



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

www.vulnerablemission.org

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin
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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM.

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The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages some missionaries from the West to engage in their ministries using local languages and resources.

vulnerablemission.org write to: jim@vulnerablemission.org

2015 conferences / consultations
Avoiding *DEPENDENCY* in global Christian mission: *VULNERABLE MISSION*
- a potential answer

UK
York, 11th April
Gloucester, 14th to 16th April
Coventry, 18th April
Oxford, 22nd and 23rd April (by invitation only)

GERMANY
Marburg, 8th to 9th May
Kornthal, 11th May (by invitation only)



For **CALL FOR PAPERS** for Gloucester, Redcliffe College conference 14th to 16th April 2015, go here: <http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/Call-for-Papers-2015-Redcliffe.pdf>

Please take the time to read the brochure below, produced by Gary Cowman of SIL:



Development is about people, and using a language people don't speak limits development. Imagine having medication for your sick child, yet the dosage instructions are in a language you cannot understand.



SIL International® is a faith-based nonprofit organization committed to serving language communities worldwide as they build capacity for sustainable language development. SIL does this primarily through research, translation, training and materials development. The organization makes its services available to all, without regard to religious belief, political ideology, gender, race or ethnolinguistic background. We are motivated by the belief that all people are created in the image of God, and that their languages and cultures are part of the richness of God's creation. We share a Christian commitment and seek to demonstrate God's love through SIL's service with these communities.

SIL supports active language projects in 1,980 languages spoken by 1.6 billion people.



7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
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Language and Development



Are you choosing the best language?



When people can use their **own** language for learning and development, they move from being

- recipients to **actors**
- excluded to **included**
- marginalized to **respected**
- voiceless to **in control of their own development**

Using the language of the community for development work demonstrates respect for the culture and identity of that community. Sometimes even well-intentioned development efforts can convey the message that local knowledge and practices are inadequate or irrelevant, denying local communities their inherent human dignity and demeaning their identity.

These communities, found on the neglected fringes of society, are the least likely to be able to access development knowledge in the dominant national or international language. Although people in local communities are likely to be multilingual, their fluency in the dominant language is often quite limited. When development information is communicated in a language that the majority of the community does

not speak well, those people are excluded. Those who most need the benefits of development initiatives are least able to access them.

Language frames our thinking, learning and communication with each other. For this reason, gaining and using development knowledge hinges on using a language that people understand. Language is also an expression of inclusion and respect.



These realities are the foundation of SIL's work in minority language communities around the world. SIL's goal is that people are able to use their languages for whatever spiritual, social, educational, and cultural purposes they may have.



*"The language of everyday communication is the most effective language medium for releasing **creativity, initiative and productivity** among the members of a community."*

-Paulin Djité



For further information please write to: Gary Cowman at gary_cowman@sil.org

- *To join pearl; active internet discussions on vulnerable mission issues, write to jim@vulnerablemission.org*
- <https://map.bloomfire.com/posts/822182-louder-than-words-excerpt> is an excerpt from a book on language embodiment. Language is not really about words that have definitions, says the author, but simulations of things that the language describes. In that sense, language is embodied – it arises from what our bodies know and experience. What does this imply for translation and missionary language learning?

(The papers below were mentioned in the June edition of the AVM Bulletin, but are listed again here to emphasise their high quality!)

- **‘Vulnerable Mission: An Overview’** is the title to Tim Reeves’ paper, as presented at last year’s VM conference held in Norwich, UK. It is now published in the EMS (Evangelical Missiological Society) Occasional Bulletin 27(2) that is available here: http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/OB_Spring_2014.pdf Tim takes a scientist’s view of vulnerable mission.
- Jean Johnson entitled her UK conference paper **‘Vulnerable Mission is worth a Second Look’**. It is published in the same EMS Bulletin as Tim’s paper above here http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/OB_Spring_2014.pdf Jean challenges the widely presupposed notion that the material advantage of the West is always a help in doing the work of the Gospel. She points out that apostolic mission practice was very different.
- **‘What Can Vulnerable Mission Contribute to the Short-term Missions Discussion?’** was the title of John Henry’s paper at the Norwich VM conference held in 2013. John takes a detailed look at short term mission. He concludes that VM can’t ‘fix’ the problems of short-term mission, but it is a credible alternative to short term mission needing serious attention. See (as above) http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/OB_Spring_2014.pdf

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- If anyone can get a hold of this book, it would be great to receive a review of it: Djité, Paulin, G., 2008. *The Sociolinguistics of Development in Africa*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. Djité makes a lot of points that would seem to be key to the promotion that we are doing in the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission. Please let me know if you are able to get a hold of the copy of it and are willing to review it.