

## Learning through Listening: *Literacy in Myanmar*

### Overview

The Bible Society of Myanmar has committed to making the Bible available to every language group in Myanmar. However, the effectiveness of this is dependent on the literacy rate of the people.

In partnership with various churches, the Bible Society of Myanmar will implement the 'Literacy through listening' program. This will focus on the Sgaw Karen and Asho Chin ethnic groups as well as the Myanmar native speakers.

### The Need

The population of Myanmar is about 54 million, with between 80% - 89% practicing Buddhism. Christians constitute around 6.2% of the population. The government recognizes 135 different ethnic groups and estimates that there are about 200 spoken languages in Myanmar. The main ethnic groups are Kachin, Kayar, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan.

While literacy rates across the country have improved dramatically in recent decades, there are still many people who need access to an education in literacy. To date, the government has not encouraged literacy development for ethnic minority groups in their respective mother languages. Myanmar (Bamar), Sgaw Karen and Asho Chin are the target group for this project.

This project will mainly focus on raising literacy levels in 100 villages among Sgaw Karen, 50 village among Myanmar (Bamar) speaking communities and 30 villages among Asho Chin speaking communities. The project aims to improve literacy rates in these three languages using audio material. Scripture portions for new readers, New Testaments and comics will also be made available. Workshops, training sessions and village visits will take place in different communities for an initial period of 5 years.



## Strategic Goal and Impact

In 2021, the project plans to reach 1500 adults among the Sgaw Karen people in rural areas. Due to political conflict and economic struggle, many Karen people were displaced inside the country. The situation forced them to be illiterate in their mother tongue especially in rural and remote areas.

When they cannot read and write they become victims of social exploitation. Bible Society will teach them how to read and write, as well as to value their language and have the skills to read the basic information of everyday life.

## Impact

Eradicating illiteracy will help the people to be able to claim their basic human right and access Scripture for themselves and gain the knowledge of the Gospel. It is expected that the Karen people will genuinely receive the light of God's love through the literacy books,

as these books are Bible based and contain tasks relating to God's love. The use of the books will impact students, as they are not only for literacy skills but also for their spiritual growth in the knowledge of God.

## Testimony

"Although I am Karen, I cannot speak and read Karen well. Whenever I think about that I feel so shy. Sometimes when I see that nowadays children have opportunity to learn Karen language, I am really envious and happy. God knows my feeling and HE open the door for me to learn Karen language through Bible Society of Myanmar and Karen Baptist Convention. Because of this class I can read and write our mother language. Now I can know the meaning and pronunciation exactly and deeply. Whatever I learn from this class I will share to our next generation. I am deeply thankful to God for giving me this opportunity and also thankful to Bible Society of Myanmar and Karen Baptist Convention. God bless you all richly." - **Law Eh Paw Wah, Nyaung Lay Bin Village.**

## Prayer Needs

- Please pray that this literacy program will be well established in the rural villages and accepted by the people.
- Please pray also that this project will play a vital role in bringing the Gospel to those searching for truth.
- Pray for safety and wellbeing of the Bible Society staff and local facilitators.