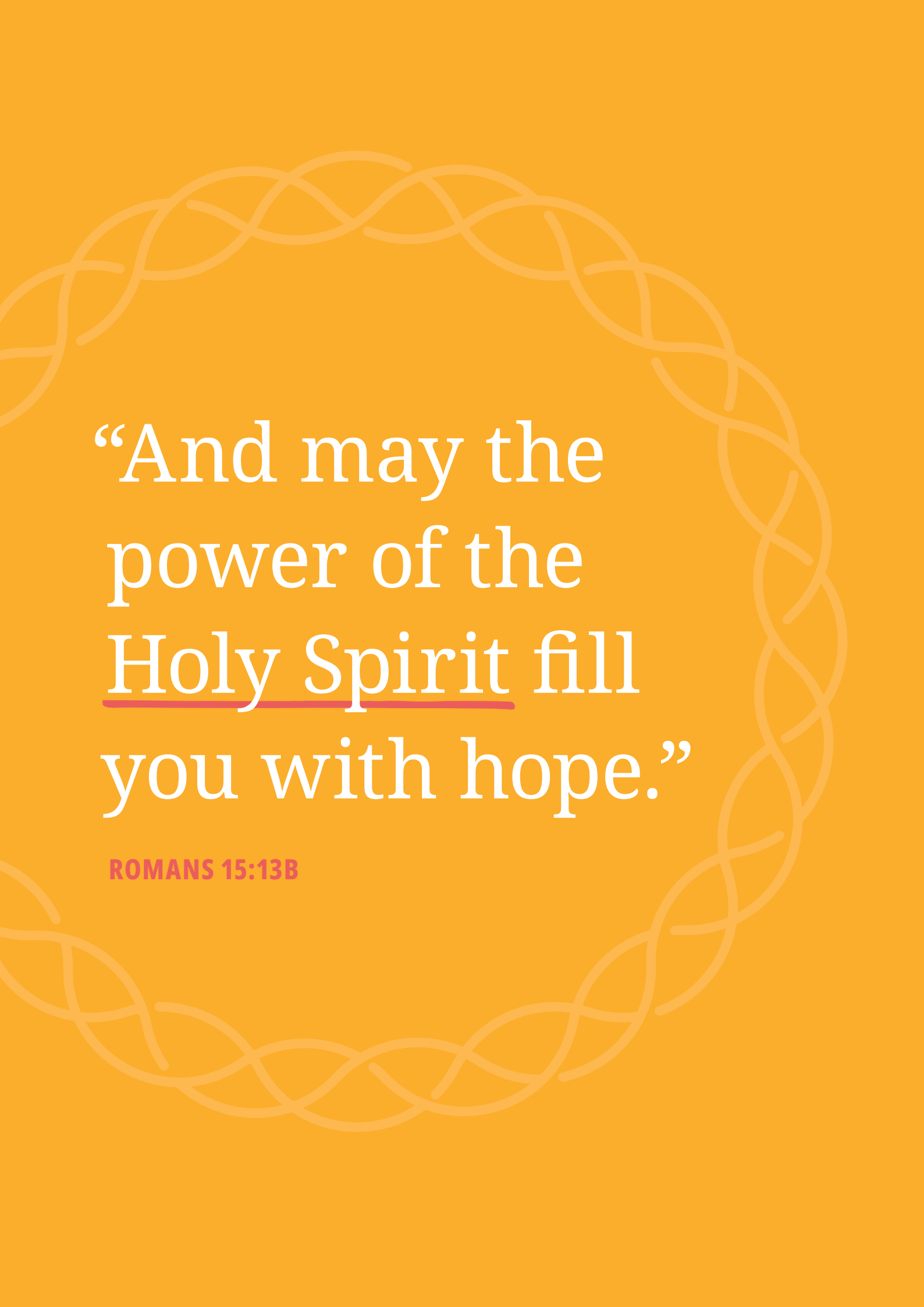




**United Bible
Societies**



**Annual
Report
2019**



“And may the
power of the
Holy Spirit fill
you with hope.”

ROMANS 15:13B

UNITED IN HOPE

DEAR FRIENDS,

In the pages of this report, you'll find stories of Bible Society ministry in all its beautiful diversity. You'll read about translators delivering Scripture in new languages, Bible Society teams learning how to collaborate with and serve their local churches, and dedicated staff members using their technical skills to coordinate projects across thousands of miles and numerous time zones.

Every story is different, yet I see an important common theme as I read each one: These are stories of hope.

Each person you read about helps deliver Scripture and its message of hope to more people around the world. And by working together toward this sacred goal—with our diverse talents, across geographical boundaries and national borders—we are united in that very hope we share with our communities around the world.

Although this report shares about Bible ministry in 2019, I think it is especially significant to reflect on the importance of delivering that message of hope as a way to prepare so many people's hearts for the challenges we face in 2020. Around the world, the coronavirus has not just brought physical illness, but political unrest, economic upheaval, and deep emotional and spiritual pain. The Bible's message of hope is essential in the midst of this crisis, and Bible Societies' faithful ministry for years, decades and even centuries has planted seeds of hope that will sustain so many people throughout the world in this time.

Now, as you read the following stories, I pray for you using the words of Romans 15:13b, "*And may the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.*"

I am so thankful that we serve a God of hope and that I have the honour and joy to work in service of Bible Societies around the world to spread that precious message.

May God bless you.

In humble service,



Michael Perreau
Director General
United Bible Societies



Global Translation Advisor Brigitte Rabarijaona (back right) with the Yinzebi Bible translators (clockwise from front right) Jacques Mbada, Fidele Nzengue Nzengue and Theophile Bomba-Ngoumbou.

Working together for Yinzebi Scripture

A focus on high-quality Bible translation is bearing fruit in Gabon



FOR THE YINZEBI SPEAKERS in Gabon and the Republic of Congo, the wait for a full Bible in their language is almost over. First started in the 1990s by the Bible Society of Gabon, the Yinzebi translation project is nearing completion. But it has not been without difficulties.

For a start, the language had no established linguistic rules, leading to complexities in consistency and orthography. The translators, drawn from a range of churches in the community, worked without internet connectivity and previously had to cope with only one computer shared between the team. At one point, they resorted to dispatching a volunteer 600km to Libreville, the capital city of Gabon, with a USB stick storing the updated texts for upload to Paratext in order that other users could engage with the text. More recently, the translators came to an agreement with a local missionary hospital to gain at least some access to the internet.

Most of the team are now retired from their previous careers—which include serving as a member of Parliament, mayor and teacher—and are fully focused on their mission to translate the Scripture into Yinzebi. One translator, Jacques Mbada, a retired teacher, has encountered health

issues recently but is resolved to continue his work, saying, “my hope through all of this is that I will see the Bible while I am still alive.”

Supporting the translators through this challenging process is Brigitte Rabarijaona, a Global Translation Advisor from the UBS Global Mission Team. Brigitte advises on linguistics, exegesis, translation, and technology plus offers guidance on best practices for translation. Most important of all, she meticulously checks all the Scripture verse-by-verse to ensure accuracy.

As part of her work with the project in 2019, Brigitte visited the translation team in the village where they live and work. “It was important to see their context and better understand the culture of the community,” she explains. Attending a local church service, which was conducted in French despite the fact that most congregants spoke Yinzebi, reinforced the need for the full Bible in Yinzebi: “There was a time when it seemed that French and English were the languages of heaven. The Bible can change this perspective. God speaks every language!” Thanks to the translation team and Brigitte’s work, that truth will soon be reinforced through the full Bible in Yinzebi.

“There was a time when it seemed that French and English were the languages of heaven. The Bible can change this perspective. God speaks every language!”

Brigitte Rabarijaona, Global Translation Advisor on the UBS Global Mission Team

In 2019, one key type of service provided to Bible Societies in the UBS Fellowship was support, guidance and capacity building for Bible translation projects around the globe.

203

Bible translation projects visited in 2019 by members of the UBS Global Bible Translation team, including Brigitte Rabarijaona, for the purpose of intensive collaboration and support

74

countries received in-person support from UBS Global Bible Translation Team in 2019 to provide intensive collaboration and support

481

Bible Society translators and staff participated in Bible translation capacity building on topics such as linguistics, theology and technology

Serving the church across confessions

Through intentional preparation, Bible Societies are serving the church in its diversity

IF YOU WALK INTO a UBS Systematic Church Relations course—or log onto the online equivalent—you may expect it to be full of Bible Societies' church relations staff members. But that is not necessarily the case.

The participants are often serving the Bible Society in a range of roles, from finance, to human resources, to leadership. And that variety is by design.

Whether a Bible Society is launching a new Scripture translation, organising a youth Bible

engagement initiative, or facilitating Bible-based trauma healing, the support of and partnership with the local church is essential. However, building and nurturing that partnership also requires a concerted effort across Bible Society team members.

The result, though, is worth it. In project after project, Bible Societies find that, with the involvement of the local church in all its inter-confessional diversity, the transformational impact of Scripture ministry is more profound and widespread—more Christians

connect with newly published translations, more people access Bible-based literacy courses, and the list goes on.

“Strengthen Church Relations”, a Philadelphia Promise from the 2016 World Assembly, only re-affirms the long-held value of serving the local church across this next era of Bible ministry.

And Bible Societies’ historic and collective commitment to serving as a space for interconfessional collaboration around Scripture ministry means that Bible Societies have an important role to play in this ministry, explains Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell, who started as Director of UBS Church Relations at the beginning of 2019.

“The Bible Society becomes that place where concrete projects around the Scriptures are done better because the churches are collaborating,” she explains. “It may be biblical literacy or engagement; it might be publishing a book for young people around the value of life.”

As a result, the Systematic Church Relations course—one of several offered by the Church Relations team—is specifically designed to provide practical guidance. In addition to tools, such as templates of letters to use to reach out to church leaders, the course shares church history and context that can help Bible Society staff meaningfully navigate an often-nuanced church landscape. The course also provides an opportunity for participants to share knowledge and advice with each other, exchanging tools and resources as well as approaches that have worked in their own contexts.

At the end of the day, when participants walk out the door or log out of the Zoom meeting, they are equipped to carry on a tradition that has remained at the heart of the Bible Society movement from its beginnings to the present: gathering all Christians to the table to celebrate and share in Scripture together.

Participants gathered for a Church Relations training in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2019.



“The Bible Society becomes that place where concrete projects around the Scriptures are done better because the churches are collaborating.”

Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell,
Director of UBS Church Relations

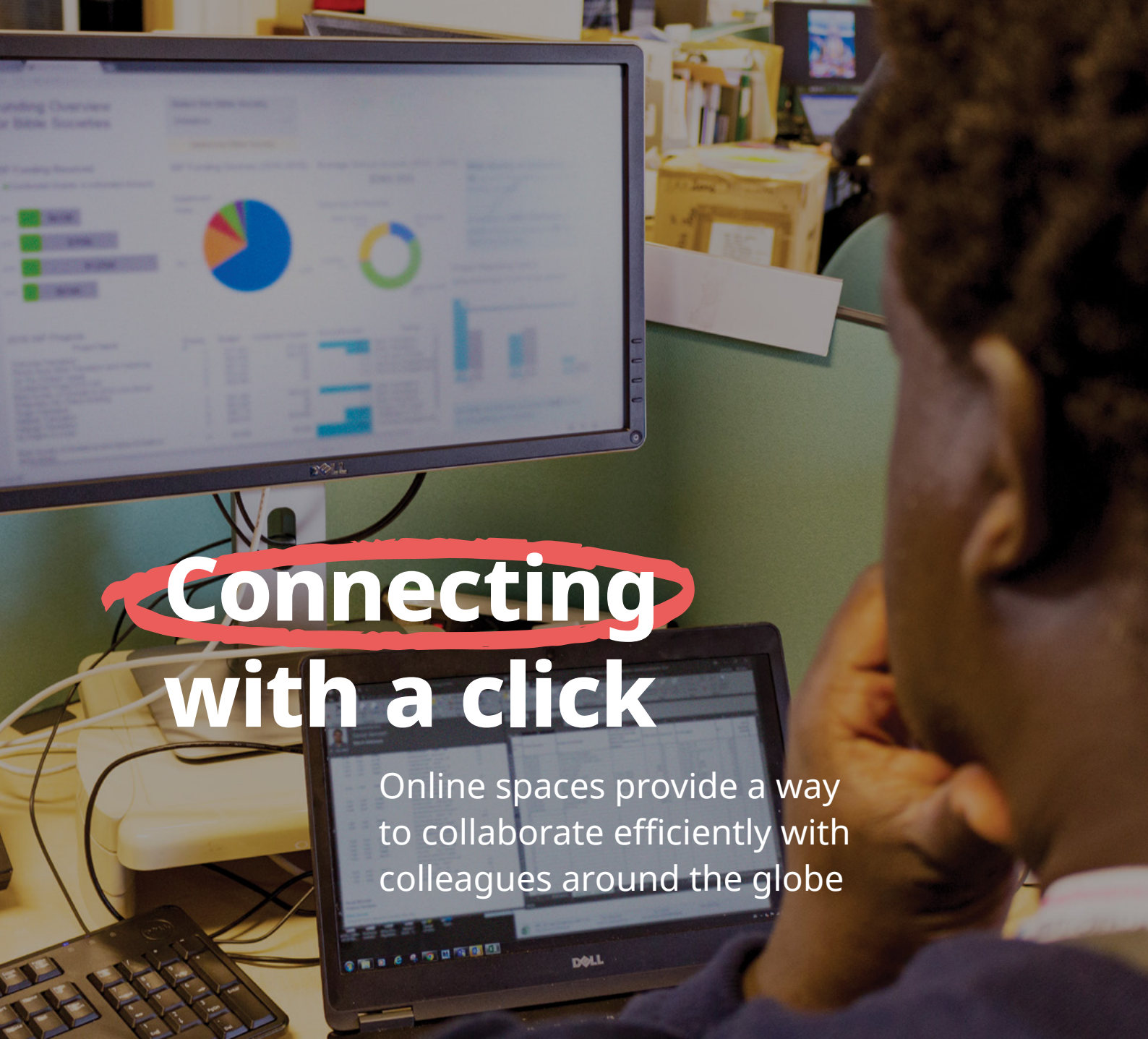
In the Philadelphia Promise the UBS Fellowship pledged to strengthen Church Relations. In 2019, Bible Societies received support to grow and enhance their work in this area.

4

regions of the world
hosted Church Relations capacity building opportunities

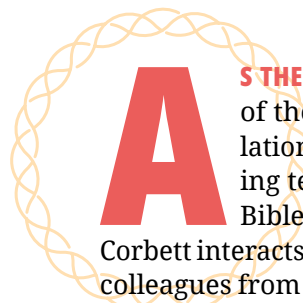
72

Bible Society staff members received Church Relations trainings that helped them better understand the churches they serve, as well as guide and manage volunteers from the church



Connecting with a click

Online spaces provide a way to collaborate efficiently with colleagues around the globe



A **S THE BUDGET MANAGER** of the Scripture translation and trauma healing teams at American Bible Society, Christina Corbett interacts with Bible Society colleagues from around the world on a daily basis.

But when she first met many of these UBS Fellowship friends, it didn't start with a handshake; more often than not, they met

through an email or a video call.

In fact, other than an occasional opportunity to meet in-person, such as the UBS Global Induction she attended a few years ago, collaboration over the years has continued to take place almost exclusively online. As a result, Christina relies on UBS online systems to coordinate budgets and grants with colleagues across oceans, mountains and time zones.

In 2019, the International Support Programme, the grantmaking system that is operated through Solomon, helped Bible Societies implement Scripture ministry around the world.

1,400+

projects submitted to the International Support Programme with a request for funding

800+

projects received grants through the International Support Programme

140+

Bible Societies and partners made or received grants through the International Support Programme



“It’s great to have partners all over the world,” Christina shares. “And because we have this common system that we’re using, we’re able to do that in a really efficient way.”

Christina Corbett, American Bible Society

“It’s great to have partners all over the world,” Christina shares. “And because we have this common system that we’re using, we’re able to do that in a really efficient way.”

That common system Christina uses involves a suite of different resources. It includes the UBS Community site, which serves as a hub of information with spaces to share prayer requests, look up colleagues’ Bible Society contact information, access shared collections of storytelling assets, provide basic information about governance, reporting and more.

Another key feature of the suite is Solomon, the front-facing management system of the International Support Programme that allows Bible Societies to share resources. The Learning Zone offers a library of resources on topics ranging from digital strategy and communication to publishing and leadership.

“I am in Solomon all the time to make sure budgets are there and to work pretty extensively with our program managers to secure and allocate funding,” Christina says.

When she thinks about what it would be like to do all of that work without a shared system, it gets pretty overwhelming, she explains. And it’s important to get it right.

Because ultimately, Christina knows that the end result of that shared efficiency isn’t just peace of mind, it’s Bible ministry that changes lives in more than 240 countries and territories around the world.

United Bible Societies Finances in 2019

DEAR FRIENDS,

As someone whose daily work revolves around managing the financial gifts God has given United Bible Societies, I see stewardship as an act of hope.

When our Fellowship invests our earthly resources in Bible ministry—whether it's to make the Bible available and accessible or show its credibility—we are planting a seed in people's lives around the world. Together, we tend and water that seed, and finally God makes it grow—hope is realised.

It is a joy to do that sacred work as a united Fellowship, and it is an honour for me to report back on where those shared funds came from and how they were used to deliver services that benefit the whole United Bible Societies Fellowship.

By providing these services to Bible Societies, our Fellowship is making a collective investment in Bible ministry effectiveness, Bible Society effectiveness and Fellowship effectiveness. Ultimately that means more people can encounter Scripture around the world, and that gives me great hope.

In humble service,



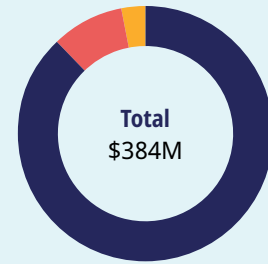
Nick Chinnery

Director of Finance & IT
United Bible Societies
Global Mission Team

Average Annual UBS Fellowship Economy (2015-2018)

The UBS Fellowship economy is made up of three components: Local Bible Societies' economies, grants given from Bible Societies to each other through the International Support Programme (ISP), and the Global Stewardship

Fund, which funds the provision of shared services through the Global Mission Team. This shows the average amount of each part of the economy from 2015-2018.



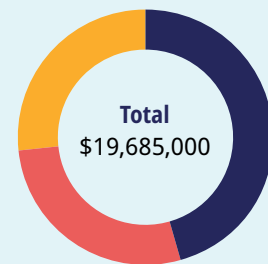
- **Local Ministry:** \$340M (88%)
- **International Ministry:** \$34M (9%)
- **Shared Services:** \$10M (3%)

Fellowship global income based on best estimates and information.

2019 UBS Global Mission Team Income

The UBS Global Mission Team received the largest portion of its operating budget from the Global Stewardship Fund. This was the first year the Global Stewardship Fund was financed using the updated formula agreed upon by the Global Council in 2018. Although the income was \$600K lower than in 2018, significantly fewer Bible Societies expressed difficulty in contributing the calculated amount.

The UBS Global Mission Team also received income—designated here as “Other income”—from sources such as investments, sales and royalties of copyrighted materials, reimbursement for seconded staff, and other minor activities. The income from ISP grants is restricted and primarily designated for Scripture translation projects that provide value and service to the Fellowship at scale.

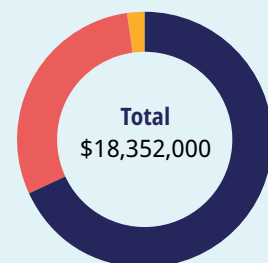


- **Global Stewardship Fund:** \$9,014,000
- **ISP grants (primarily from ETEN to GMT for translation work):** \$5,442,000
- **Other income:** \$5,229,000

2019 UBS Global Mission Team Expenditures

The UBS Global Mission Team used its income to deliver shared services to the UBS Fellowship. These include services that contribute to Bible ministry effectiveness, individual Bible Society effectiveness and the overall effectiveness of the UBS Fellowship. Although the ISP projects implemented by the Global Mission Team, which are often projects that scale to support the Fellowship at-large, also result in shared services, the expenditure is broken out here to reflect the designation of funds.

The net gain for 2019 of slightly over \$1M was largely due to royalties received from the RVR 60. The use of these royalties are governed by a Tripartite agreement that was operationalized in 2019 and therefore UBSA received more funds in 2019 than would typically be received in a year. The funds granted to date have gone to Bible Society-led enterprises such as the Spanish Publishing Committee and the Americas Taskforce.



- **Shared services to the Fellowship:** \$12,533,000
- **Implementation of ISP projects (primarily Bible translation work) by GMT:** \$5,458,000
- **Pension deficit payments:** \$361,000

Please do note that the accounts summarized here were signed almost 3 months later than usual as a result of the effects of COVID-19. In addition to our auditors adjusting to working virtually, our team needed to demonstrate that UBSA remains a “going concern” in the current economic environment. This latter issue necessitated significant additional work and expense.

The Bible for everyone

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Scripture quotes are from the
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The Fellowship is incorporated as United Bible Societies, a corporation registered in the state of Delaware, USA, in 1946. The affairs of the Fellowship are administered on its behalf by the United Bible Societies Association (UBSA) from its registered office at UBS UK Hub, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7PJ, England. UBSA is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales no. 2264875. Registered charity no. 800058.