

Empowering Literacy



Project: 72123
Tax-Deductible

Bangladesh

Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting the Bangladesh Bible Society (BBS) to help non-literate women in rural communities gain essential reading and writing skills that improve their confidence, expand opportunities and strengthen their families and communities. Through structured classes, audio tools and supportive facilitators, participants build practical literacy that enhances everyday life and long-term wellbeing. As their skills increase, many women are also able to begin reading the Bible for themselves, deepening personal reflection and enriching their spiritual lives.



The Need

Bangladesh's rural communities continue to face deep educational inequality, with women in remote areas among the least likely to access schooling. Many adult women have grown up without the opportunity to learn to read or write, limiting their ability to support their families, participate fully in community life, or engage with important information and services. For ethnic minority groups such as the Garo and Santali, literacy is also connected to preserving language use, cultural identity and participation in community-based Christian life. Despite these challenges, there is strong desire among women to learn, improve their livelihoods, and contribute more confidently to their families, churches and wider communities — creating a significant opportunity for long-term impact.

- **79%** of adults (15+) in Bangladesh are functionally literate
- **77%** women's literacy rate, while men are at 81%
- **67%** of Bangladesh' population live in rural areas

Goals

The project aims to equip 1,500 non-literate women each year with functional reading and writing skills through a structured three-year literacy pathway. Learners attend five classes per week, using printed primers, audio lessons and facilitator-led activities to build confidence and practical literacy.

In 2026, 63 active classes will continue progressing 1,218 learners, completing Level-2 *Muktir Path* units and Level-3 *Learning Circle* materials, alongside baseline and end-line assessments for new and graduating cohorts.

As in previous years, the project plans to provide 500 Bibles, literacy books and audio Scripture resources, with sewing machines supporting third-year groups, and aims to see women confidently reading newspapers, books and the Bengali Bible.

Impact

By gaining literacy skills, each student grows in confidence and independence to support her family, navigate government information, legal matters and health services, and participate more fully in community life. The three-year program uses printed primers, audio resources and facilitator-led classes, reinforced by area-based follow-up training seminars that lift class quality and local ownership.

In 2025, the project advanced how they assess baseline and end point literacy and developed the primers to strengthen

future cohorts. As literacy deepens, many women are also able to read the Bible for themselves, share stories with children and neighbours, and contribute more confidently in church life. With graduates receiving practical livelihood supports (such as sewing machines or small farming aids), the indirect impact is estimated at 6,000 people annually as each learner influences at least four others.

Impact in Numbers

1,218

learners actively engaged across 63 classes in 2025.

4

training seminars conducted to support and improve teaching.

Testimony

"The teaching from the Bible stories in literacy class helped in my life and changed me. I realised that I got peace from Jesus that brings a joy in my life. I got the opportunity to know Jesus deeply during these classes. I learned how to love my neighbors, even love my enemies." — Rafsan*, 40-year-old mother of four children. She came from a Hindu family, but was interested to know Jesus, and joined in the literacy class in her village church.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

How Your Support Helps

\$10

will help cover a learner's Bible plus literacy booklets.

\$1,300

will help run a local follow-up seminar for facilitators and class leaders.

\$15,000

will help fund a five-day primer development workshop that strengthens materials for new readers.

"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."

— **Revelation 1:3, NIV**