

Pre-Primary Literacy



Project: 102454
Tax-Deductible

Bangladesh

Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting the Bangladesh Bible Society to help preschool-aged children in remote and rural communities build strong pre-literacy, cognitive and social foundations through an age-appropriate Multilingual Pre-primary Education curriculum. Children learn in their own mother tongue before gradually developing oral Bengali skills, strengthening confidence, cultural identity and readiness for school. Alongside this holistic development, child-friendly Bible engagement is woven through stories, songs and values-based activities, reinforcing the message that each child is loved and valued by God.



The Need

Bangladesh's remote and rural communities face deep educational barriers, especially for young children from minority language groups. Many live far from early-learning centres, and participation in early childhood education remains very low, with only approximately 19% of children aged 3–5 attending an early childhood program. This leaves children without the foundational pre-literacy skills they need before entering primary school.

Most children from minority groups begin school in Bengali, not their mother tongue, creating early learning disadvantages; in several communities there are no standardised written materials to build pre-literacy in local languages. Early, culturally grounded learning is essential to strengthen confidence, language development and school readiness across these communities.

- **58** million children in Bangladesh, which is 34% of the population
- **~19%** of pre-school aged children attend education
- **64%** of children go on to complete secondary education

Goals

The project aims to equip young children from minority language communities with strong pre-literacy, cognitive and social foundations through a two-year Multilingual Pre-primary Education curriculum delivered in their mother tongue.

In 2026, the program will strengthen this model by continuing 14 Santal-language classes serving around 280 children, completing and field-testing Santal L-2 materials, and beginning development of Garo L-1 resources. Facilitators will undertake targeted training and follow-up, while staff conduct baseline assessments for the 2027 intake and endline assessments for current learners. The year will conclude with a three-day evaluation and planning workshop. The program educates pre-school children in remote areas, helping them build literacy from age four and engage with Scripture in ways that nurture spiritual confidence.

Impact

This project is providing lasting educational, social and spiritual transformation for children across rural Bangladesh. Children are supported with strong mother-tongue pre-literacy foundations, improved oral Bengali proficiency, greater cultural confidence and meaningful early engagement with Scripture.

In 2025, the program established and sustained Santal pre-primary classes, with facilitators reporting that children demonstrated improved ability to recognise sounds and

symbols in their mother tongue, greater engagement in storytelling and songs, and stronger emotional security through value-based, faith-affirming activities. Parents and community leaders also observed growing pride in cultural identity and increased support for early learning. Classes ran in multiple northern and hill-tract locations in partnership with 20+ denominations and local churches providing venues and practical support. Children showed increased confidence and engagement, with strong affirmation from parents and community leaders.

Impact in Numbers

2,000

people impacted by this project so far.

280

children are currently learning in 14 Santal-language pre-primary classes, gaining early mother-tongue literacy skills.

Testimony

"At first, Keya* didn't want to go and cried when we brought her there, so I had to sit with her during the classes. She couldn't speak or write vowels, consonants, or English letters, nor could she count numbers. But now, she confidently goes to the centre alone, and has made significant progress in both literacy and social skills. I believe this experience will help her transition smoothly into primary school, and she will thrive on her own." — Keya's Mother, Keya is a 4-year-old student of this program

*Name changed to protect privacy.

How Your Support Helps

\$10

will help supply printed literacy materials for one child.

\$600

will help support a teacher-training or follow-up session for facilitators.

\$4,500

will help fund a five-day materials development workshop for Santal or Garo.

"My son, give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways..."
— **Proverbs 23:26, NIV**