



Project Profile

Lafi e Devleso Cluster 2 Gurbet language

[LAH – FEE’ EH DEV – LEH’ – SOH] [GUHR – BEHT’]

Project Summary

The Gurbet language is spoken by Roma people of Croatia and Serbia—a group often looked down upon by their neighbors. But while they’re disrespected in man’s eyes, God sees these people differently. And through translated Scripture, Gurbet speakers are beginning to see God for who he is—someone who not only loves them but also speaks their language!

The previous project phase brought the Gospel of Luke to the Gurbet, allowing many to see for the first time who Jesus is. Additionally, 50 Chronological Bible Stories that provide an overview from Creation to Revelation have been translated, audio recorded, and printed as full-color books.

Now, translators seek to build on this foundation with the remaining three Gospels, Acts, and several epistles—with the eventual goal of the entire Bible. Team members hope to record and dub the Gospel of Mark as a LUMO film. Translated Scripture portions will be made available online and in audio format to reach the widest possible audience.

Churches and ministries will use translated materials for evangelism and discipleship activities, such as Bible studies for adults and VBS programs for children. God’s Word in Gurbet will bring dignity to this marginalized people, strengthen believers’ faith, and draw unbelievers toward freedom in Christ. Bible translation in Gurbet could also spark desire for heart language Scriptures among other Roma groups throughout Europe.



Quick Facts

Start Year: 2022

End Year: 2025

Population: 300,000

Location: Croatia and Serbia

Summary of Goals: Translate and publish Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, James, 1-3 John, and Jude for audio recording and digital distribution. Record and dub Mark as a LUMO film.

Key Term

LUMO videos are Hollywood-quality movies with voice-overs of the word-for-word translation of Gospel stories. These visual Scriptures are helpful for portraying biblical story elements that may be absent in certain cultures.



Background

Roma peoples such as the Gurbet have occupied this region since the 1300s, but their long history hasn't endeared them to neighboring groups. Their skin tone is different, and they have a reputation as beggars, outcasts, liars, and thieves. While some dwell in major cities, others must live in separate areas only for Roma—or even squat in abandoned homes.

The Gurbet have limited educational and employment opportunities. Many are day laborers in construction or agriculture. Others collect and resell things they find in the trash, receive government welfare, or become panhandlers. Some migrate seasonally to the European Union for work, although Roma from the Western Balkans have been denied asylum in Western Europe and may be returned to their home countries.

Mistreated by society, many Roma have fallen into drunkenness, incest, stealing, spousal abuse, broken marriages, and witchcraft. Roma-led churches seek to address these problems in ministering to their congregations.

Traditional Roma beliefs have Hindu roots, though Roma people often adopt the majority religion of their current home. Thus, the Gurbet are mainly Muslim, though with an Evangelical presence among them. But many don't actively practice what they profess. Christianity among the Roma tends to emphasize emotion and sensationalism, with less focus on theological depth or personal discipleship and godliness.

Born-again Christians are different, though. Roma believers are typically eager to attend worship, read and discuss Scripture, and share their faith with others. They give up vices, become faithful in marriage, and usually do better in school and at work.

Scripture portions in Gurbet are being well received in the community. A project leader writes, "One of our translators, Goran, started posting Bible verses on social media in Gurbet and other Roma dialects. After a while, he began to receive feedback from his followers on Facebook who encouraged him to continue posting verses." Further translation efforts will enable God's Word to keep reaching people's newsfeeds—and also their hearts!

Strategy and Partners

Since most Gurbet people don't read, audio Scripture materials are most effective in reaching them. Completed Scripture portions will be published electronically on platforms such as YouVersion and shared on social media by Scripture-engagement staff.

Experienced field partner The Word For The World (TWFTW) manages the project, providing training for translators and submitting narrative and financial reports on project progress. Project leaders have connections with local churches and expect they'll share their facilities for translation work.

Project leaders anticipate that translated Scripture will better equip believers and churches to grow spiritually, shepherd their families in the faith, and evangelize their communities. This project should also produce a stronger sense of ownership in translation from the local church and an appreciation among Gurbet communities for their own mother tongue.



Project Goals

Translation Plan:

- Matthew
- Mark
- John
- Acts
- 1-2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- James
- 1-3 John
- Jude

Distribution Plan:

- All 13 New Testament books audio recorded and published digitally on social media

4,167

Verses in Project

Book	Verses in Book	Verses in this Project
Matthew	1,071	1,071
Mark	678	678
John	879	879
Acts	1,007	1,007
1-2 Timothy	196	196
Titus	46	46
Philemon	25	25
James	108	108
1-3 John	132	132
Jude	25	25

2022-2025

Project Years

Book	First Draft	Team Check and Back Translation	Exegetical Check	Comprehension Testing	Consultant Check	Publish
Matthew	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mark	x	x	x	x	x	x
John	x	x	x	x	x	x
Acts	x	x	x	x	x	x
1-2 Timothy	x	x	x	x	x	x
Titus	x	x	x	x	x	x
Philemon	x	x	x	x	x	x
James	x	x	x	x	x	x
1-3 John	x	x	x	x	x	x
Jude	x	x	x	x	x	x



Risks and Strengths

Bible translation is a highly technical process that often takes place in some of the world's most difficult environments. Therefore, Seed Company strives to mitigate risks while maximizing the strengths of our partners so that clear, accurate translations are completed on time.

The risks and strengths of the Gurbet language project are as follows:

Risks

- Demand for translated Scripture isn't high among Gurbet people. Some feel the national language is more appropriate for religious and "special" texts. But project leaders hope to help people see the value and accessibility of translated Scripture.
- The project manager lives remotely, which could make overseeing the project challenging.
- COVID is still a threat and could restrict travel.

Strengths

- The project plan is slightly ambitious but still realistic.
- An experienced and capable translator is continuing from the previous phase.
- Field partner The Word For The World (TWFTW) is an experienced Bible translation organization with a successful history. They provide a strong training program for translators.
- Though new to this project, TWFTW plans to address issues that hindered the previous phase. They are establishing clearer guidelines for team members and requiring them to commit to full-time positions.