

Why People Clusters?

- Clusters are useful for big picture thinking. Strategy development and resource allocation. For use of the general who has troops and materiel at his command. Not so much for the sergeant who is thinking about tactical matters.
- Actual engagement of course occurs on the tactical level, the people-group-in-country level. But for planning purposes and resource allocation the big picture view is helpful.
- Affinity blocs and their constituent clusters of people groups are a way of categorizing people groups that make the global listings of people groups more understandable.
- Clusters are useful for partnering across agencies. Sharing the load. One agency may have interest in and resources for particular people groups within a cluster while a different agency is better positioned to reach out to different people groups within that cluster.
- Clusters can lessen redundancy of effort and expenditure. They can lead to more efficient utilization of resources.
- Clusters change the way information about constituent people groups is handled. Up to now, the 11,000 – 17,000 people groups in the various global listings have been used to extract lists of the least evangelized/reached/engaged. These lists often include people groups with smaller populations about which we have the least information and which may not be valid entries. Seeing these as part of a wider cluster enables comparisons to be made regionally and at the grass roots, and corrections or further research at a local level can be initiated.
- The relatively small number of clusters in the world (253 total, 118 marked as least-reached in the Joshua Project database), is psychologically much easier to deal with than the nearly 7,000 least-reached people groups which are commonly put before people. The task seems much more doable, and this is an energizing factor.
- Clusters fit well with the increasing globalization occurring in the world, the diaspora of peoples. The cluster concept encourages planners to identify and think about smaller PGICs (people-groups-in-country) that may be much more accessible than the mother group in the home country.
- Clusters enable people groups with similar characteristics but different religious histories to be grouped together. Local Christian groups and ministries can then be motivated to become involved in the evangelization of those related people groups less spiritually privileged.
- Clusters can provide a big picture view of resource need and availability that may be unnoticed if looking only at the tactical level. If comparing resources (scripture, Jesus film, etc.) between clusters, it may be glaringly apparent there is a woeful lack of resources for one of the clusters but not the other.
- Clusters provide a simplifying and motivating perspective that may motivate donors, especially major donors. A challenge can be placed before a donor to fund what it is going to take to reach an entire cluster, not simply one people group. And donors can be challenged to partner together to reach one cluster.

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- The categorization is pragmatic and can be locally modified by those involved in ministry to fit their own needs and perspectives.
- Clusters lessen the arguments and uncertainties if only the tactical perspective is provided. Arguments about such things as whether this people group is 2% Evangelical or 4%, or whether it has 25,000 individuals or 40,000. These are legitimate concerns, but they should be secondary in consideration.
- Knowledge can be shared among workers in a cluster because of similarities in culture, language, religion, life-style and worldview.
- Clusters can be helpful for prayer purposes. Prayer networks can form around a relative few prayer targets, instead of nearly 7,000 prayer targets. This simplification can help networks to form and be sustained.
- Clusters can help us get a better handle on how we are progressing in making disciples of all nations. They can help consolidate reporting from the multitude of efforts presently being directed toward individual people groups. At present, the left hand often doesn't know what the right hand is doing, or even that there exists a right hand.
- Clusters lend themselves to the formation of advocates, people or teams who would undertake research, spark prayer, report on progress and difficulties. These are more likely to form around a relatively few clusters than around thousands of UPGs.
- In summary, the people cluster concept can lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness as the missions force works to make disciples of all nations.

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