

On Mission 2020

Topic Focus: Mobilization

Dave Rofkahr - Center for Mission Mobilization Mobilization Index - A New Tool for Mission Leaders

Hello! My name is Dave Rofkahr and I serve as the Executive Director of the Center for Mission Mobilization.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Mobilization Index - something to help us visualize the sending potential of the global church. A tool that I believe and hope the Lord will use to help all of us be the best stewards of the resources entrusted to us to bring the gospel to the unreached. The index is 60 countries representing 520 million believers. We have unprecedented access and abilities to reach out to the unreached peoples. This tool shines a light on how we can all work together to advance the gospel.

One of the key responsibilities any leader has is to seek to provide clarity to their organization, its mission strategy resources, etc. Now, for my part, vital to getting that clarity is having access to reliable and useful information that affects how my staff and I steward our organization. The Center for Mission Mobilization, the CMM, the organization I lead is focused primarily on mobilizing believers in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where 80% of the evangelical church resides today. Were we consider the task of completing the Great Commission of taking the gospel to those who have no access to it, these populations must and do play a major role.

We kept asking ourselves at the CMM. What if there were a tool that could identify countries globally with populations of 1 million or more evangelical Christians? And further, if we could identify these populations, what else might be helpful to understand as it relates to the global mission community, engaging, equipping and connecting these believers to pursue their most impactful God-given role in completing the Great Commission. Let's say there was a country that had 20 million evangelical believers that was surrounded by several million individuals from unreached people groups, in terms of physical proximity they're literally right next door. Further, let's say this country actually has a pretty high ability to financially support their own missionaries. What if the believers in this country were actually very culturally and linguistically close and acceptable to the unreached people around them? Can you see how knowing some of this information might inform the body of Christ how best to steward its global resources to see the Gospel reached the unreached? If only there were such a tool! How? But there is!

It's called the Mobilization Index or Mob Index for short. Using this tool you can look at different countries, plus their regional profiles, explore the unique, scenic potential of countries within 1

million or more believers. You can use it to sort, compare a variety of data points. You can make informed strategic decisions based on your mission vision. Information is powerful. And over the years the circulation of information has ignited countless mission movements. Since their first 32-page Career Guide in 1964, Operation World has been informing and inspiring Christians around the world to join God in praying for the nations. For more than 20 years, the Joshua Project has helped awaken the church by defining the unfinished task of the Great Commission among the unreached. Both of these great resources and others like them have contributed to mobilizing laborers, guiding mission strategies and awakening countless hearts to God's global purpose.

The Mobilization Index builds upon and joins Operation World and the Joshua Project, another mission research initiative in furthering the cause of frontier missions. Specifically, the Mob Index identifies the countries in locations around the world that have the greatest mission-sending potential indicating locations where the church is ripe for mobilization. By recognizing these strategic locations and profiling their unique potential, we hope to see new and renewed mission mobilization and mission-sending movements.

Now let's talk about information sources in the Mobilization Index. Our goal with Mob Index is to capture as complete and accurate profile as possible for each of the nations on the list. To do this we gather data from a variety of sources, highlighting a wide range of factors. The data used in the Mobilization Index comes from several reputable and trustworthy sources. So we feel confident that our conclusions are based on solid information. When looked at holistically, these sub-indexes bring to light the unique role that each nation has in seeing Christ proclaimed among all peoples.

We're looking at the number of evangelicals compared to the number of accessible unreached people groups or UPGs. Other factors are cultural proximity, current sending abroad, prosperity, cultural bridges, religious freedom and more. The first tool we used in our research was Operation World. It looks at the total number of evangelicals and current sending abroad. Called the definitive prayer guide, believers for decades have been using Operation World to guide their prayer for nations.

The Mobilization Index utilizes Operation World for two critical pieces of data. Number of evangelicals and number of missionaries sent. While the most current 7th Edition is almost 10 years old published in 2010, Operation World still represents one of the most trustworthy and respected sources for country demographics. Next, we use the Joshua Project to understand a country's regional access to unreached people groups. According to their website, Joshua Project is a research initiative seeking to highlight the ethnic people groups of the world with the fewest followers of Christ. The desire of Joshua Project is to see pioneer church planting movements among every people group, especially those groups with little to no Christians among them.

The Mob Index uses the Joshua Project for numbers of unreached and unengaged for the 60 locations in the index. Specifically, we measure the in-country and regional UPG access for each Mob Index country. In other words, how far it is mobilized Christian have to travel before they

encounter the unreached. For Christians from some nations this involves getting on an airplane while others, it may just involve walking across the street. The next thing we look at is a country's Prosperity Index. A Nation's prosperity should be considered when profiling mobilization and sending potential. But prosperity is more than just economic wealth.

Therefore, we chose to use data from Legatum's Prosperity Index. The Legatum determines overall prosperity throughout what they call the Nine Pillars of Prosperity that considers factors such as economic quality, education, health and governance. Early on, we observed a correlation between a nation's prosperity level and their current mission sending, the more prosperous a nation, the more missionaries they were able to send. However, this only applied to external sending. Prosperity does not appear to be a factor when looking at internal mission sending. This is an important factor to consider when a Mob Index country has low prosperity, but high in country access to the unreached.

The next factors we considered were the cultural bridges to UPGs. Cultural distance to the unreached was another factor we felt highlighted each nation's mobilization and sending potential. To do this, we use Geert Hofstede's research into the six dimensions of national culture. By comparing the cultural data from each nation on the mobilization index with a list of countries with large populations of unreached people groups, we were able to determine most nations' overall cultural distance. Now, some locations like Tanzania and Brazil are very close culturally to the unreached. While other countries, Australia and the UK are further away culturally.

We want to be clear that cultural distance should not be used to determine where a nation should send missionaries nor does it determine who will be successful and who won't? But cultural distance can be used as a way of opening the eyes of Christians by showing them that maybe the unreached are not so different after all. Perhaps, the way of Brazilian was raised and looks at the world is similar to that of an Arab Muslim. And these commonalities could be a bridge to a gospel friendship.

The Pew Research Center, helped us identify religious freedom within the index. Religious restrictions can potentially play a significant role in the nation's ability to mobilize and send out workers to the unreached. The Pew Forum has researched both government restriction and social hostilities and how they interfere with religious beliefs and practices. Nations like South Africa and Brazil have virtually no restrictions while other countries, China and Indonesia, being two examples severely restrict their population's religious freedoms. Using this data, we were able to determine to what degree the nations on the Mobilization Index are religiously restricted. This will no doubt influence the mobilization in sending methods the church employs.

The Mobilization Index, 60 countries, 520 million believers, unprecedented access to unreached people groups! The goal of the Mobilization Index is simple. To see an increase in global mobilization that leads to more laborers, being sent to the unreached to proclaim Christ until every tribe, tongue and nation has heard. We believe that each of the locations of the Mobilization Index has the unique potential to raise up and send out laborers for God's harvest.

The Mobilization Index is not a ranking of which countries are most important for mobilization or which can send the most missionaries. Each of the nations on the index has unique missions-sending potential. Each of these nations will face their own unique sets of opportunities and obstacles as they raise up and send out missionaries. And each of these 60 nations is worthy of our prayers.

The Mobilization Index desires to be a tool that Mobilizers and church leaders can use to fuel mission prayer, encourage a greater commitment to the unreached from all believers, inform leaders about the current state of sending and guide the placement of future missionaries. We pray that God uses the Mob Index in your life as we all endeavor to complete the Great Commission. Thank you and may God use you to make His name great among all peoples.