

## 1. Study Focus

Functional Literacy (FL) refers to the ability to use printed and written information to function in the society to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential (Baer et al., 2009) whereas Functional English Literacy (FEL) refers to the ability to read and write in English.

This study focused on identifying the FEL application in PNG particularly the Adventist church to inform the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) church leaders for planning and resource development within the garden model and the communication of the gospel in general.

## 2. Respondents' Demography

Table 1 below gives information of the number of household by region. Note also that the report is based only on those households that fully completed the surveys.

| Demographic            | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| MOMASE                 | 343        | 59%         |
| Highlands              | 55         | 10%         |
| NGI                    | 105        | 18%         |
| Southern               | 71         | 13%         |
| <b>Total household</b> | <b>574</b> | <b>100%</b> |

*Note: Total Respondents were 1719 . A household may have more than one respondent, and the respondents' ages range from 13 years and older. The educational level of the respondents are as follows:*  
 30% - primary  
 21% - secondary  
 14% - incomplete primary  
 14% - not educated  
 7%- incomplete secondary  
 14%- tertiary level (Vocational, college, universities)

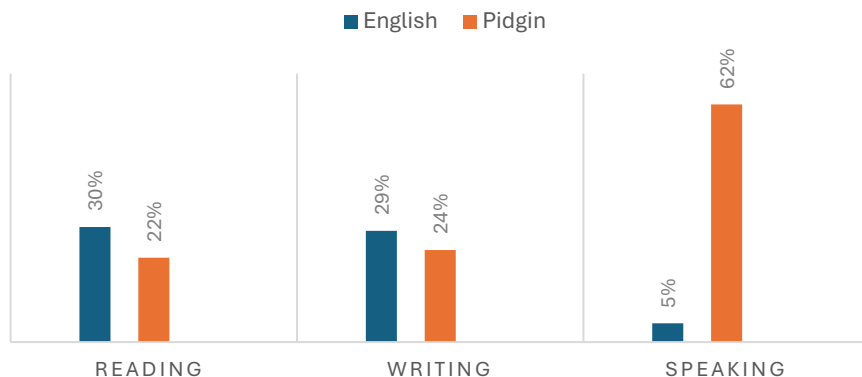
The findings reported here is based on the information provided by the respondents.

# Functional English Literacy Research- PNG Union Mission

## 3. Key Findings

To identify the level of functional English Literacy in Adventist households, the study asked, "What is functional English Literacy like in Adventist Communities in PNG?" This question was then divided into sub-questions to identify the participants' confidence in reading, writing, speaking, and hearing English. The graph below shows the respondents' self-evaluation of their reading, writing, and speaking in English and Pidgin for comparison

### FIGURE 1: FUNCTIONAL LITERACY ON READING, WRITING, SPEAKING



The graph above shows the respondents' view on their ability to read, write, and speak English. About 30% can read English, 29% can write English, while 5% can speak English.

A question further asked on listening and understanding, 40% indicated that they can partially understand English.

## Functional Literacy Application

To further understand in what ways they apply the reading and writing skills in English, the study asked questions on the documents they read and worked on weekly in English. Tables 2 and 3 report these findings.

*Note.* One respondent may indicate more than one document

## Key Findings continued...

Table 2 below shows information on documents respondents read weekly in English

| Documents read in English | Responses |         |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                           | Total     | Percent |
| Bible                     | 919       | 23.5%   |
| Sabbath/School Guide      | 553       | 14.1%   |
| Hymnal                    | 441       | 11.3%   |
| Letters                   | 225       | 5.7%    |
| Newspaper                 | 262       | 6.7%    |
| Directions                | 142       | 3.6%    |
| Instructions              | 141       | 3.6%    |
| Memos                     | 101       | 2.6%    |
| Articles                  | 103       | 2.6%    |
| Books                     | 350       | 8.9%    |
| Manuals                   | 63        | 1.6%    |
| Invoices                  | 66        | 1.7%    |
| Receipts                  | 118       | 3.0%    |
| Diagrams                  | 68        | 1.7%    |
| Maps                      | 75        | 1.9%    |
| None                      | 288       | 7.4%    |

This findings shows that functional English reading is mostly applied on spiritual documents such as Bibles (23.5%) , Lessons (14.1%) and hymn books (11.3%). There is low indication of reading on enrichment activities such as books (8.9%), articles (2.6%), and newspapers (6.7%).

There is a far low indication of reading on formal documents that can be either personal and professional such as receipts (3%), invoices (1.7%), manuals (1.6%), and memos (2.6%).

A very small percentage apply reading skills on visual information such as maps (1.9%), directions (3.6%), and diagrams (3.6%).

This may indicate that individuals apply reading literacy on information that is personally significant and that may be easily accessible.

Table 3 below shows the information on the documents that they **write** weekly in English

| Documents Written in English | Responses |            |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Document Type                | Total     | Percentage |
| Bibel Study Notes            | 649       | 23.4%      |
| Lesson Plans                 | 354       | 12.7%      |
| Memo                         | 249       | 9.0%       |
| Budget                       | 120       | 4.3%       |
| Emails                       | 145       | 5.2%       |
| Budget                       | 122       | 4.4%       |
| Message (Phones)             | 13        | 0.5%       |
| Articles                     | 107       | 3.9%       |
| Reports                      | 183       | 6.6%       |
| Forms                        | 109       | 3.9%       |
| Others                       | 297       | 8.2%       |
| None                         | 497       | 17.9%      |

- Most documents written is related to spiritual matters such as Bible study notes (23.4%) and lesson notes (12.7%).
- A small portion of the respondents seems to write documents related to formal settings such as memos (4.3%), reports (6.6%), budgets (5.2%), and emails (5.2%).
- A very small percentage (0.5%) indicated they phone messages in English.
- This may indicate that many people use English writing skills on simple activities, such as writing notes from Bible or Lesson study, informal messages on phones, and not many write things of formal and more comprehensive.

## 4. Recommendations for Ministry

**R1.** Provide relevant information and resources in both English and Tok Pisin. A significant portion of the respondents indicate their proficiency in reading and writing both languages. Having important resources in both languages may enhance comprehension on significant information. There seems to be a hunger for knowledge in Tok Pisin, with 23.6% reading and writing in Tok Pisin which clearly states their preference and comfort in using Tok Pisin. Thus, providing recourses such as Bible study guides, hymnals, and other ministry related materials in both languages may enhance understanding and foster deeper engagement with spiritual content.

**R2.** Leverage *Tok Pisin* as the primary language of communication. Many of the respondents speaks Tok Pisin fluently, making this a dominant language for everyday communication. Making *Tok Pisin* the main language for sermons, Bible studies, church announcements, workshops, or trainings would ensure that messages are accessible and easily understood. Key people such as pastors, evangelists, and trainers should also be well-versed in *Tok Pisin* to ensure information is meaningfully communicated.

**R3.** Utilize visual aids, audio recordings (preferably in Tok Pisin), and multimedia presentations in church services, trainings, and resources to ensure illiterate and low-literacy individuals to comprehend information and feel included. A considerable percentage of the respondents seems to struggle with reading and writing in both literacy languages (13.3% cannot read, and 15.8% cannot write effectively).

**R4.** Develop digital resources that addresses gaps in functional literacy. Digital platforms such as audio, video, and social media can assist individuals who may struggle with conventional reading and writing. Create digital content such as audio-visual devotionals, video sermons, and podcasts in both English and Tok Pisin to reach a wider audience.

**R5.** Provide inclusive church engagement activities for all members. Train leaders to acknowledge individuals with low or no literacy skills to feel included in church related activities. Feeling of inclusion ensures one feel belong and significant despite lacking skills. Allow non-fluent speakers to be involved in sharing sermons, testimonies, prayers in their preferred languages. Provide translations when needed while presenting sermons, trainings, or other programs.

**R6.** Provide activities for enrichment on literacy and related functional skills. Below are few recommendations for enrichment activities:

- Offer Bilingual literacy programs within local churches.
- Offer digital literacy and communication skills training.
- Offer early childhood literacy programs in both English and Tok Pisin within the local churches
- Offer resources development workshops.
- Provide functional skills training programs to address practical literacy needs.

Overall, this study identified that Tok Pisin is the most spoken language. While English is useful to less than 25% of the respondent. It appears that there are few resources available in Tok Pisin or local language than English.

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