

The Gambia



Literacy Equality

Project: 76501
Tax Deductible



2.7m

people in The Gambia

51%

of older women are non-literate
and 57% of young women are non-literate

4-5%

of the population in The Gambia
are Christian

Overview

This literacy project in The Gambia, aims to assist women and girls from five focus groups — Mandinka, Manjako, Wolof, Karon, and Jola — by teaching them how to read and write in their languages as well as equipping them to learn God's word and the message of the gospel.

The Need

In many parts of Africa, sons receive the benefits of schooling while daughters do not; instead, many young girls are utilised by their families as farm hands and home helpers for their mothers. 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.

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 2.7 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.

Girls are married 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. Furthermore, research shows that poor reading ability impacts spiritual growth and understanding of God's message. This project aims to fill the gap, providing a Bible-based literacy program to improve girls and women's lives.

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behaviour, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good. – Titus 2:1-3 ESV

Goals

Bible Society in The Gambia is partnering with local churches to offer this four-year Bible-based literacy program to at least 1,500 learners each year. Women and girls will learn how to read, write, count and engage with the Bible in their local languages as well as English as a second language.

The Bible Society in The Gambia plans to continually present the program to more churches in the region and train additional teachers to broaden its reach. The goal is to impact the lives of 100,000 people from the five focus groups — Mandinka, Manjako, Wolof, Karon, and Jola — by 2030. Bible Society will also organise community events to highlight the progress of the learners, such as literacy day celebrations, reading competition and sporting events.

Impact

The impact of this literacy project will be measured by the literacy attainment of the participants through reading sessions, short quizzes, assignments, encouraging peer-to-peer learning sessions, and the use of audio Bibles to test their listening abilities.

In 2025, there are plans for 2,338 students participating in literacy classes consisting of women, children and men which will be led by 232 literacy facilitators. It is hoped that 83 students will graduate the program this year. Two new classes have also opened in two towns (in the south and north of The Gambia) as of November 2024.

With an overall improvement on the reading skills and interest to read in the church, volunteers and participants have motivated others to take part as they demonstrate how they are now able to make use of the Bible during church services.

Testimony

“I was a student then after my graduation, I became a teacher. Before the program I cannot read and write ... the literacy workshop helped me a lot ... My teacher was encouraging me until I became interested in the program, now I can read and write very well ... I enjoy the program. I am telling all my friends to come for the program so that they can read and write.”

— Halima*, 32-years-old

Prayer Points

- Pray that the beneficiaries will be committed and devoted to seeking knowledge.
- Pray that through this project, beneficiaries will have a divine encounter with God.
- Pray for a successful launch, as well as continued growth and stability in our new locations. Pray that these efforts will be fruitful and have a lasting impact on the communities served.