



76501 – The Gambia  
Project Fact Sheet 2022

# The Gambia: Literacy for Young Girls and Women

## Overview

This literacy project aims to assist girls and young women from four tribes in The Gambia, teaching them how to read and write in the languages of their tribal groups. This project fills a gap, since many young girls are utilised by their families as farm hands and home helpers for their mothers rather than being sent to school.

## The Need

In many parts of Africa, sons receive the benefits of schooling while daughters do not. This has clear ramifications for individual families, communities and the broader society as women remain marginalised from the workplace and opportunities to improve their lives.

Girls are married very young and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is still widely practiced. Daughters have no right to inherit their father's property - this goes to the first born son. Girls are often seen as inferior and of less value to the family.

The Gambia in West Africa is the smallest country within the African mainland. Its needs are great, as poverty is high. Close to 50% of the 1.8 million population cannot read or write and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has ranked the country in the "Low Human Development" category. Most of its people work as farmers.



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## Project Goals

Bible Society in The Gambia is partnering with local churches to offer literacy classes for all girls, where they are encouraged and empowered to be all God created them to be. Research shows that poor reading ability impacts spiritual growth and understanding of God's message, so these girls will be equipped to not only read but understand the Bible and the message of the Gospel.

In 2022, training workshops for literacy teachers will be held in Mandinka, Manjako, Wolof, English, and Jola. The goal is to open and start new Literacy and ESL classes. The classes will teach literacy through Scripture engagement.

Attendees will be provided with Scriptures of their own. They will also receive skills training at the conclusion of each class to help them generate income and become productive members of society.

The first goal of the project is to raise awareness of the literacy classes through church leaders to the people.

This project requires considerable patience and lots of prayer. There are significant barriers to overcome.

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## Impact

As awareness of the classes grow, it is hoped that more people will recognise the value of literacy for their girls, and more girls and women will commit to the program.

As the students attend classes, they will then read the Bible at church, motivating others to attend classes, so they too can read God's word for themselves.

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## Testimonies

"They laughed at me when I started the class but today, I can read and even teach those who were laughing at me."  
- Fabiana

Fabiana was among the first group of people who was trained. She has become a strong literacy promoter after reading the Ten Commandments in Mandinka during a service.

## Prayer Needs

- Please pray for a successful literacy program.
- Pray that discrimination against the education of women and girls would cease.
- Pray that as attendees become more competent in their literacy and other skills, they will be able to apply for formal jobs.
- Pray that learning to read, as well as owning their own Bible (in their heart language) will bring these new readers closer to God and to understanding his calling on their lives.