



Literacy

For Life

Bible Society newsletter JAN 2019

MOZAMBIQUE

Reading is power

There are two things Rabeca Daude has in common with every member of her literacy class in Mozambique. Financial survival is a daily struggle for each one of them, and they all feel that learning to read will be crucial to overcoming this.

"I have lived my whole life in poverty," says Rabeca. "My husband has no job and I spend a lot of time just finding food for my family ... All my life I have wanted to read. I have seen the power that it gives people."

But thanks to the support of Bible Society donors like you, Rabeca is learning to read in her mother tongue, Sena, and some Portuguese words as well: *"I want to learn as much as I can so that I can start my own business or get a job to support my family."*

Mussa Joaquim agrees: *"I was so excited when I found out my church was going to have a literacy programme. Being able to read will open up many opportunities for me. I will be able to get a driver's licence and improve my employment opportunities. I will have more respect for myself when I can read."*



LAOS

Literacy work impacts next generation

Mrs Sa, her husband and her young family work together on their farm in a Hmong village. She never learned how to read or write in Lao – even her ability to speak in Lao was very poor.

It was hard for Mrs Sa to communicate with the Lao or with other minority groups when she went to the market in the city because she could only speak Hmong. It was always a struggle to buy what she needed because she wasn't able to read the signs.

When Bible Society's Lao literacy project began in her village she learned to read the Bible, communicate effectively with others and calculate costs at the markets. But she also now understands the importance of education and will send her daughter to school. She is so proud that she will be able to read alongside her daughter in the future.

"I praise God that I am now able to read," she said at her graduation with tears in her eyes. "Even though my skills are not the best, I am so happy ... If I had never learned to read, my child would not have had the chance to learn to read either."



PAKISTAN

Beacons of light in Pakistan

During 2018 you helped empower around 8,000 Pakistani women with reading and writing skills. As a result, their lives have improved in practical ways.

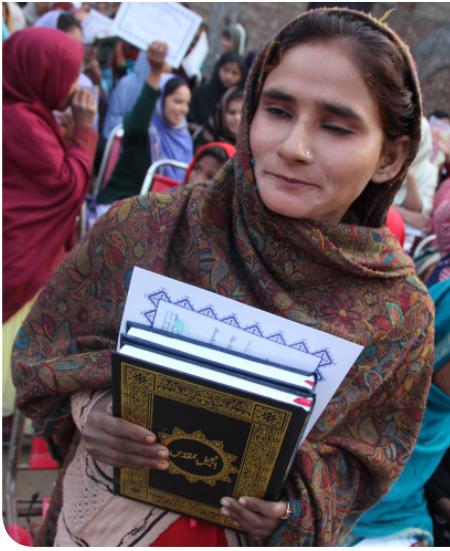
They can calculate wages owed to them and accurately pay utility bills on time. They can read the Bible to their families and grow as Christians by engaging with God's word.

Parveen is one of these women. As for so many other girls burdened by poverty, life was harsh for Parveen growing up in rural Pakistan.

She woke early to provide breakfast for her father and brothers working in the fields which were about 3.5 km away. After returning home she prepared lunch and then dinner for the family. There was simply no time to go to school.

"I am thankful for the Pakistan Bible Society for arranging the women's literacy classes in my village," Parveen says. "I wanted to be able to read the Bible but couldn't because of illiteracy. Now I am so glad that I can ... When I read it with my children they listen intently even though I can only read slowly."

"Now my three children are going to school and I will encourage them to have a good higher education for a happier life."



CAMEROON

Standing firm in the word

The Mafa people live in the mountainous areas of far-north Cameroon. The steep terrain here isn't good for cultivating crops and the area's isolation limits opportunities for children to attend school.

The region is extremely poor, but within these struggling communities it is women who are the most vulnerable.

The proximity of the Mafa communities to the Nigerian border exposes them to attacks by terrorist group Boko Haram. This forces many to leave their villages to find refuge in camps away from the borders.

Bible Society depends on your partnership to reach out to the Mafa people with God's word so they can stand firm despite these challenges. A Mafa Bible translation is well underway, and your provision of Scripture-based literacy classes will equip them to be able to read it.

"Thank you for thinking of the displaced Mafa people," says Naomi. "I never imagined I could have the opportunity to read and write my language. Thanks to you, today I have learned how to read, write and count. This will permit me to equally read the Mafa Bible and to understand it to distinguish what is right and wrong."



AFRICA

No longer ashamed

There is a heart-breaking aspect of illiteracy that is mostly kept hidden. It is the sense of shame that people feel when they can't read or write.

Martha Francisco's father worked as a security guard, but he was timid in one respect. Villagers would laugh at him because of his illiteracy. His workplace made matters worse: he had to use his thumbprint as a signature to receive his salary.

This kind of humiliation was familiar to Martha's mother too. She couldn't easily relate to other women. She was unable to make any meaningful contribution whenever they were discussing issues that could improve their families.

But Martha recently qualified as an Adult Literacy Teacher after completing a course organised by the Malawi Bible Society. She proudly returned home to announce to her parents that a Yawo adult literacy class was starting in their village and encouraged them to enrol.

"I had mixed feelings, that of joy and uneasiness. I asked myself 'How in the world am I going to teach my own parents?'"

But imagine her delight when she saw the first class gathered under a tree and noticed her parents there among the learners!

Your donations are bringing dignity and hope to many lives!



BANGLADESH

Words of new life

If you had the chance to visit a small grocery store in Bangladesh you could see for yourself the positive impact of your gifts to Bible Society's literacy work.

Antora's husband used to struggle to manage the shop alone. She couldn't help him because she couldn't read or do the simple maths required to handle money or receipts. But Antora joined a literacy class at her local church and after a year had not only learned to read and write but also learned about addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

"Now I'm helping my husband. When he goes to ... the market or is busy with other activities, I am able to stay at the shop, look after the accounts and keep our small business running."

But the legacy of your giving extends even beyond improving livelihoods to changing hearts.

When Nimita joined a Bible-based literacy class, she learned to read and write within 12 months, but she also learned about Jesus and realised she had been living in darkness without him. Nimita decided to accept Jesus as her Saviour and became a Christian.

"I am grateful for this literacy programme that changed my life and led me to salvation."



Thank you for supporting our projects.

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