

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ten years ago, Room to Read began its work with a simple desire to bring books to the children of Nepal. Today, we are a global organization – working in nine countries across Asia and Africa – that helps millions of children in the developing world gain access to quality educational opportunities. We have built an effective, entrepreneurial and passionate global team, a strong and diverse donor base and a foundation of scalable programming.

In 2009, as we neared completion of our first decade, we conducted a thorough and participatory strategic planning process to articulate our ultimate goals for the next decade and beyond, as well as to define the major strategies needed to achieve them. We included input and involvement from our Country, Regional and Global Office staff as well as our Board and Advisory Board members, donors and experts in the field of international education. The process was designed to chart how we can sustain our already strong momentum, and extend our achievements and impact with greater clarity. We were fortunate to have the *pro bono* assistance of Oliver Wyman, one of the world's leading international management consulting groups, who played a critical role in launching and helping to design the initial phases of the process and by providing key research and stakeholder analysis.

The result of this year-long exercise is a sharp focus on two objectives: **Literacy and Gender Equality in Education**. Moving forward, we will build upon our history of providing access to educational infrastructure through libraries, children's books, schools, and girls' education, and expand our work to include reading instruction programs and enhanced life skills workshops for girls.

Room to Read is excited to enter our second decade with focus and leadership that will increase our impact on children through education in the developing world.

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BACKGROUND

Since 2000, Room to Read has partnered with local communities throughout the developing world to provide educational resources to underserved children. Room to Read believes that all children, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, deserve access to a quality education because today's educated children are tomorrow's empowered, active and responsible citizens.



Room to Read was launched in Nepal, where we initially donated English language books to rural communities. Today, we are a global organization that helps children gain access to education. We currently work in nine countries - Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Zambia. Over the past ten years, we have developed an integrated, long-term approach to address a range of educational needs that create lasting change for children in the developing world. Our current programs include: **Reading Room** (establishing multi-lingual libraries for children); **Local Language Publishing** (working with local writers and illustrators to create and publish high-quality local language children's books); **School Room** (building new structures, replacing dilapidated schools, or expanding school buildings to alleviate overcrowding); and the **Girls' Education program** (funding long-term scholarships and providing life-skills workshops that support underprivileged girls through secondary school).

We are a results-driven organization. Since our inception¹, Room to Read has impacted the lives of more than four million children by:

- Establishing nearly 9,200 libraries
- Publishing 433 original local language children's titles in 21 different languages, representing the distribution of more than 4.1 million books

¹ These cumulative totals represent our results from 2000 through the end of 2009.

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



- Supporting holistic, long-term educational opportunities to over 8,700 girls for a total of more than 26,000 years of girls' education
- Constructing 1,129 schools

In recent years, we have taken steps to further improve the quality of our programs and to place a greater emphasis on desired, measurable outcomes. On the heels of our ten year anniversary, Room to Read felt it was the right time to undertake a formal global strategic planning process to identify and articulate our ultimate goals for our next decade and beyond, as well as to define the major strategies needed to achieve this long-term vision.

Strategic Vision

Our goal for the future is more ambitious than ever: to enable more than 10 million children in over a dozen developing world countries to maximize their educational experiences by 2015. Our new strategic vision for Room to Read is summarized below:

Our programs will reach more than **10 million** children by 2015.

Vision Statement

Room to Read believes that World Change Starts with Educated Children. We envision a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to their community and the world.

Mission Statement

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on **literacy and gender equality in education**. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, we develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children, and support girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.

Core Operating Principles

Since our founding, Room to Read has used basic business principles from the private sector and best practices from the non-profit sector to inform our innovative operational strategy. In our second decade, we will maintain the following principles:

Focus on Education of Children: We will continue to work only in education, focusing on the child as our primary beneficiary, and we will not take on broader community development issues. We feel that we can have the greatest impact in the areas of literacy and girls' education. The majority of our work will be centered in government schools, and we will aim to enhance, supplement and support government education initiatives. We also seek to be a thought leader in the field of international education by sharing what we learn from our evidence-based research and seeking input and advice from others in the field.

Global Footprint and Long-Term Engagement: We aim to provide flexible program models that can be adapted locally. We will concentrate our work in developing countries with relatively stable governance where education can be prioritized. We seek strategic partnerships with governments and like-minded organizations. We take a long-term approach in the countries where we operate while supporting individual communities within those countries for a fixed period of time.

Community Engagement and Local Partnerships: We are committed to working in collaboration with communities based on community need. A key partner in every country we work in is the government, and we seek to enhance government educational initiatives through our support and capacity building.

Scale and Sustainability: We believe our role is to successfully demonstrate effective and cost-efficient program models so that governments and other non-profits can adopt our methodology and practices. This will enable us to reach scale and ultimately achieve long-term sustainability. By innovating to find replicable and scalable program models, we aim to demonstrate the possibilities for delivering quality educational programs in ways that catalyze long-term, systemic change.



Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



Attract and Retain Top-Caliber People: We seek to continue to attract and retain world-class talent to deliver our programs. Country teams will continue to be comprised of nationals from that country and will be supported and guided by our regional and global teams. Additionally, we will continue to build a movement by inspiring a vibrant, global volunteer chapter network and strengthening our high-caliber Board and Advisory Board.

Diversified and Engaged Funding Base: We seek to maximize our resources for the greatest impact in the communities where we work, and we aim for a donor base that is diverse in type and geographic location. We desire to have an energized and engaged donor base by creating a global movement around international education. We will continue to actively encourage a direct connection between our donors and our work and to portray a positive and optimistic view of the children and communities we serve.

Healthy and Efficient Organization: We are an action- and results-oriented international organization that is responsive to our wide network of global stakeholders. We work across country, regional and global levels in order to ensure mutual ownership of the end goal of educating more children. We maintain an efficient overhead ratio to ensure that at least 80 percent of our funding goes directly to our work, while at the same time investing in high-quality infrastructure that will support the long-term health and effectiveness of the organization. We strive to remain nimble so that we can make decisions in a timely manner to further our mission.

PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS

Programmatic Overview and Theory of Change

Over the past two decades, the international community has mobilized around universal education. Education is increasingly perceived to be a basic human right and key to human development. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meetings around education, first in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and then in Dakar, Senegal (2000), resulted in *Education for All*, a common vision and framework for all children to receive a quality basic education. Additionally, the Millennium Summit, held in New York in 2000, resulted in the Millennium Development Goals, a set of time-bound, measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender discrimination. The initial outcome of these various international commitments was an emphasis on the part of governments, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local NGOs to increase educational enrollment, particularly in primary schools in the developing world. As a result, hundreds of millions of previously out-of-school children are now participating in formal education.

“Education is perhaps the most powerful tool for reducing poverty, improving health, promoting healthier economies, and providing peaceful and productive opportunities for young people around the world.”

– Global Campaign for Education

Nonetheless, rapidly expanding enrollments and scarce resources have meant that many of these children, especially in rural areas, still do not have access to a *quality* education. And, although *Education for All* has significantly raised awareness regarding gender disparities and focused efforts on achieving gender parity (meaning equal numbers of boys and girls are enrolling in and completing school), gender equality in education remains a significant challenge due to bias against girls in many places around the world.

Room to Read has therefore identified and committed itself to two critical areas of educational development where we believe we can have the greatest impact: a) **Literacy** and b) **Gender Equality in Education**:

Literacy Among Primary School-Aged Children

Room to Read will focus on literacy as the foundation of all other learning by developing reading skills and the habit of reading among primary school children. To achieve this goal, Room to Read will work to increase access to culturally-relevant, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive reading materials; increase the effectiveness of teachers and librarians to teach literacy skills and develop the habit of reading among children; and improve the school environment to be more conducive to learning. As a result, more primary school children will become independent readers.

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



Girls' Secondary Education

Room to Read will also focus on equalizing the secondary school experience for girls as a means for improving gender equality in education and thus promoting quality education for all children. To achieve this goal, we will ensure that girls have equal opportunities to attend secondary school, have the support they need to continue in school (including creating a girl-friendly school environment) and have an opportunity to improve their life skills. As a result, girls in our program will complete secondary school and have the skills necessary to make key life decisions.

Literacy Program

Literacy is part of the right to a basic education and is crucial for economic, social and political participation and development.² Yet today, there are more than 750 million illiterate adults (age 15 and above) in the world, with 98% living in developing countries. In order for children – who are the focus of Room to Read's work – to acquire lifelong literacy skills, they need access to books and other reading materials, which are often scarce in many of the communities where Room to Read operates.

“Literacy gives people tools with which to improve their livelihoods, participate in community decision-making, gain access to information about health care...Above all, it enables individuals to realize their rights as citizens and human beings.”

– Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

Our Reading Room program was founded to fill this gap and give children the opportunity to explore, discover, learn, and imagine through stories and characters within books. In stocking the libraries, Room to Read soon discovered a lack of adequate grade-, language-, gender- and culturally-appropriate books and other learning materials for children who access our libraries. The Local Language Publishing program was created to fill this need. At the same time, we also recognized that children often lack safe, child-friendly learning spaces. The School Room program was launched to improve the infrastructure of schools and address the need for better learning environments with adequate space. Together, these programs support the creation of a literate environment at school and home by surrounding children with relevant, creative and interesting print material to encourage and foster a joy of reading. The programs also provide teachers, facilitators and librarians with materials and strategies to engage children and nurture the habit of reading.

Over the past several years, we have monitored our efforts closely and uncovered concerns about whether or not we have maximized the utilization of the programs. For example, although we know that in 2008 a total of 2,341,941 local language and/or English-language books were provided to the 4,478 libraries established between 2006 and 2008, and that on average 88% of our libraries have check-out systems in place, we still had concerns about just how many books were being checked out and read by children. Specifically, we observed that children within the communities where we work often lack the grade-appropriate reading skills necessary to take full advantage of the Reading Room and Local Language Publishing resources. In order to address this concern, our teams in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka launched initial literacy pilot programs in 2008 and 2009 to focus on reading skills in the primary grades, a prerequisite for children to become independent readers and lifelong learners. The pilots focused on providing professional development for teachers and supplemental teaching materials in order to enhance the teaching of reading in the schools where we work. Initial lessons learned from these pilots have informed our new literacy strategy and demonstrated that Room to Read can impact more children by focusing on creating environments that enable and promote reading. Furthermore, adding components that support teaching literacy will lead to a greater utilization and a higher rate of return on the investments we are already supporting.

The goal of our Literacy program will be to ensure that more primary school children become independent readers. Room to Read defines an independent reader as a child who has grade-appropriate literacy skills³ and a habit of reading⁴, thus empowering them for lifelong learning.

² *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006: Literacy for Life*. (2006). Paris: UNESCO Publications.

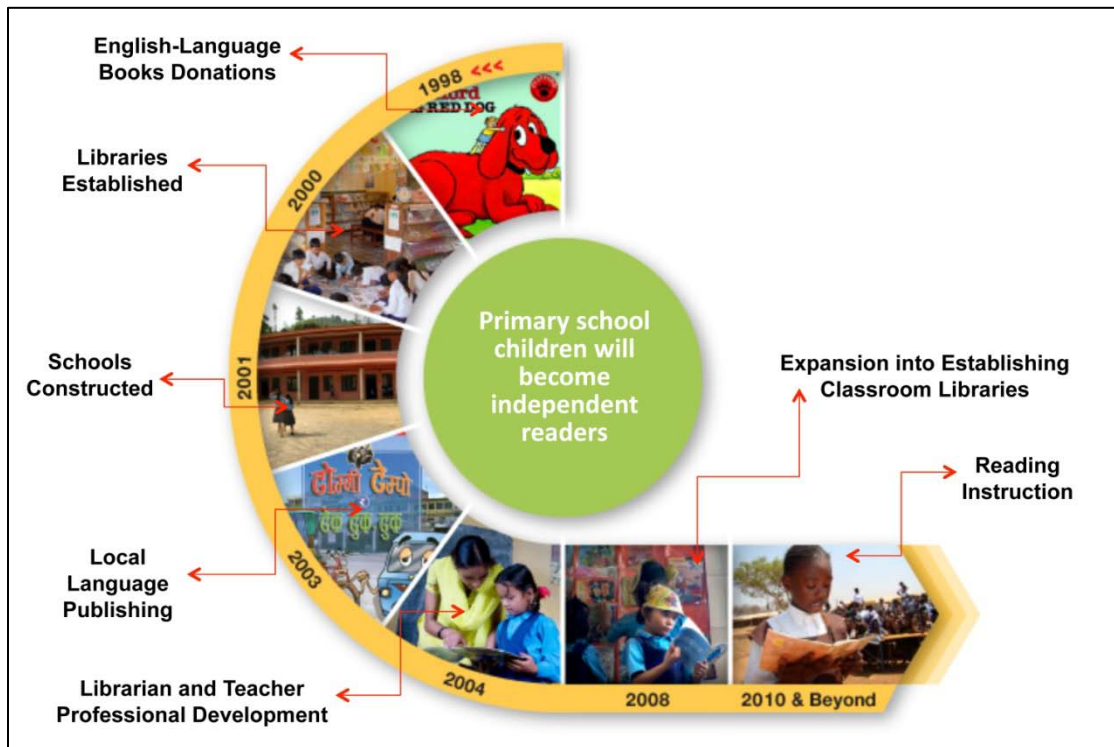
³ Literacy skills include listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, and may include basic numeracy. Children will read fluently and with comprehension, and will be able to express themselves with clarity both orally and in writing.

⁴ Children with a habit of reading are independently motivated to read and utilize reading as a means for learning.

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



Room to Read's Evolution of our Literacy Program



Building on our organizational strengths, our future Literacy program will continue to build and sustain the habit of reading and create a child-friendly, literate school environment through the donation of books and the building of schools and libraries. However, with the addition of supporting the teaching of literacy, we will expand our activities to include building the reading skills of children. By integrating all these activities together, we will be able to achieve our goal of more children becoming independent readers. Specifically, the future Literacy program will include the following activities:

- Establish multi-lingual libraries for children
- Develop and source enjoyable, quality books of different genres for all grade levels, with an emphasis on beginning readers
- Provide teachers with professional development to encourage reading and language activities inside and outside the school environment for all primary grades
- Create a reading program, in the official language of instruction⁵, that supplements or modifies existing classroom instruction
- Provide supplementary teaching and learning materials such as flashcards, story cards and posters that support the teaching of reading
- Provide teacher development workshops on literacy acquisition
- Construct and refurbish primary schools and classrooms as needed
- Encourage events at school and in the community and other activities to increase awareness about the importance of reading
- Enhance partnerships with governments and other NGOs to support program implementation and expansion
- Continue investing in research, assessment, and monitoring and evaluation to improve the design of effective programs and demonstrate results

⁵ Although we recognize the importance of mother tongue instruction, the challenge of working in a government school environment that does not support it at a policy level is beyond the scope of Room to Read at this point in time. Therefore, in countries where mother tongue is not the medium of instruction, we will look for other ways to support children and their first language. One possibility is to create materials that help children transition from their mother tongue to the official medium of instruction.

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



Changes we hope to effect through our Literacy Program include the following:

- Improve the literacy skills of primary school children
- Improve the reading habits of primary school children
- Improve access to culturally-relevant, age-appropriate, and gender-sensitive reading materials
- Increase effectiveness of teachers and librarians to teach literacy skills and develop the habit of reading
- Improve school environments to be conducive to learning and reading
- Increase family, peer and community awareness and support of reading
- Increase collaboration with governments to support policies and programs to promote primary school literacy

Girls' Education Program

Worldwide, girls make up a disproportionately low number of students enrolled in and completing secondary school. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa exhibits a verifiable “gender gap” in education: girls are 38% less likely to be enrolled in secondary school.⁶ Even where girls and boys are at school in roughly equal numbers, there is still gender bias against girls in many countries’ curriculum, classroom dynamics and teaching methodologies. Furthermore, girls

must overcome a range of other hurdles to complete their schooling. Often there is a lack of female teachers and other positive role models for girls. In school, girls at times face sexual harassment and even violence from male teachers and classmates. Many schools do not have toilet facilities, thus hindering girls from attending school during menstruation for fear of embarrassment. Additionally, girls often risk their safety while walking to and from school, particularly secondary school which tends to be further away from a girl’s home. Lastly, they may be forced by their families to drop out of school due to cultural practices such as early marriage, to care for younger siblings or to earn an income. These and other issues continue to restrict girls’ ability to benefit equally from education.

“Girls’ education yields some of the highest returns of all development investments, yielding both private and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society at large.”
– *The World Bank*

Aside from a desire to bridge the gender gap in education, educating girls is, according to the World Bank and others, simply an excellent investment. When girls learn, their families, communities, and societies all benefit – an assertion proven time and time again by empirical research. These benefits include the reduction of child and maternal mortality, improvement in child nutrition and health, lower fertility rates, enhancement of women’s domestic and political roles, improvement in economic productivity and growth, and protection of girls from HIV/AIDS, abuse and exploitation.⁷



Formal education, however, is not enough. Increasingly, education experts are recognizing that life skills⁸ are a critical component to realize the full benefits of formal education, yet often they are not taught. Skills such as self-confidence, self-awareness, decision making and problem solving will better prepare a girl for the challenging situations and decisions she faces during, and after, her adolescence. Life skills are especially important for girls because of the risks and challenges they face in society at large that limit their ability to complete school. Research points to the need for a variety of approaches and program activities to keep girls in secondary school and support their acquisition of life skills. This includes work at the broader level of community, including working with boys, teachers and parents.

⁶ In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 28 percent of girls are enrolled in secondary school compared to 45 percent of boys, and in South and West Asia the figure is 46 percent of girls compared to 55 percent boys (UNESCO, 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report).

⁷ Herz, B and G Sperling (2004). “What Works in Girls’ Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World.” Council on Foreign Affairs.

⁸Life skills are living skills or abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World Health Organization, 1997, *Partners in Life Skills*).

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



Room to Read's Evolution of our Girls' Education Program



In its early years, Room to Read's Girls' Education program was a need-based, girls-only scholarship program focused on keeping girls enrolled through completion of secondary school. Over the years, the program has moved away from focusing on just scholarships into a more holistic program that recognizes that the many barriers to girls' education cannot be overcome simply through financial support. Today, the program focuses not only on scholarships but also on providing life skills, including promoting girls' self-esteem and broadening their horizons through field trips and exposure to new ideas. In recent years, local women have been trained as mentors and advocates for the girls to provide more regular and ongoing direct support. In addition, there has been a focus on increasing parents' awareness of the value of sending their daughters to school. The program has experienced a great deal of growth and success. In fact, in 2008, 98% of our Girls' Education program scholars successfully advanced to the next grade.

Building on our organizational strengths and our past program experience, our Girls' Education program will prioritize the following activities, with country teams determining the exact combination within their local contexts:

- Provide financial assistance as needed, which could include covering the costs associated with school fees, uniforms, books, stationery, or medical insurance, to ensure girls stay in secondary school longer
- Offer tutoring and remedial academic support, as necessary, to support girls to keep up with their classmates at school in basic and examination subjects
- Provide life skills activities and workshops to ensure girls have the necessary support to remain in school (e.g., problem-solving skills, awareness of choices, confidence building, etc.)
- Identify female mentors who will act as positive role models for girls and support them as needed through the challenges of adolescence, as well as introduce them to post-schooling opportunities
- Offer professional development to teachers that promotes gender-sensitive teaching methods and practices, and fosters a girl-friendly school environment
- Deliver infrastructure support as needed, such as additional classrooms
- Foster parent, community and government engagement, awareness and involvement
- Enhance partnership with governments and other NGOs to support program implementation and expansion
- Continue investing in research, assessment, monitoring and evaluation to improve the design of effective programs and demonstrate results

Room to Read is already engaged in most of the above activities to varying degrees in each of the countries operating the Girls' Education program. Beginning in 2010, we will focus on enhancing and building on these existing program components, with an

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



emphasis on expanding our life skills activities, to create a more holistic program. In addition, the countries where we operate the Girls' Education program will depend on where there is verifiable gender inequality in education in favor of boys over girls. Thus, not all countries or communities will be appropriate for this program.

Changes we hope to effect through our Girls' Education program include the following:

- Increase years of schooling for girls
- Increase the self-awareness, decision-making, and problem solving skills of girls
- Increase girl friendliness in the school environment
- Increase family, peer and community awareness and support of girls' education
- Increase collaboration with governments to support policies and programs to promote girls' education

Our Approach

To ensure both programs are sustainable and scalable, we will continue to build strong partnerships with governments as well as with local communities and partner organizations.

Room to Read believes that our greatest chance for systemic and sustainable change is by working with the largest supplier of schooling: the government. We will continue to build on the strong relationships we have established with the governments in the countries and communities in which we work. Our programs will support

mainstream government schools or government-supported schools. The exact grades for both the Literacy program (which targets primary school children) and the Girls' Education program (which targets adolescent girls) will vary by country.

“The changes that can happen from a successful literacy program are both transformative and empowering. Our programs will help children build a foundation for all future learning by taking a comprehensive approach focusing on developing both reading skills and the habit of reading.”

–Dhir Jhingran, Chief Program Officer



Room to Read's local teams will select the areas in which we work based on country-specific criteria which identify “enabling environments” – communities that demonstrate a commitment and ability to partner with us to implement and institutionalize our projects. We will continue to work directly with communities and local partners to execute the key elements of our two programs, knowing that active school and community engagement is critical for both success and sustainability. When it is deemed more efficient or effective, Room to Read will utilize partners to implement some activities.

A key element of our work has always been measuring and communicating the results of our programs. We will continue to be a results-focused organization measuring our outputs by tracking, for example, the numbers of libraries, books, schools and girls that we support. Increasingly, however, we will also measure outcomes that demonstrate the impact we have on children.

We have developed these as separate program strategies due to the differences in primary beneficiaries (primary school children versus secondary school girls) and the goal of each program. Nonetheless, where possible, we will actively seek ways to strengthen the intersection between both to improve operational efficiency and impact.

Finally, we recognize the need to incorporate the theme of gender equality into all of our work. This will require working internally, through our programs, and with partners to use a “gender lens” in all the work we do.

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



ACHIEVING OUR STRATEGIC VISION

With this new framework, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. At the same time, we understand that it will take time to fully evolve all aspects of the organization towards achieving these newly defined programmatic goals. We expect several years of transition as we design, launch and begin to scale pilots that address the newer components of these strategies.

During this programmatic transition, Room to Read will continue to implement our core programs. For instance, in 2010 we aim to establish more than 1,800 libraries, publish more than 100 new children's book titles, build more than 250 schools and support more than 10,000 girls in our Girls' Education program.

To achieve our strategic vision, Room to Read is committed to building a healthy and sustainable organization that can effectively and efficiently deliver and scale these new programs globally. While each department has defined its own priorities for achieving success, organizationally, Room to Read is focused on the following top seven priorities over the next five years:

- 1) Develop and begin to scale quality programs that achieve the defined literacy and girls' education goals and outcomes through pilots and ongoing improvements. This includes piloting reading instruction programs in all nine countries within the next three years, to help determine the best programmatic design in each country. We can then focus on rolling out new programmatic enhancements on a broader scale.
- 2) Develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools to demonstrate measurable results, allowing Room to Read to be among the leaders in delivering quality education programs in the developing world. This includes identifying how we define success for the Literacy and Girls' Education programs, track progress and document results.
- 3) Respond to increasing demand for Room to Read programs by growing our operations to include two to four additional countries by the end of 2014. Future geographic expansion will be tied to securing up-front, preferably multi-year, fundraising commitments from investor consortiums so that we can ensure our ability to make long-term commitments to partner communities. Initial target regions under investigation for expansion include Southern Africa, East Africa and Latin America.
- 4) Grow a diversified funding base with a focus on individuals, corporations and foundations, and support a flourishing volunteer chapter network that continues to be energized, engaged and committed – all with a goal of doubling the size of Room to Read's annual budget to US\$50 million within the next five years.
- 5) Invest in building our internal capacity to deliver quality programs through the hiring of high-caliber staff, internal capacity building and outsourcing, with a specific focus on increasing our expertise in both literacy and gender equality in education.
- 6) Continue to invest in cost effective systems and infrastructure for finance, information technology, legal and administration resources necessary to support a sustainable organization.
- 7) Further grow an effective, active and informed Board of Directors and Advisory Board whose governance and support help to advance Room to Read's mission.

During this programming transition, Room to Read will **continue to implement our core programs.**

FINANCING OUR STRATEGIC VISION

We have developed a model to show the financial implications of the plan over five years (2010-2014). The model incorporates guidance from the management team and specific information provided by the programs and fundraising teams. We will continue to revise and refine the model as more information about the cost of piloting and implementing some of our newer initiatives becomes available.

“What excites and inspires me now is moving towards more quality and proof that we use resources in the most effective manner.”

– Kall Kann, Country Director, Cambodia

Based on current assumptions, Room to Read will double in size by 2014 to become a US\$50 million organization (including gifts-in-kind). Precise timing will depend on a stabilization of the global economy, but we expect to sustain continued growth and to reach this objective by the middle of the decade. This growth is based on a number of assumptions:

Envisioning Our Future: A Roadmap for Learning



- Continued growth in the number of libraries, local language publishing books, schools and girls in the Girls' Education program
- Increased expense for components of the Literacy program as we develop a holistic program and commit to work within schools for five years instead of the current three-year commitment
- Significant expansion in our existing Africa operations and expansion into two additional countries in Southern and East Africa and possibly Latin America
- Investments in capacity building at all levels of the organization to ensure we have the proper talent and systems to support the new vision

We expect that Asia will comprise approximately 60% of total program spending and Africa 30% by 2014. The balance will be for Global Office program work and Latin America expansion, projected for 2013, but dependent on fundraising outcomes. Global Office costs as a percentage of total costs will decrease over time when some economies of scale are reached. Prior to being able to dramatically scale either the Literacy or Girls' Education programs, the focus will be on piloting new programs, testing assumptions, and continuing to build literate environments through our successful Reading Room, Local Language Publishing, and School Room programs. To allow for this transition, and with the phasing out of certain activities that do not align our literacy and gender goals such as preschool construction, we anticipate the organization's costs in 2010 and 2011 to remain fairly flat.

“Right now education in Africa is under threat...What is going to help is giving children the opportunity to learn for the rest of their lives – a child who can read, write and learn for themselves...If I can do that I will die a happy man.”

– Wiseman Ngwata, Africa Regional Director

In order to support the future vision of Room to Read, we will need to scale our fundraising efforts to match the programmatic plans for growth. The following are the major drivers to growth:

- Continuing to retain and expand our strong base of supporters who will invest in our popular “sponsor a project” model
- Attracting and retaining significant investments from individuals, corporations and foundations to fund our programs and literacy work
- Funding our expansion into new geographies through a “Private Placement” model: identifying and cultivating a group of investors who would pool their money to support our expansion and first two years of operations within a new country(ies) in a specific geography
- Increasing the number and level of supporters to the Girls' Education program through a multi-pronged strategy
- Adding staff in cities and countries where major momentum and funding opportunities exist thanks to the efforts of our volunteer chapters (e.g., Japan, Australia and European countries)
- Increasing the geographic diversification of our funding base by targeting prospects in India and South Africa, both of which are areas of incredible potential for programmatic growth as well as funding sources

CONCLUSION

Room to Read is committed to pursuing these global strategies over the next five years and beyond to work towards a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to their community and the world. While some of these organizational strategies and structures are new, this is a natural evolution of our existing programs that builds upon our past experience and leverages our organizational strengths. Through these initiatives, we believe that we can significantly increase our global footprint and impact in developing world education, and ultimately have an even greater effect on the lives of more than 10 million children by 2015.

In addition, we see this as a way to establish Room to Read as an even more effective and successful leader, model, and catalyst for change within the communities and countries where we work. We are confident this strategic plan gives us the compass for success, and we look forward to the exciting journey ahead.