



World change
starts with
educated children.

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROOM TO READ LAUNCHES OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA

Organization expands into third country

San Francisco, Calif., March 7, 2003 -- Room to Read, a non-profit organization that facilitates education in developing Asian communities, today announced the organization's continued expansion into Cambodia. The Cambodian office, officially opened in December, 2002, will initially focus on two of Room to Read's core programs: the Reading Room Program, which establishes multi-lingual libraries and the Computer Room Program, which establishes computer labs in schools. Both programs in Cambodia will be initially targeted towards girls and the announcement coincides with the International Women's Day Celebration on March 8, 2003. The Cambodian efforts add to the organization's existing presence in Nepal and Vietnam.

"Cambodia is an important country for us to operate in," said John Wood, founder and chairman, Room to Read. "Cambodia was really devastated in the last three decades and the children today don't have a lot of educational opportunities. We can see the need everywhere in this country and it's just a matter of how fast we can get teams mobilized to bring increased access to literacy to the children who clearly want to learn and recognize that education is the key to their future."

Room to Read has hit the ground running in Cambodia in its first few months of operations. The local operations are run by Mr. Dim Boramy, a Cambodian who previously worked for a Japanese educational NGO. Mr. Boramy, along with the international Room to Read team, have already worked in conjunction with 23 NGO's and schools in Cambodia to distribute more than 8,000 books in the first few months of operations.

Reading Room Program

The Reading Room Program, which establishes basic library facilities for schools and communities, is a cornerstone of Room to Read's efforts. This program is operated in conjunction with The Asia Foundation of Cambodia, Room to Read's worldwide partner on its books program. With more than 100 libraries already established as part of this program in Cambodia, the organization will focus more closely on the needs of rural communities with the intention of establishing hundreds of libraries throughout all provinces of Cambodia. This basic goal gives each rural community a library and set of bi-lingual books that children from primary through secondary school can use.



Computer Room Program

The Computer Room Program, which establishes computer labs in secondary schools, has also seen initial success with the establishment of two computer labs in conjunction with KAPE (Kampuchea Action for Primary Education). KAPE is a local NGO that operates a girl's scholarship program in Kampong Cham province. KAPE already has over 1,000 girls on scholarship and many of them will have immediate access to these Computer Rooms.

At the recent Computer Room opening event, a female teacher commented to the group, "The girls are always overlooked in this society. But Room to Read has not only trained female teachers like me to understand computers, but has also specified that girls have to have the same access to this lab as the boys. That is going to change how girls in this province view themselves, and how they are treated by others."

About Room to Read

Room to Read's mission is to provide under-privileged children in Nepal, Vietnam and Cambodia with an opportunity to gain the lifelong gift of education. A results-driven organization, the team has built more than 33 schools, established more than 300 libraries, donated 190,000 books, granted more than 120 long-term girls' scholarships and established 12 new computer rooms. Over 90% of donations go directly into programs. Founded in 1998 with its first book donation in Nepal, Room to Read's vision is to expand its programs to numerous countries in need throughout Asia. To find out more, please visit www.roomtoread.org.

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