

South Sudan: Literacy for Non-Literate Shilluks

Overview

This literacy project aims to bring growth and reconciliation to people in South Sudan - one of the world's most troubled nations. By providing Bibles to Shilluk Christians in their native language and offering literacy classes to help people learn to read and write, this project will give Christians the ability to read and put into practice the word of God.

The Need

In the ten years since they received their independence, social unrest, armed conflict, tribal disputes and other challenges continue to impact the daily lives of the South Sudanese. Only 34.5% of South Sudanese are literate (according to a 2018 Global Report on Literacy). With 70 major ethnic groups – each with its own language – only 1 out of 10 women and 3 out of 10 men are able to read in any language.

The Shilluk people in particular (of whom about 45% are Christian) were badly affected by the conflict of the civil war. Illiteracy concerns mostly women above the age of 15.

A focus on adult literacy is crucial for many areas of life: reading the Bible, learning basic rules of sanitation for the home, selling or buying in a marketplace, and helping children with schooling. It is in this context that the Bible Society considers this literacy project a priority.



Project Goals

The goal of this project is to enable Shilluk churches to help the non-literate communities around them to read and understand the word of God and thereby empower them to receive the message of love, hope and reconciliation in the context of a troubled world.

In 2022 the goal is to teach 1,000 students (500 women, 200 men and 300 children). The goal is to impart literacy skills and thereby improve family health, enable personal Bible reading and encourage participation in both church and social activities.

Impact

It is hoped across the four-year life of this project the whole Shilluk people group, 1.5 million people, will be impacted.

It is anticipated that literacy will have a great impact on the Shilluk people, including helping people to learn how to build better relationships and minimize conflict between communities.

Being able to access the Bible for themselves will help Christians to become an example to others, especially in the area of reconciliation and living in harmony, for the rebuilding of their nation. The word of God has power to bring healing for the many who have lost loved ones in the conflict, who may be living with bitterness and hatred.

Testimonies

“Before I was not confident enough to participate in singing and reading of the Bibles, because I could not read and write. But now after joining literacy class, I have gained confidence in serving my Lord by joining the choir and reading of the Bible to the congregation. I can read the Bible to my family and pray to God with full understanding of His Word.”

Monique*, just one of the many who has benefited from the literacy class by the Bible Society in South Sudan

*name has been changed to protect identity

Prayer Needs

- Pray for those who will take the step to begin literacy classes.
- Pray that volunteer numbers would increase and that these people would be equipped to teach effectively.
- Pray for peace and reconciliation in South Sudan.