

South Sudan



Literacy for Shilluks

Project: 100525
Tax Deductible



Overview

This literacy project by the Bible Society of South Sudan aims to bring growth and reconciliation to people in South Sudan. This project works with local churches in offering literacy classes, contributing to the community's social progress, promote wellbeing, help break the cycles of poverty as well as empower communities to read and learn the word of God.

The Need

Since South Sudan's independence in mid-2011, social unrest, armed conflicts, 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 can read in any language. The Shilluk people in particular (of whom about 45% are Christians) were badly affected by the conflict of the civil war. Illiteracy concerns mostly women above the age of 15.

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

65.5%

of South Sudanese people are non-literate (2018, World Bank data)

45%

of Shilluk people are Christian

574,000

Collo speakers in South Sudan

Goals

This literacy project was established to enable Shilluk churches to help their non-literate communities develop in their literacy skills for everyday living and learn about reconciliation in their troubled context. Part of the project's goals is that participants learn to read and understand the Bible in their language, the Shilluk Bible, empowering them to receive God's message of love, hope and reconciliation.

Overall, the project aims to reach 5,000 learners, with each graduate being able to impart what they have learned to 10 non-literate fellow family members, friends and neighbours.

In 2025, the project will continue in teaching students, both adults and children, in Juba and Malakal including its surrounding towns. The project's activities include Bible reading in churches, participation in social activities and a graduation ceremony for successful candidates. Near the end of 2025, the Bible Society of South Sudan will start plans for 2026 including a teaching on Literacy Sustainability.

Impact

It is hoped across the life of this project the whole Shilluk people group, 1.5 million people, will be impacted. By imparting literacy skills, learners will be able to improve their family health and participate in community activities. They will be able to read the Bible for themselves and be an active part of their church communities.

It is anticipated that literacy, infused with learning the word of God, will have a great impact on the Shilluk people, including helping people to learn how to build better relationships and minimise conflicts between communities.

Being able to access the Bible themselves will help Christians to become an example to others when it comes to 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.

Testimony

"The Collo Literacy Project is gaining momentum, what great number of community members, especially men joining literacy classes ... The returnees from Sudan from the current conflict are enrolling in classes to know their mother tongue after spending decades in a foreign land. There is great enthusiasm among the community members: men, women and children. Number of those who joined classes have increased rapidly compared to previous years, especially men." — Bible Society of South Sudan Team

Prayer Points

- Pray for those who will take the step to begin literacy classes, and for Bible Society to carry forth the program effectively and in the years to come.
- Pray for the volunteers — that volunteer numbers would increase and that these people would be equipped to teach effectively.
- Pray for peace and reconciliation in South Sudan.