



Literacy

For Life

Bible Society newsletter JULY 2017

EGYPT

Reading for change

It's no surprise that Bible Society's ongoing post-literacy programme is having a significant impact in Egypt. Children desperately need the programme to continue because a recent report ranked Egypt's primary education system as the worst in the world.

In Egyptian's failing primary schools, too many children miss out on basic literacy skills. Others - even after learning to read and write a little - relapse into illiteracy. There is also a high drop-out rate at the end of Year 6.

But the outlook is much brighter for children who take part in Bible Society Egypt's Scripture-based literacy classes. These students become actively engaged in their learning and put their new skills into practice each day at school. Most go on to secondary school. The programme's emphasis on independent learning makes education much more meaningful. The young people also become more established in church.

Learning to read using the Bible provides a real focus and motivation for Christian children in Egypt. It offers a far greater reward than a regular literacy programme that might focus only on the technicalities of reading and writing. Children are learning to read God's word with a view to understanding that it brings change, and they apply it practically to their own lives.

*<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-primary-education-ranks-last-global-competitiveness-report>



SOUTH AFRICA

Closing the gap

Word is spreading about the positive difference that Bible Society's literacy project is making to young lives in South Africa. For instance, a famous South African conductor presented the project to his concert audiences as his focus on a worthy cause.

Another audience heard about the project from the principal of Elufefeni Primary School in the Eastern Cape. Addressing a group of business people, she praised the Scripture-based literacy material being used in her school, and applauded its positive influence on the basic literacy skills of younger learners.

She also referred to the encouraging spiritual development she is seeing in the little ones using the material.

Several new preschools received project resources for the first time, including Sunshine Pre-Primary School near Cape Town. It was exciting to see the children's progress at a follow-up visit five months later.

Children from disadvantaged homes in South Africa fall behind even before they start school. But your gifts are helping narrow the gap, bolstering children's literacy skills and introducing them to the Bible at a very early age.

Thanks to your generosity, we plan to distribute 360,000 Bible-based literacy booklets this year.

VIETNAM

Literacy unlocks the treasure of Scripture

As churches reach out to ethnic minorities in Vietnam's remote rural areas, literacy work is intimately linked with Bible translation and distribution. This is because if you can't read, even when Scripture is made available in your heart language, you are still cut off from it. High rates of illiteracy block many Hmong, Dao and Tay people from engaging with God's word.

Hmong Pastor Sua knows how vital Bible Society's literacy programme is, in a community like his. 70 of the 85 people in his village are believers and a modest quantity of Bibles is available, but only a third of his

congregation can read the Bibles.

"I am very keen to have a literacy programme for my village," says Pastor Sua. "I pray that God will strengthen their faith and that literacy classes will be a new way to encourage spiritual growth as people learn to read God's word for themselves.

Hundreds of New Testaments and New Reader portions have developed students' reading skills, helping Christians to grow spiritually and to reach out to non-believers.

Thanks to your support, 31 classes reaching 392 students have been run since the start of this year.



CAMEROON

Literacy offers refugees a new future

The Minawao refugee camp is shelter to almost 60,000 of the 87,000 Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of northern Cameroon. Over 30,000 of these are traumatised young women – many merely girls – who have fled from the threat of the world's deadliest terror group: Boko Haram.

Aside from the physical and emotional toll of such an ordeal, the added challenge of illiteracy makes it even harder for refugees to start over. In camps like Minawao, some ethnic groups have illiteracy rates as high as 70%.

These refugees desperately need healing, and they need to know they are loved and cherished by God. They also need help with practical skills like learning to read, so they can build a future for themselves.

Your generosity will help us with our plans to set up Bible-based literacy classes for refugees in two camps – Minawao and Wack. With your support, this year we aim to teach more than 1000 refugees to read, providing them with the comfort of God's word and vital skills to rebuild their lives.



AFRICA

A new world of knowledge for women

Bible Society donors are the positive force behind an extensive project aiming to empower 40,000 African women with functional literacy by the end of 2020.

We are reaching out to the most disadvantaged in some of the poorest nations in Africa. These women have been denied access to education, but your gift of literacy will improve their lives – enhancing their health and employment opportunities and giving them a voice in their communities.

The opportunity to participate in this project in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania is particularly precious to those who speak minority languages. These languages are usually ignored by other literacy programmes which focus on national or more widely used languages. Learning to read and write in their own language creates a sense of pride in their own cultural and linguistic heritage.

Even more exciting, learning to read in their mother tongue will also make the Scriptures available to them for the first time. A New Testament or Bible in each of the 16 languages chosen has either recently been published or is nearing publication, but it is your gift of literacy that will allow the words to speak to their hearts.

Please pray for the Bible Society and local church partners as they implement this life-changing programme.



BANGLADESH

Finding Jesus in the word

Your generosity is ensuring Bible Society's literacy project in Bangladesh continues to expand. The programme is now operating in 50 of the poorest areas of the country.

Groups of 20-25 Christian women meet for one hour a day, five days a week, guided by facilitators from local churches.

Mina couldn't read before she began attending her classes.

"I desired to read and write but I did not have any opportunity to do so. I did not even know Bible stories. I was so curious to know about Jesus Christ, and my desire has been fulfilled after attending this literacy class. I personally came to know Jesus from stories in the literacy books and CDs."

In 2017, we want to reach 1,000 women like Mina, enabling them to read and interact with the Bible, and equipping them with literacy and numeracy skills to use in day to day activities.

Training seminars for facilitators and supervisors were held in three locations recently, providing an opportunity for them to develop their skills, obtain new materials and share their experience of helping participants to learn. Give thanks for the encouragement these times of fellowship provided and pray that each facilitator will teach confidently and effectively.



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Thank you for supporting our projects

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