



Empowering Women Through Literacy

Overview

Bible Society Australia is partnering with Bible Society Burkina Faso to launch a women's literacy program, incorporating income-generating activities in local languages. The initiative empowers women with reading, writing, and socio-economic skills, fostering spiritual growth through Bible engagement.



The Need

Burkina Faso faces a dire literacy challenge, with one of the world's lowest rates. In 2019, only 29.7% of individuals aged 15 and above were literate. This issue predominantly affects women, who comprise over half of the population. Millions of women, including countless adolescent girls, lack access to fundamental literacy. They seek knowledge for spiritual growth, socio-economic integration, and self-sufficiency. This literacy need is emphasised by the local churches partnering with the Bible Society of Burkina Faso (BSBF). This challenge is compounded by the region's instability due to terrorism since 2015. Illiteracy perpetuates high female unemployment, low income, financial instability, poor health, and adverse family impacts.

75%

of women over 15 are non-literate (2019, National Institute of Statistics)

3,880

women will graduate over the 4 years of this literacy project

19,400

people will be indirectly impacted through these literacy graduates

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

John 17:17, NIV

Goals

The goal of the project is to enhance reading and writing fluency in native languages, promoting Scriptural engagement and spiritual growth while also bolstering living conditions. BSBF will partner with churches, who will host classes as hubs for students and teachers, with an evangelistic purpose. Ultimately, BSBF aims to transition program ownership to the church.

Beginning in 2024, Level 1 focuses on students across four languages. In 2025, Level 2 expands to five languages while maintaining the student count. From 2026 to 2029, six languages will be taught, alternating between Levels 1 and 2.

The anticipated outcomes include 2,400 annual students, 80 educators, and 1,940 graduates every two years, coupled with literacy and Scripture materials creation and distribution. These efforts impart essential skills in reading, writing, numeracy, and entrepreneurship, leading to a more fulfilling life.

Impact

Over four years, this project will directly impact 3,880 students, equipping them with literacy and income-generating skills. Indirectly, at least 19,400 individuals, including immediate and extended family members, will benefit from the women's newfound expertise.

The initiative aims to transform lives by providing vital skills in reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. These competencies enhance their understanding of God's word and empower them to navigate both Christian and daily life effectively. The project also broadens horizons through knowledge and entrepreneurship skills, emphasising income-generating activities. Vocational training equips participants to establish sustainable income sources, leading to a more fulfilling life.

As part of the program, students will receive Bibles or New Testaments in their learning languages as post-literacy resources. Additionally, Bible reading clubs will be established for graduates to maintain their reading skills.

Testimonies

"I didn't have the chance to go to formal school because my parents decided to send my brothers instead of me, the only girl ... One day I fell ill ... I took the medicine, but more than I should have (overdose) because I couldn't read or write ... by the grace of God, the doctor saved my life. Later, I gave my life to Christ and started going to church. Every time the pastor preached, I enjoyed the message and could remember it for a few days. One day I sat down and made the decision to learn to read and write. When the Bible Society decided to open a literacy class in our church, I was the first to register. Now I've joined our church choir and write my songs; I take notes when my pastor preaches. I can read a medication prescription, even if I don't understand it all. At least I know how many pills to take." — Solange

Prayer Needs

- Please pray for a good partnership with the churches and other organisations in running this project.
- Pray that students would attend classes regularly.
- Pray for a great impact in the lives of the beneficiaries (women and their immediate relatives).