



73613 – Cambodia
Project Fact Sheet 2022

Cambodia: Learning Through Listening

Overview

Bible Society Cambodia (BSC) launched The Learning Through Listening literacy project in 2003 to teach people how to read, by reading the Bible. Each year the program empowers illiterate people so they can read the Scriptures for their own personal growth and contribute more effectively to their communities.

The Need

Illiteracy exposes Cambodian people to shame and exploitation and keeps people in poverty. Many of the youth and adult populations of rural Cambodia have not had the opportunity to receive a quality education due to the nation's history of devastating war and genocide. Teachers are paid very low salaries, particularly in rural areas, where many only teach their students for two hours a day so they can earn additional income elsewhere.

The general literacy level in Cambodia is 80.5 per cent. The most illiterate people in Cambodia are those who are hard to reach (remote populations, ethnic minorities, migrants, and people with disabilities), and this accounts for the slow improvement rate in literacy.

The net enrolment ratio for Primary School students in Cambodia is high (98.2 per cent), but the attendance rate is lower (between 83–85 per cent). United Nations data suggests that only 61.3 per cent of children complete primary school. Secondary school attendance drops dramatically to around 40 per cent.

Additionally, most churches are still quite poor, with an average of 75 per cent of Cambodian church leaders not being paid for their work. Illiteracy continues to block many Cambodian Christians and seekers from accessing the Scriptures for themselves.

Project Goals

BSC is partnering with Cambodian churches to offer this literacy training to disadvantaged communities. Each year the program aims to provide literacy skills to a total of 5,000 – 6,000 students.

The Literacy program is a three-month audio and Bible based program, running for one-hour, five days a week. A class is made up of 10-15 students who listen to a pre-recorded lesson and work from a provided textbook. The classes do not require teachers. Instead, Bible Society trains volunteers to facilitate the group. Many volunteers have been through the classes themselves.

Each year the program aims to provide literacy skills to both disadvantaged Christians and non-Christians who have

not learned to read or write Khmer.

Students who finish the course will receive a New Testament and New Reader Scripture Portions.

In 2022 BSC aims to conduct 350 classes, reaching 4,200 people. As well as the classes, four training workshops for new facilitators are planned, five graduation ceremonies and one evaluation workshop. 4,800 literacy textbooks will be provided, along with 200 MP3 players. To assist students in the learning process and as a gift upon completing the class, 1,300 New Testaments, 3,060 Scripture portions and 9,000 Scripture portions for children will be provided.

Impact

This project has been running in Cambodia for over ten years, and in that time, it is estimated that approximately 46,000 previously illiterate people have learned to read. Those who take the class diligently and stick with the program are able to read a simple text after three months. Students learn to read the Scriptures for themselves and participate more fully in their churches and communities. Churches are also using the program as an outreach to non Christians.

The social impact of this program is very apparent. Wherever the project is implemented there is less domestic violence and crime, and the relationships between parents and their children improves. People are able to find jobs or start small businesses as a result of following the program. Local authorities covet having the program in their villages, having witnessed the results in other neighbouring communities.

Impact

"The textbooks contain the words of God, so besides becoming literate, the students also learn about the true God, his word and his love... This literacy program makes it easy to share the gospel. I am keen to see the Bible Society continue helping illiterate people in the rural areas. I believe God will bless our nation and all the volunteers who serve him from their hearts with cheerfulness."
- Pastor Keo, Kset Borei Village, Pursat

"When I saw the kids are not going to school but working hard in the field or brick factory, it broke my heart. But when I heard about this literacy project of BSC, it convinces me to conduct a class to help those kids learn literature in their free time. Most importantly, they're learning about the word of God."
- Saly, (class coordinator, Phnom Penh).

Prayer Needs

- Pray that God will use the program to bring salvation to students and spiritual growth to believers.
- Pray for protection and strength for staff and volunteers as they implement the program.
- Pray that churches will be diligent in recruiting and training new volunteers so that more classes can be offered.
- Pray that God will continue to transform rural communities through the literacy projects.