

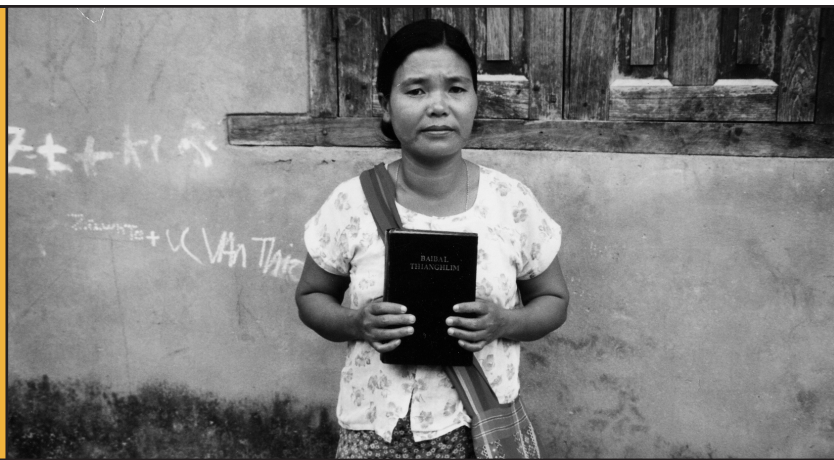
PROJECT NO: 82513

TAX | NON-TAX

# Myanmar



## Literacy by Listening



### Overview

In partnership with churches, the Bible Society of Myanmar is running the 'Literacy through Listening' program, which focuses on the Sgaw Karen and Asho Chin ethnic groups as well as the Myanmar native speakers.

### The Need

The population of Myanmar is about 54 million, with between 80% - 89% practicing Buddhism. Christians constitute around 6.2% of the population. The government recognizes 135 different ethnic groups and estimates that there are about 200 spoken languages in Myanmar.

While literacy rates across the country have improved dramatically in recent decades, there are still many people who need access to an education in literacy. To date, the government has not encouraged literacy development for ethnic minority groups in their respective mother languages. Myanmar (Bamar), Sgaw Karen and Asho Chin are the focus of this project. Karen people are the largest Christian population and the biggest population among the ethnic minorities. Surprisingly, there are many non-literate Karen communities, particularly in remote areas. Asho Chin communities also experience very low rates of literacy, and have a sizeable Christian population (around 40%).

54m  
people in Myanmar.

6.2%  
of the population are Christian.

200  
spoken languages in Myanmar.

40%  
of Karen population are Christian.

# Goals

Overall, each year this project hopes to help 2,250 Sgaw Karen people learn to read, write and count. They will mainly focus on raising literacy levels in 100 villages among Sgaw Karen, 50 villages among Myanmar speaking communities and 30 villages among Asho Chin speaking communities.

The project aims to improve literacy rates in these three languages using audio material, though Scripture portions for new readers, New Testaments and comics will also be made available. Workshops, training sessions and village visits will take place in different communities for an initial period of five years.

In 2023, the goal is to reach 2,250 adults among the Sgaw Karen people in rural areas, through 100 classes. Ten workshops will be held for 150 new facilitators. January – March will be book and material preparation; April-June will build awareness of the course in the target areas; July-September will be the learning period, and October-December will be the presentation of certificates of completion.

## Impact

Eradicating illiteracy will help the people to be able to claim their basic human rights, access Scripture for themselves and gain the knowledge of the Gospel. It is expected that the Karen people will genuinely receive the light of God’s love through the literacy books, as these books are Bible based and contain tasks relating to God’s love. The use of the books will impact students, as they are not only for literacy skills but also for their spiritual growth in the knowledge of God.

So far, the project has impacted 5,000 people.

## Testimonies

“Because of civil war, I have no chance to study about my own language. Because of this program, I can read, write and speak my language with confidence. I feel so glad and blessed that I can read and write my own language and I also taught my parents how to read, write and sing. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to learn.”

*Kyaw\*, 16 years old, from a village in the Kyaukkyi township, 2021*

“Although I am Karen, I cannot speak and read Karen well. Whenever I think about that I feel so shy... God knows my feeling and HE open the door for me to learn Karen language... Because of this class I can read and write our mother language. Now I can know the meaning and pronunciation exactly and deeply. Whatever I learn from this class I will share to our next generation. I am deeply thankful to God for giving me this opportunity...”

*Wah\*, from a Karen village*

\*Name changed for security reasons.

## Prayer Needs

- Please pray that this literacy program will be well established in the rural villages and accepted by the people.
- Please pray also that this project will play a vital role in bringing the Gospel to those searching for truth.
- Pray for safety and wellbeing of the Bible Society staff and local facilitators.
- Pray for the country’s leaders and authorities as they navigate political situations and the COVID-19 pandemic.

