

Executive Summary

Joshua Project People Group Profile Research and Writing Guide

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The profile text is vital to motivating Joshua Project (JP) readers to pray and begin missions among unreached and unengaged people groups. Creating a People Group Profile requires, 1) understanding the purpose of JP, 2) using a valid research methodology to gather information 3) writing an informative and appealing profile that communicates to a diverse audience.

I. The Purpose of the Profile

Creating a profile starts with understanding the overall purpose of JP and specifically the profile text. JP is a research initiative seeking to highlight the ethnic people groups of the world with the fewest followers of Christ. Information is not gathered to merely produce an encyclopedia, but to motivate prayer and ministry. The purpose of the people group profile text is to motivate prayer and missions through an accurate picture of the people and need. While basic information (location, religion, etc.) must be included, the text should go further by helping readers understand the most important aspects they need to grasp.

II. The Research

In addition to understanding the profile's purpose, thorough and quality research is critical. Many who contribute information to JP are not trained social science or mission researchers. Still, using acceptable social science research practices is essential, though application is more important than scholarly acceptability.

Profile writers should follow the *cautions and recommendations* (listed in the full guide). These include focusing on the researching for before writing, and searching for answers to the *why* not just *what* questions. For example, finding out how a group's current beliefs have been a barrier to their acceptance of Christ, is more useful than simply listing beliefs.

Following the *research steps* (listed in the full guide) helps ensure profile writers are asking the right research questions and finding adequate and defensible answers. These steps force the profile writer to focus on unique aspects the group readers need to understand, more than simply listing generic information. For example, explaining how Buddhism impacts the Thai's rejection of Christianity is more useful than simply listing the tenants of Buddhism.

III. The Writing

The goal of the finished product is to pull together the most important information the profile writer has learned about the group into an informative, appealing and concise profile. The focus should be more on the *why* and *how* more than listing *what*. Proper citations and a bibliography are required. Also, writers should follow the *cautions and recommendations* (list in the full guide). These include being sensitive to time-sensitive information, dates and being cautious about using numbers, which change over time.