



# Literacy

For Life Bible Society newsletter JULY 2018

## SOUTH SUDAN

### Preparing for the future

*“During a war there’s nothing you can rely on for help apart from God,”* says Bible Society’s Edward Kajivora.

South Sudan’s four-year civil war plunged the nation into a humanitarian crisis, and the June ceasefire is only the start of a long process of recovery. Shilluk Christians have been particularly affected by the war, and many are still in crowded refugee camps.

The Shilluk are just one of 60 major ethnic groups within South Sudan’s population of 10-12 million people. Most of these people groups are only able to speak, and not write, in their languages. The majority are unable to read in any language.

But literacy is crucial for many areas of life, including selling or buying in the marketplace, maintaining good health and helping children with schooling. It is also key to one day being able to find work and start a new life beyond the refugee camp.

There is another burning desire motivating the Shilluk to learn to read: a new translation of the Bible available in their heart language.

The Shilluk have been longing to be able to read and understand God’s word for themselves. You are making this possible by helping Shilluk churches reach out to the non-literate communities around them with Christ’s message of love and reconciliation.



## CAMBODIA

### Making literacy possible

Thanks to your continued support of Bible Society’s literacy work in Cambodia, another course got underway in March. 15-year-old Torn Vanney is one of the students enrolled.

Vanney’s schooling was cut short when she was in Grade 3. She wasn’t allowed to continue because her parents needed her to work and take care of her younger siblings. Besides, her family had no bicycle and the school was a long way from home, and going to school meant walking on a long, lonely road.

“At that time, I only knew how to spell a little,” Vanney explains. “I was sad because I wanted to study and I missed my friends, but I did not have any other choice.”

The literacy course is only for one hour each week, so Vanney’s parents are happy for her to study alongside working to help support her family.

Her teacher has noticed the change in her within a few months of participating in the class.

“I was afraid and did not dare to speak much,” Vanney says, “but now I am braver than before and feel more confident.”

Vanney is also excited about the prospect of receiving a Bible of her own once she has completed the course.



“I will definitely study very hard to get that Bible. After I have finished the literacy course I will not have to just sit and listen when I attend the worship service on Sunday. I will know how to read the Bible.”

## LEBANON

### Moving life forward for young refugees

A Bible Society literacy programme is offering hope and a more positive future for young refugees living in limbo at a refugee camp in Lebanon.

Your support of Bible-based literacy lessons here is opening the way for traumatised kids to discover the truth about God in his word. To do this they learn to read, or pick up where they’d left off when the war in Syria cut short their education.

Abed el-llah and his brother Hayyad are orphans. They’re young teenagers, but they have already experienced a life-time of pain.

“I saw a lot of people dead and suffering because of the war,” says Abed. “It was so hard for me to see all this. There was a lot of suffering in my heart.”

The boys have lived in the camp for over four years. They dream about a very different future, but for now, life is frustratingly on hold.

“I haven’t been to school in Lebanon,” he says. “I think I will have to stay here for another three years. I will have lost more than six years of my life. This will make a big difference to my future. I want to work and do something more important with my life.”

Your gift provides kids like Abed and Hayyad vital life skills and shows them they are not forgotten. Our aim is to teach 6,000 young refugees to read and write over the next 3 years.



## VIETNAM

# Relating to those around her

Lieu Thi Su lives in the remote province of Lai Chau in northwest Vietnam. She never had the opportunity to go to school. As a Hmong, she felt cut off from the Vietnamese culture that surrounds her because she could only speak her mother tongue.

"The world was hard to navigate. When I went to the market I could not understand people very well and it was hard for me to buy goods. I felt bad and I thought that people pitied me."

When the Bible Society began a Vietnamese literacy class in her church, Lieu saw the opportunity to study as God's answer to her desire to learn. She is already making progress.

"I will be extremely happy when I can read Vietnamese fluently because I know that language is the thing that connects people to one another," she says. "One day I will be able to read the whole Bible in Vietnamese and have full conversations with confidence."

But the impact of your gift extends beyond Lieu to other Hmong Christians too.

"I am learning for myself so that I can be a testimony for the Lord. Then I will be able to encourage all the women in the church to register for this programme so they can also learn how to read and write in Vietnamese. What I have learned will be passed on to them."



## EGYPT

# A fresh start through literacy

You'll be encouraged by a recent example of the impact that Bible Society's literacy project has on Egypt's next generation.

The *King's Daughters* is an outreach ministry to disadvantaged teenage girls. Each one is neglected or abused, and some live on the streets. Few of them are in school: some have dropped out, others have never attended.

Every fortnight, up to 50 new girls attend a five-day 'retreat' where they receive holistic and focused care and training. Bible Society's Scripture-based literacy curriculum is the tool used to improve the girls' literacy skills. Leaders attending with them also receive training in the programme so they're equipped to follow up the girls when they return.

Leaders notice a transformation over the five days.

"At first the girls are fighting, interrupting, pushy, unfocused... typical behaviour for street kids," says Suzi.

"But by the fourth day there's a big change. They begin to receive, interact and respond. They start asking questions about faith, forgiveness, sin and love. They make an effort to learn and finish school, go to church and confess their sins."

Give thanks that two girls who took part in one of these retreats continued with the literacy course and have now re-entered the school system. With your support there will be many more good news stories like this.



## EAST AFRICA

# The joy of writing your own name

There's been exciting growth in a Bible Society literacy project that's changing the lives of women from minority communities in East Africa.

In Malawi, the project has expanded to 19 more Yawo villages. Now there are 29 classes running, reaching over 580 women.

Additional teachers and assistants have been recruited, and there's an urgent need to publish more Bible-based literacy resources so they'll be ready as new classes begin.

Maria got a pen for the first time in her life when she joined a Yao literacy class. She didn't know how to hold it and couldn't read or write even one letter.

"Day by day she practiced and learned more," says her teacher Veronica. "She copied the letters of her own name. Every day she came to me, dancing and puffing with enthusiasm, saying 'Look, this is my name on paper. This is beautiful, I like this!' Today, Maria can hold a pen and she knows all the letters. She is no longer copying but proudly writing."

"When you teach someone to read and write you give that person something very valuable. It's something that becomes part of her, and no one can take it away," says Malawi Bible Society Programme Director Wilfred Ngalawa.

Thanks to your giving, the impact of this project extends way beyond letters on a page to building women of faith, confidence and influence.



**BIBLE  
SOCIETY**



Thank you for supporting our projects.

GPO BOX 9874

In Your Capital City

Phone: 1300 BIBLES (1300 242 537)

Email: [bibles@biblesociety.org.au](mailto:bibles@biblesociety.org.au)

Website: [biblesociety.org.au](http://biblesociety.org.au)