



Learning Through Listening

Overview

Bible Society Cambodia (BSC) launched The Learning Through Listening literacy project in 2003 to teach people how to read, by reading the Bible. Each year the program empowers non-literate people so they can develop their literacy skills and contribute more effectively to their communities. It also means they can read the Scriptures for their own personal growth.



The Need

Illiteracy can expose Cambodian people to shame, fraud and exploitation and often keeps people in poverty. Many of the youth and adult populations of rural Cambodia have not had the opportunity to receive a quality education due to the nation's history of devastating war and genocide.

The most non-literate people in Cambodia are those who are hard to reach (remote populations, ethnic minorities, migrants, and people with disabilities), and this accounts for the slow improvement rate in literacy. Teachers, particularly in rural areas, are also paid low salaries, with many teaching their students for only two hours a day so they can earn additional income elsewhere.

84%

of adults are literate in Cambodia
(2022, World Bank data).

61.3%

of students complete primary school (UN data)
despite a 98.2% net enrolment ratio.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

Romans 15:4, NIV

Goals

BSC is partnering with Cambodian churches to offer literacy training to disadvantaged communities. Each year the program aims to provide literacy skills to a total of 5,000 – 6,000 students.

The Literacy program is a three-month audio and Bible-based program, running for one-hour, five days a week. A class is made up of 10-15 students who listen to a pre-recorded lesson and work from a provided textbook. The classes do not require teachers. Instead, Bible Society trains volunteers to facilitate the group. Many volunteers have been through the classes themselves.

Each year the program aims to provide literacy skills to both disadvantaged Christians and non-Christians who have not learned to read or write Khmer.

BSC aims to conduct 350 classes in 24 provinces of Cambodia. As well as the classes, training workshops for new facilitators and graduation ceremonies are planned. Graduates from the literacy course receive a certificate and a New Testament Bible.

Impact

Bible Society of Cambodia has reported several positive outcomes of this literacy program. By learning literacy skills, participants are equipped with tools for acquiring knowledge and effective communication. Students' motivation to join the classes range from aiding their children's education to starting small businesses.

Local authorities in certain areas have supported the program by awarding certificates to graduates, and parents appreciate the positive impact on their children's knowledge, attitudes, and affection. This transformational experience is leading families to view these classes as a valuable means of education.

Many join the classes in order to deepen their faith, as they are equipped to read and understand the Scriptures independently. The impact on individual students — as they're able to read simple texts, as well as the word of God — has inspired others, including Christian leaders and community members, to join the classes. Leaders and pastors are supportive of the program which has empowered their church members to grow in confidence and resilience. Many people have encountered Jesus in these classes, prompting a demand to expand the classes into neighbouring villages.

Testimonies

"The textbooks contain the words of God, so besides becoming literate, the students also learn about the true God, his word and his love ... This literacy program makes it easy to share the gospel. I am keen to see the Bible Society continue helping illiterate people in the rural areas. I believe God will bless our nation and all the volunteers who serve him from their hearts with cheerfulness." — Pastor Keo

Prayer Needs

- Pray that God will use the program to bring salvation to students and spiritual growth to believers.
- Pray that churches will be diligent in recruiting and training new volunteers so that more classes can be offered.
- Pray that God will continue to transform rural communities through the literacy projects.
- Pray for more communities and authorities to open up their doors to the program.