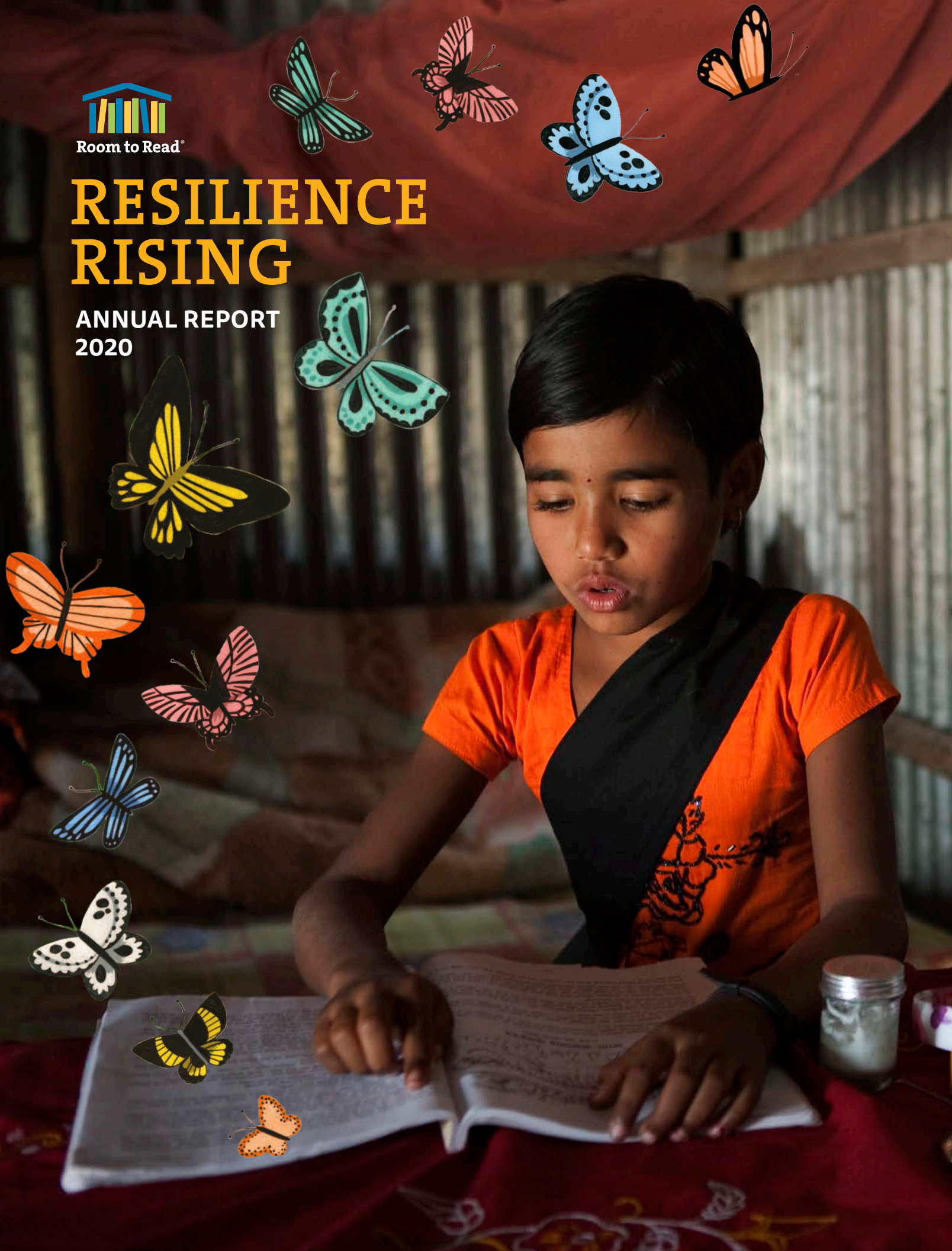




RESILIENCE RISING

ANNUAL REPORT
2020





Education is transformational. At Room to Read, we have seen it change the lives of more than 23.8 million children who have benefited from our programs over the course of our 20-year history. Education helps children grow, dream and, ultimately, change the world.

When COVID-19 swept across the globe, it devastated communities, families and children in many ways, including many of the world's children losing access to education. As with any disaster, children in underserved communities are particularly vulnerable to harmful consequences in both the short and long term. Girls are at increased risk of falling behind in school, facing pressures to drop out permanently and marry early, succumbing to child labor to help support household expenses and encountering an increased risk of domestic violence and neglect.

Through this crisis, Room to Read has remained committed to the children we serve. Drawing upon our decades of experience in literacy and gender equality work, we quickly adjusted our approach to ensure we could continue to reach children, even during school closures. In this report, you will read about the innovative ways that Room to Read has been able to support teachers, children and their families during the pandemic. In times of uncertainty and tragedy, education has the power to lift children up and build resilience.

Thanks to the support of our community around the world, Room to Read was able to reach 4.9 million children in 2020 alone, helping them to rise above seemingly insurmountable obstacles and continue to pursue their dreams. Together, we more than doubled the number of children we reached in 2019 using our new approaches. With these strategies in place, we are well on our way to benefiting 40 million children by 2025.

Although we have risen to meet the challenges at hand, the education crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. Students and teachers still urgently need our help to combat learning loss while the future of education systems around the world remains uncertain. We have continued delivering our programs remotely, where needed, in 2021, adapting to the changing needs of the communities we serve. Regardless of what happens, Room to Read will continue to support children and teachers throughout the pandemic and into the recovery and rebuilding phases.

The cover and inner cover pages incorporate artwork from *Elephant Runs*, a Room to Read title from South Asia, illustrated by Ilana Exelby and written by Room to Read staff.





Dear Room to Read Family,

We approached 2020 intending it to be a year of celebration that would commemorate Room to Read’s ability to benefit more than 20 million children during our 20-year history. Instead, like everyone, we faced challenges unlike any before. The pandemic struck at the very foundation of society, sending us into various degrees of isolation, exacerbating inequalities and making Room to Read’s mission to educate the world’s children all the more critical. Education systems took immense hits, alongside healthcare systems, and school closures forced 1.6 billion young people to continue their learning at home.

Despite all the chaos and hardship, 2020 also showed us just how much we can accomplish when our global community comes together. Through your support, we were able to persevere and help safeguard children’s futures. We saw resilience rising all around us as we united to keep young people learning and pursuing their dreams.

Over the course of the year, we learned just how nimble we can be as we shifted our programs to meet students’ evolving needs and benefited 4.9 million children in the process — double the number of the previous year. We launched an array of educational programming, from no-tech to high-tech, so children in any given situation could receive support. Because most families in the communities we work lack internet access, we delivered printed educational materials to young learners with guidance to parents on how to use them. We supported girls, many of whom face increased pressure to drop out, with remote mentoring via text messages and phone calls. We created television and radio programming for national and local networks to spark imaginations and provide comfort, joy and escape during lockdowns. We invested in Literacy Cloud, our digital library platform, so that more young people could see themselves — their communities, their situations and their

experiences — reflected through engaging books.

In many cases, Room to Read was the only source of learning children had, and that remains true today in numerous communities in South Asia and Southeast Asia, where schools are still closed. In Tanzania and South Africa, schools are mostly open for now, but the pandemic continues to spread and the future is uncertain.

When learning loss will end and schools will open their doors permanently remains unclear, but what is clear is that Room to Read will play a pivotal role in getting children caught up. We have never been more energized and inspired to do so.

The butterflies on these opening pages symbolize the hope we feel as we see families taking extraordinary measures to keep their children learning. They represent the lift that individuals and communities receive when girls’ futures are fueled by education. They also make me think of the butterfly effect — the scientific theory that something as small as a butterfly flapping its wings can have immense consequences in places far away.

This past year, I’ve been filled with gratitude as I’ve observed our partner communities, 1,600 staff, board members, investors, government and corporate partners, and chapter volunteers “flap their wings” like never before to propel education forward. The road ahead is not an easy one, but together we’ll continue to build momentum. Through actions large and small, we’ll provide millions more children with the education necessary to give flight to their futures. I am honored and humbled to continue on this journey with you.

Geetha

Dr. Geetha Murali, Chief Executive Officer



Dear Friends,

There are many ways to celebrate a significant milestone like Room to Read’s 20-year anniversary. But amid a global pandemic that threatened to irrevocably turn back the clock on progress in education, Room to Read marked two decades of advancing education and gender equality in the most fitting of ways: by doubling the number of children benefited in a single year.

While nothing could have prepared any of us for COVID-19, more than two decades of working across countries and cultures equipped Room to Read with the maturity and adaptability to not just persevere, but to thrive. Throughout the organization’s 20-year history, Room to Read has fostered and nurtured a spirit of innovation that rendered us uniquely prepared to serve children who suddenly found themselves out of school, for months on end, due to COVID-19. Our creative culture provided pathways to meet young learners and their families where they were, whether we were offering teachers learning materials online, or delivering books and worksheets to children via bicycle, boat and even camel!

But innovation is only part of the equation; the other factor driving Room to Read’s success has been our commitment to communities. Nine in every 10 Room to Read staff members live and work in the countries in which Room to Read operates. These professionals’ strong ties make them adept at partnering with governments, civic institutions and families to create learning opportunities, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Room to Read’s commitment to communities manifests in other ways as well. Over the last 18 months, our leader-

ship team has come together in unprecedented ways to navigate the ongoing roadblocks for children who long to return to the classroom. Employees in all corners of the world found novel ways to build camaraderie and continue to deliver on our mission while offices were closed. Our global network united through virtual fundraisers to support India and neighboring countries as the Delta variant of COVID-19 devastated communities. We drew strength from each other, and from the countless stories of children and families who were persevering — despite all odds — to keep learning alive.

For millions of children and their families, Room to Read was a bright spot in a dark year. I draw hope from that accomplishment, and I know that I am not alone. Room to Read has ambitious goals — including benefiting 40 million children by 2025 — and I know we will reach them. 2020 has shown that we can meet any challenge with flexibility, grace and innovation. I am grateful to our robust network of investors and volunteers for their unwavering dedication during this journey. With your trust and support, Room to Read is rising to the challenges in front of us and helping to make illiteracy and gender inequality a thing of the past. Thank you for your commitment, and for being part of this community. We couldn’t do it without you.

Mary

Mary Byron, Board Chair

OUR REACH

As of the end of 2020, we have benefited more than 23.8 million children and have worked in 20 countries. That includes 4.9 million new children served in 2020 alone. We reached many of those children through innovations to our work that we designed to overcome the many challenges of the pandemic.

These pages incorporate artwork from *What is Peace?*, a Room to Read title from our Peace and Equality Collection, illustrated by Kat Yao and written by John Lasack.

GLOBAL

CHILDREN BENEFITED

CUMULATIVE¹:
23.8M +

WHERE WE WORK

COUNTRIES: **20**
COMMUNITIES: **48,000+**

GIRLS' EDUCATION

GIRLS BENEFITED

NEW IN 2020: **2.7M+**
CUMULATIVE²: **2.8M+**

SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES

NEW IN 2020: **1,821**
CUMULATIVE: **11,416**

LITERACY

CHILDREN BENEFITED

NEW IN 2020: **2.2M+**
CUMULATIVE: **20M+**

LITERACY PROGRAM SCHOOLS

NEW IN 2020: **6,680+**
CUMULATIVE: **48,000+**
NEW TEACHERS TRAINED: **36,000+**

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

NEW ORIGINAL TITLES IN 2020: **92**
NEW ADAPTED TITLES IN 2020: **1,400**
CUMULATIVE (ORIGINAL AND ADAPTED TITLES): **4,777**

¹ Cumulative number of children benefited by Room to Read's literacy and girls' education work along with former Room to Read programs.

² Our cumulative number of children benefited through our Girls' Education Program increased notably in 2020 (through the end of 2019, we had benefited 114,900 girls through the program). This large increase is due to our new methods of supporting girls during the COVID-19 pandemic including radio and TV programming, through which we were able to reach a much larger audience quickly. This number reflects a conservative estimate and is based on a careful review of the quality of broadcast content and the best available data on viewership/listenership for this type of content.

All of the children counted here were not necessarily enrolled in our comprehensive, in-person program, but have benefited through Room to Read's support in specific and measurable ways.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

BENEFITING CHILDREN IN 20 COUNTRIES IN 20 YEARS

Since our organization was established in 2000, we have helped more than 23.8 million children in 20 countries around the world unlock their full potential through education.

Our literacy as well as girls’ education and gender equality portfolios support children across four continents. The proven effectiveness of our programs is enabling us to scale through projects in public school systems with local NGOs, ministries of education and government agencies.

Through our work, we have benefited children in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Grenada, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, the United States, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.



REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FOUNDERS



Left to right: Dinesh Shrestha, Erin Ganju and John Wood

In 2020, Room to Read celebrated our 20th anniversary as an organization. Room to Read was started by John Wood, Dinesh Shrestha and Erin Ganju in 2000, based on a shared vision to bring books and education to all children around the world. The organization has since grown to more than 1,600 staff who have worked in 20 countries and reached more than 23.8 million children through our highly respected Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs. The founders reflect on this milestone below:

“It feels like just yesterday we started our journey focusing only on Nepal with very little resources, and today we are a global organization changing the lives of children through education. Twenty years have passed in the blink of an eye. We have had many ups and downs throughout the years but, together, we have persevered, showing that you can accomplish things beyond your imagination.” – Dinesh Shrestha, Co-Founder

“What’s key is that not only have we reached millions of children with educational opportunities, but that we have focused on the quality of that education as well. Children are learning to read in their local language and they have access to incredible libraries in their schools. The girls in our Girls’ Education Program have the ability to make their own choices in life because not only are they completing secondary school but they’re empowered through life skills to be able to determine their future.” – Erin Ganju, Co-Founder

“The thing that I am most proud of is that Room to Read has done something that no other organization has done before. Starting from being a cash-strapped, unknown organization with very few resources, we’ve built a global movement. We’ve scaled with impact, data and metrics to prove that our organization has the tools needed to change the future forever.” – John Wood, Founder

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST TWO DECADES



1998: John Wood visits a school in the Himalayas in Nepal and is inspired to leave his executive position at Microsoft to start Books for Nepal, together with Co-Founder Dinesh Shrestha. Books for Nepal focuses on building schools and establishing libraries filled with donated English-language books.



2000-2001: Books for Nepal officially becomes Room to Read. Erin Ganju joins the team as co-founder and chief operating officer. Room to Read begins its Girls' Education Program. Room to Read Vietnam is launched.

2002: Room to Read Cambodia is launched.



2003: Room to Read India is launched. Room to Read launches our local-language publishing to produce children's books in local languages. Our first volunteer chapters emerge in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States to help broaden Room to Read's fundraising efforts.

2005: Room to Read Sri Lanka and Laos are launched.



2006: Room to Read expands to the African continent, launching in South Africa.

2008: Room to Read Bangladesh and Zambia are launched. Room to Read pilots our Reading and Writing Instruction in India to support educators as they teach students to become readers.

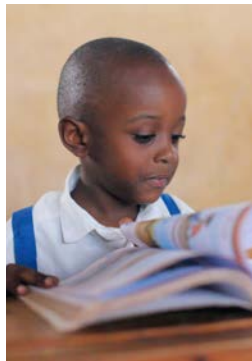


2010: Reading and writing instruction pilots expand to Laos and Zambia. Room to Read consolidates our program areas to literacy and girls' education. Room to Read establishes our 10,000th library.



2012: Room to Read Tanzania is launched.

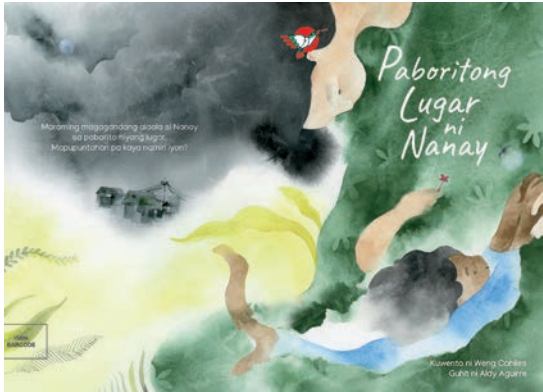
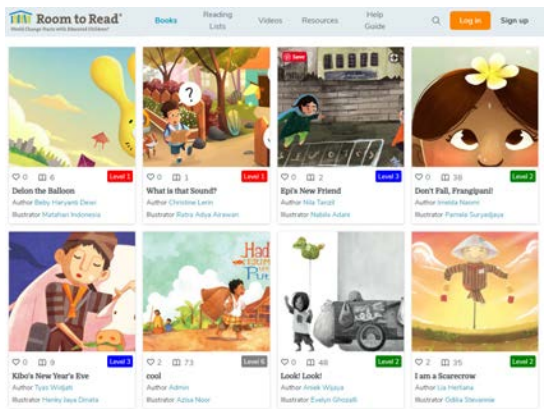
2014: Room to Read launches our first technical assistance project in Indonesia to scale school libraries and build local book publishing capacity.



2015: Room to Read reaches a milestone of support for 10 million children. Room to Read begins a technical assistance project in Grenada, improving literacy skills and fostering a habit of reading among children.

2016: Room to Read begins a technical assistance project in Rwanda with partners USAID and Chemonics to improve early reading instruction among children.

2017: Room to Read builds Literacy Cloud, Room to Read's digital library, with the help of Google.org. Room to Read starts a project to develop and distribute Arabic storybooks in Jordan to support Syrian refugees and host communities.



2018: Room to Read launches a book publishing and teacher training project in Honduras and a school libraries project in Myanmar. We benefit more than 16.5 million children by the end of 2018, surpassing our goal of benefiting 15 million children by 2020. Dr. Geetha Murali becomes Room to Read's first non-founder CEO.

2019: Room to Read launches a book publishing project in the Philippines, distributing Filipino books and creating radio adaptations of the new titles.



Room to Read launches a new strategic plan, Vision 2025, and commits to benefiting 40 million children by 2025.

2020: Room to Read responds to COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures by adapting our programs for remote learning. We receive the 2020 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Award of the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program in honor of our success in benefiting underserved populations during the pandemic.

We begin technical assistance projects in Pakistan and Uganda to establish libraries and to adapt Room to Read storybook titles for the local context.

HELPING DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT



EARLY-GRADE LITERACY

The education emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could set millions of students back permanently. We know that it is crucial for students to develop literacy skills and the habit of reading in early primary school so they have a strong foundation for the rest of their education and beyond.

These pages incorporate artwork from *Kim Discovers the River*, a Room to Read title from Honduras, illustrated by Wendy Mairena and written by María José Montesinos.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS IN LITERACY

To keep children engaged in their studies and on track to become lifelong learners, Room to Read adapted our Literacy Program to reach children in innovative ways during the crisis. We are:

- Supporting parents with the tools and knowledge to support their child’s learning at home, whether those parents are literate or not
- Providing virtual trainings for educators
- Staying in touch with students and families through messaging platforms
- Distributing hard copies of resources to those without internet access
- Offering read-alouds via radio and television
- Posting our local language children’s books online

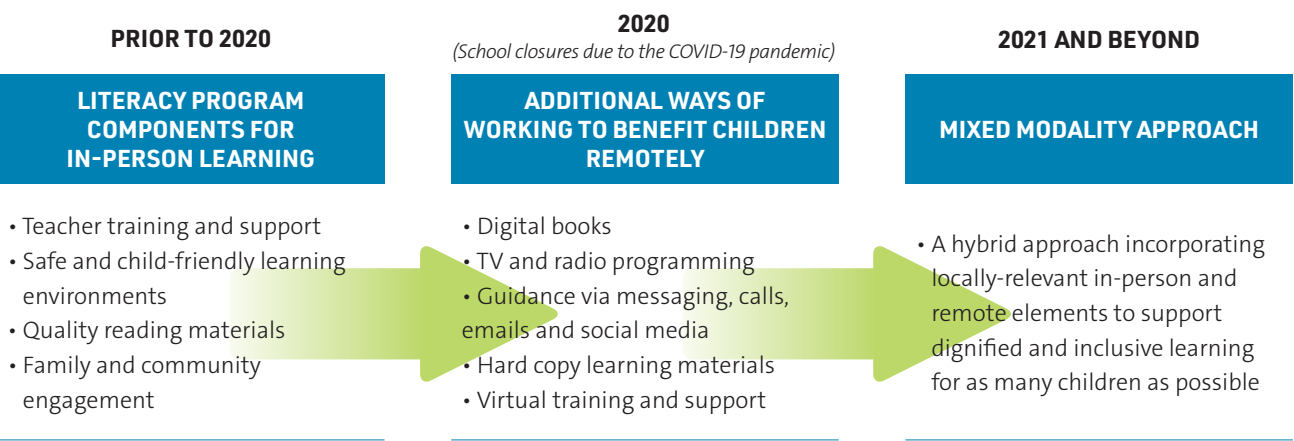
These remote interventions help students develop their literacy skills even in the face of school closures and numerous other challenges. They also enable Room to Read to expand our reach and benefit more children than ever before. We will use the important lessons we’ve learned to evolve our programming and grow our impact, even once the pandemic is over and schools reopen and resume normal schedules.

At Room to Read, we know reading and writing are crucial to keeping us connected, especially in times of isolation. Books open up a child’s world, allowing a young learner to soar to different places and seek new experiences right from their own home.

You can learn more about our literacy initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic through [this video](#).

COVID-19 Program Innovations

The following section highlights our work in 2020, but it should be noted that as the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures continue in the regions where we work, we are continuing these program adaptations in 2021.



“What started as a regular year turned into an experience of innovating and creating new ways of working. With our incredible hard-working and dedicated team members, we have been able to reach out to children and parents through radio, phone, workbooks and other means so that learning continues at home in the communities we serve.”
- Pushkar Shrestha, Nepal Country Director



Access to Digital Books

[Literacy Cloud](#), was created by Room to Read through support by Google.org to provide training for teachers and offer a digital library of children’s books. In 2020, Room to Read substantially expanded Literacy Cloud, in part to address the needs of children learning remotely during the pandemic. Literacy Cloud now houses more than 1,750 book titles in 30 languages. The website also has a wide selection of read-aloud videos along with resources and instructional videos for teachers, publishers, authors and illustrators.

- In 2020:**
- **208,016** unique users visited Literacy Cloud from **143 countries**
 - Users completed **46,783** book-reads
 - **1,172** book titles in **22** different languages added

TV and Radio Programming

Given that we typically work in low-income and/or rural communities where internet connectivity may not be widely accessible, we offered our literacy content in a variety of mediums. Since television has a wide reach across South Asia, Room to Read collaborated with television stations in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to reach rural areas. Together, we produced

literacy-focused television programs including read-alouds of our children’s books and tips for parents on supporting their children’s reading habits at home.

Radio is still the most commonly available and accessed technology across the world; therefore, we introduced literacy-focused radio programs in Nepal, India, South Africa, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. Children could tune in to hear stories read by Room to Read staff and even participate in reading and writing lessons in some areas.

- In 2020:**
- **387** literacy-focused TV programs were broadcast in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
 - **1,178** literacy-focused radio programs were broadcast in Nepal, India, South Africa, Tanzania and Sri Lanka

Engagement via Other Channels

Room to Read used direct messages, calls and emails to ensure parents and children remained engaged in improving literacy skills and reading habits at home. Our teams conducted out-reach, including literacy tips for parents via text message, read-alouds sent via WhatsApp message and toll-free numbers to call for pre-recorded literacy content. We also leveraged social media posts to further our program objectives.

In 2020:

- Our country teams sent over **18 million** messages to teachers, students and their families
- Room to Read posted over **867** unique pieces of content on social media to advance literacy during the crisis

Hard Copy Learning Materials

Wherever possible, we also provided books, worksheets and other learning resources to homes so children had access to hard copy learning materials. We partnered with schools and other organizations to distribute these resources to children at home. In some communities, the materials from Room to Read have been the only learning resources children received during the pandemic.

In 2020

- **615,486** children received hard copy Room to Read literacy materials

Virtual Training and Support

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we built the capacity of teachers, school leadership, book creators, parents and other stakeholders through virtual outreach. Our remote support allowed them to keep children learning during school closures while securing their commitment to address learning loss when schools re-open.

In 2020

- We delivered **26,716** hours of virtual training and support to teachers, school leadership, authors and illustrators in support of literacy



David M. Rubenstein Special Response Award

Room to Read was one of three recipients awarded the 2020 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Award of the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program. This award recognizes Room to Read as a best-practice model for our responsiveness and outstanding work addressing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest.

**MEET
HARMEET**

INDIA, AGE 7



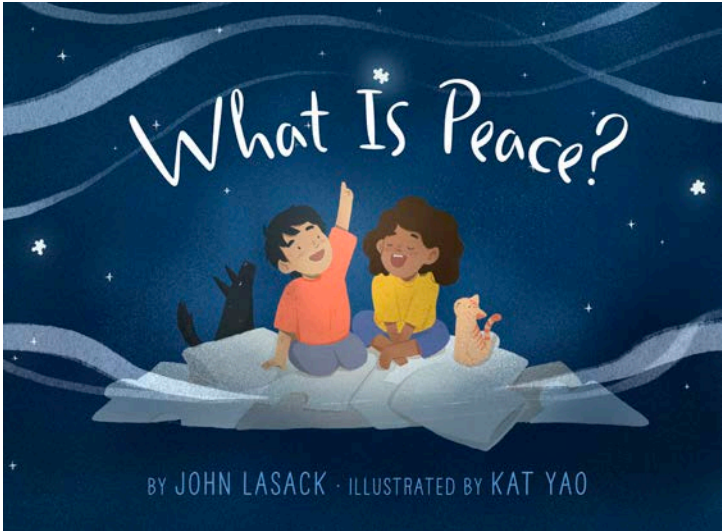
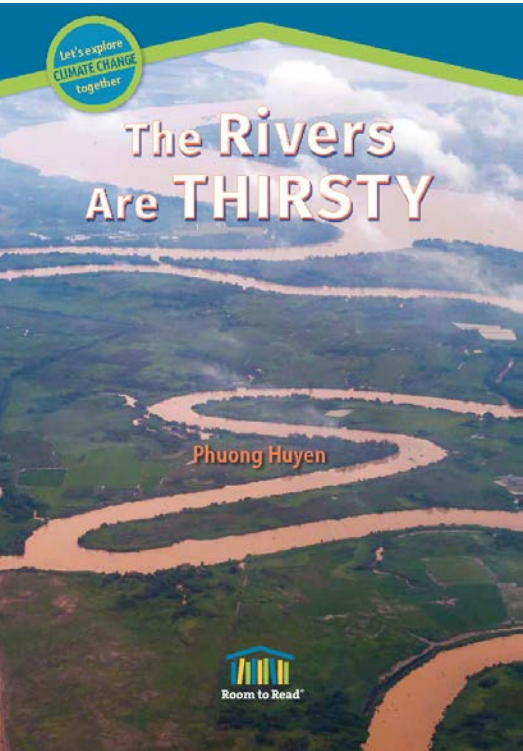
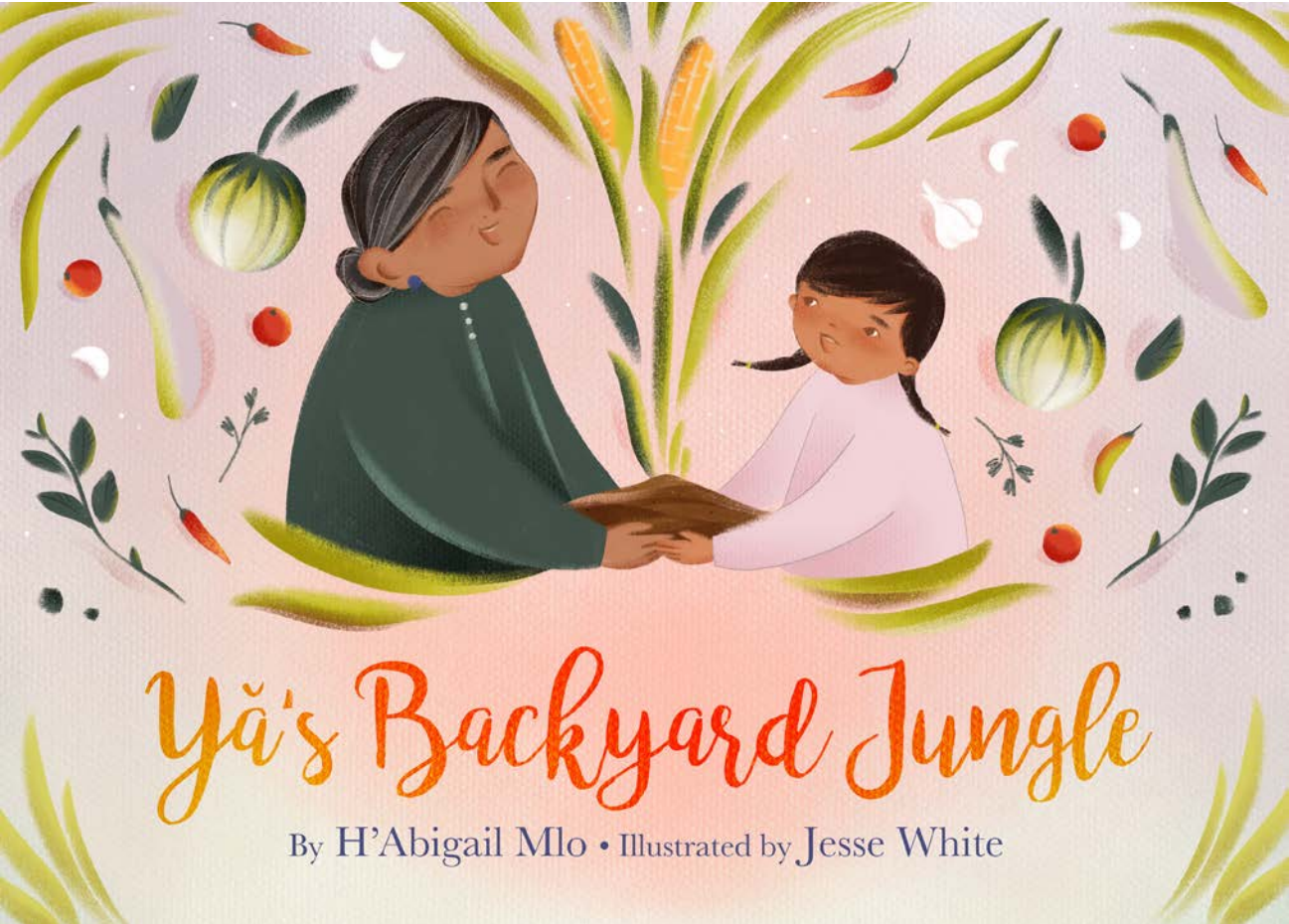
The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 lockdown was especially hard on seven-year-old Harmeet, a student in Uttarakhand, India. Harmeet could no longer go to school or play with his friends. Most of all, he missed the reading sessions organized at his school. To his worried parents, Rajvinder and Sukhdev, their son seemed depressed, and they called his teacher asking for materials to engage him. Fortunately for little Harmeet, help was soon available.

Cognizant of the disruption being caused to children’s education due to the lockdown, the government of the State of Uttarakhand launched a concerted effort to provide digital learning resources and materials to children across the state. The government called on Room to Read as the key partner in this task.

Harmeet was delighted when he first saw the read-aloud videos from Room to Read. These weren’t any ordinary audiobooks; they had text and pictures, too. And then there were the digital books — he could read them at his own pace and flip pages with a click. Best of all, there were questions that kept him engaged. Harmeet was soon devouring the read-alouds and waited eagerly for the materials shared by his teacher daily.

Harmeet’s parents are both proud of his progress. They are thankful that even during these challenging times, their son can pursue his passion for learning.

This page incorporates artwork from *Kim Discovers the River*, a Room to Read title from Honduras, illustrated by Wendy Mairena and written by Maria José Montesinos.



Top: *Yä's Backyard Jungle* from our Peace and Equality Collection tells the story of a Vietnamese-American family. **Bottom Left:** *The Rivers Are Thirsty*, a nonfiction title from our Climate Change book series about the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. **Bottom Right:** *What is Peace?* from our Peace and Equality Collection tells the story of two siblings navigating peace, conflict and resolution.

Special Initiatives

Book Publishing

COVID-19 book series

- To help children understand and process their experiences during this unprecedented time, Room to Read created a COVID-19 book series. We organized a global work-shop with book creators from 10 countries (spanning 12 languages and 11 time zones) to develop 20 book titles with themes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as it is experienced by children.

Books for immigrant and low-income communities in California

- In 2020, we launched partnerships with San Francisco Bay Area organizations to support the educational needs of immigrant and low-income communities. We provided 500 Room to Read-published Arabic books to local advocacy group, Refugee and Immigrant Transitions (RIT) and distributed 30,820 Spanish books to the Mission Economic Development Agency and RIT.

A representative of RIT said, “We’re grateful to Room to Read for donating books in Arabic and Spanish, languages that many of our students speak! Having these books inspired us to do native-language story time. We held our first one recently (in Arabic), and the kids loved the books.”

Peace and Equality book series

- Our [Peace and Equality book series](#) brought together diverse writers and illustrators from the United States for a “book sprint” to create 10 book titles in just four weeks on the theme of creating a more peaceful and equal world. Each book was made by a team of four creators. The series

covers a range of engaging stories, from highlighting the contributions of Black inventors, to the importance of the U.S. census, to the experience of a Palestinian refugee in the U.S. These books are available online on [Literacy Cloud](#).

Climate change book series

- We developed a global series of expository nonfiction books for young readers that highlight different climate-related issues around the world, such as:
 - Deforestation in Indonesian forests
 - Decreasing snow levels on Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania
 - Salt levels and lack of fresh water in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam
 - Threats to animals and biodiversity in Nepal

We plan to adapt the books across geographic contexts, so children can learn how climate change affects different parts of the world and their role in creating a healthier planet.

Book publishing and distribution in the Philippines

- In 2019, Room to Read began publishing books in the Philippines for the first time, creating 20 beautiful books. In 2020, we introduced these titles to more readers by printing and distributing 19,600 copies of the books to children in the Philippines and also by creating 15-minute radio adaptations of each of the 20 Filipino titles to serve children in communities without (or with limited) access to the internet. These adaptations are also available online on the Cultural Center of the Philippines’ YouTube channel and Room to Read’s Literacy Cloud. We also hosted webinars with local Filipino school officials and teachers on effective book use.

“Unable to visit schools and teachers, teams came up with creative, innovative strategies for training and supporting teachers, principals, teacher-librarians and school administrators through our Literacy Program. We also were able to contribute to the recovery of reading losses by leading the development of a strategic paper on this topic for the Department of Education, and we are now the leading NGO in implementing some of the recommendations in this paper.”

- Vanessa Francis, South Africa Country Director

FLOURISHING DESPITE OBSTACLES

GIRLS' EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Our girls' education and gender equality work is centered around keeping girls successfully engaged in school and helping them develop the life skills they need to gain agency over their own lives. We know that with a quality education and mentorship, girls can grow into fulfilled women, reaching heights they never thought possible. Unfortunately, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted schooling and significantly jeopardized girls' opportunities and futures.

These pages incorporate artwork from *An Adventure in the World of Flowers*, a Room to Read title from Cambodia, illustrated and written by Chou Chinith.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS IN GIRLS' EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as domestic responsibilities and financial hardships affect women disproportionately. There is a high risk of girls dropping out and not returning to school once the crisis is over. Girls in precarious financial situations can fall victim to child marriage, sex trafficking or other means of exploitation. As families navigate through unprecedented levels of stress, the risk of intrafamily conflict and gender-based violence also increases, negatively impacting girls' self-confidence, well-being and ability to negotiate key life decisions.

To face this challenge, Room to Read found new approaches

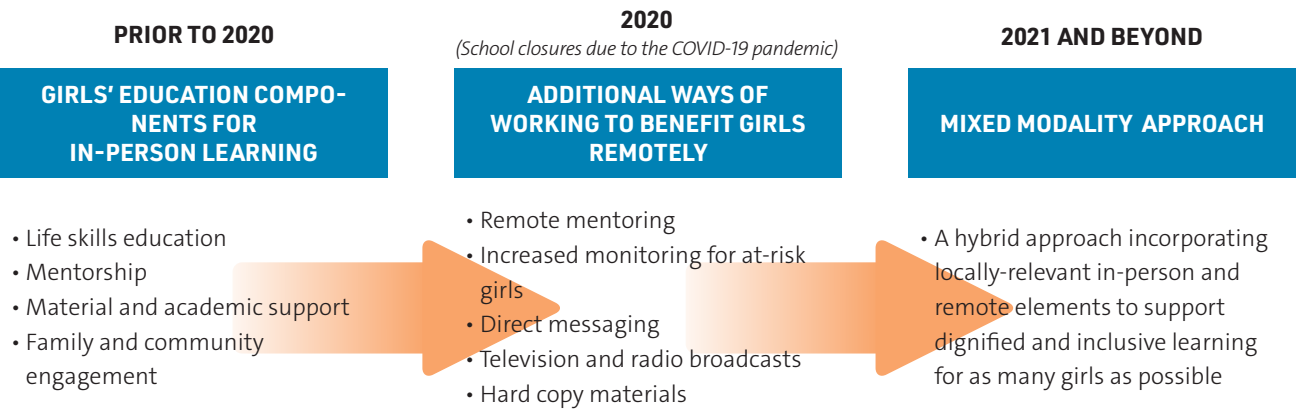
to delivering our Girls' Education Program interventions. We adjusted our model to:

- Reach girls with remote mentoring, while they are isolated at home
- Deliver life skills lessons through radio, worksheets and videos
- Increase monitoring of girls' risk of dropping out
- Increase guidance to parents via various means of communication

These new ways of working have allowed us to reach more girls than ever before in ways that meet their immediate needs.

COVID-19 Program Innovations

The following section highlights our work in 2020, but it should be noted that as the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures continue in the regions where we work, we are maintaining these program adaptations in 2021.



“The pandemic required us to build on strong faith and optimism. To meet the challenges, we had to collaborate and leverage each other’s experiences. Our energetic team was able to use their skills and creativity to help unlock the potential of children facing a range of learning obstacles. As we look to reimagine education in the future, we’ll continue to seek out positivity, learn from each other and pivot where necessary.”

- Vantha Chea, Cambodia Country Director



Remote Mentoring

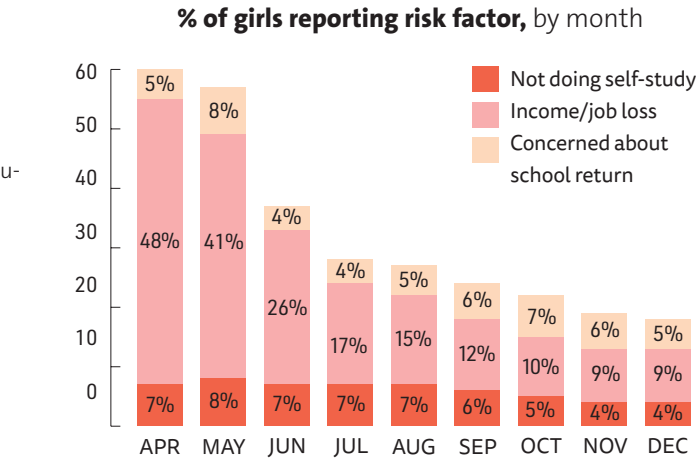
Room to Read’s staff of social mobilizers and the mentorship they provide act as a lifeline for program participants as they navigate challenges. This support becomes even more crucial in times of crisis, so we continue to provide group and individual mentoring to girls during the current school closures. In 2020, we delivered group mentoring via messaging platforms including WhatsApp, but largely focused on remote one-on-one individual mentoring. We worked on four priority areas: well-being, academics at home, staying safe and healthy, and return to school.

In 2020:

- **34,420** girls received individual remote mentoring
- **4,215** girls received group mentoring
- We delivered **265,488** individual remote mentoring sessions
- **84%** of Girls' Education Program participants across all countries received individual remote mentoring

Increased Monitoring for At-Risk Girls

Given the added risk posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Room to Read enhanced our existing system to monitor girls more closely and support those who were particularly struggling during the pandemic. During individual remote mentoring sessions, our social mobilizers conducted a brief risk survey with girls. We focused on three risk factors: whether girls were keeping up with their studies during school closures, whether anyone in their household had lost a job or income because of the pandemic and whether they were concerned about their ability to return to the classroom once schools reopened. We surveyed nearly 24,000 girls, and the results are as follows.



When a girl is identified as “at risk,” their social mobilizer provides additional individual mentoring sessions and collaborates with the girls’ family to ensure she has a strong support system.

Direct Messaging

Social mobilizers were able to keep in touch with girls through text and phone-based messaging. Our staff used multiple platforms to communicate with girls and their families.

In 2020:

- Our teams sent over **2 million** messages in support of Girls' Education Program objectives

“2020 has been a challenging year for all of us, although I am heartened by the fact that we at Room to Read have a team that can collectively go above and beyond during challenging times and continue achieving great things. In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have realized that Room to Read has a workforce that always acts with a sense of urgency, mindfulness, competence, flexibility and self-awareness. The very strong collaboration among teams when working on a number of demanding remote activities to ensure we continue benefiting as many children as possible during school closures has really inspired me. I find myself both blessed and fulfilled to be part of this amazing team that remains open-minded and filled with purpose.”

- Juvenalius Kuruletera, Tanzania Country Director



MEET NHU'

VIETNAM | Grade 11

When Nhu was just one year old, her mother left and never returned. Since then, her father has raised her in a bustling home filled with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

“Not having a mother, I have a lot of questions related to being a girl and I am especially worried about my future since I do not want my father working too hard. I want to get a good job to help him relax more and enjoy his life.”

As the oldest granddaughter, Nhu is expected to stay home with her grandparents to take care of the younger children and household chores while her other relatives work long hours. She faces constant pressure at home to do chores instead of studying. She says, “Attending Room to Read classes make me feel more at ease with these pressures. I’ve started making plans and goals for myself to keep making progress every day.”

Without a maternal presence in her life, mentoring sessions have been invaluable for Nhu. She’s able to ask questions, get answers from her friends and mentors, and has grown more comfortable expressing her feelings and opinions.

Like her classmates, Nhu transitioned to remote learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the remote learning period, she was an active participant in her class’s online messaging group. Nhu reflects, “In the time of social distancing, Room to Read organized activities online for us, such as group mentoring. Our social mobilizers kept connecting with us through these online groups. We could share anything that we were concerned about, like studying and issues at home, and get advice.”

Despite the challenging circumstances in 2020, Nhu completed 10th grade with high marks. She spent her summer break working and spent her earnings to supplies for the 2020-2021 school year. Nhu is still figuring out what she hopes to do after graduation, but regardless of where she goes, the life skills she has learned help her to remember that the choice is hers.

This page incorporates artwork from *An Adventure in the World of Flowers*, a Room to Read title from Cambodia, illustrated and written by Chou Chinith.

Television and Radio Broadcasts

In several countries, our staff disseminated Girls’ Education Program content via television and radio. In 2020, Room to Read Bangladesh partnered with the Directorate of Secondary Higher Education (DSHE) to develop 26 life skills education videos that were broadcast on the government-run national television channel, Sangsad TV. These videos aired as part of the Amar Ghore Amar School (My Home My School) program, which the Bangladesh government used to deliver the national curriculum to young people in grades 6 to 10.

Our teams in India and Nepal used radio programming to reach girls without television or internet access. In Nepal, we broadcast stories of Girls’ Education Program alumnae and the role that education has played in their lives. We also provided life skills lessons on key topics, including managing emotions and stress, nutrition, healthy relationships and peer pressure, delaying marriage, problem-solving, setting goals and studying at home.

- In 2020:**
- In Bangladesh, we created **26** unique Girls’ Education Program TV episodes that were broadcast
 - In India, we created **32** unique radio episodes that were broadcast
 - In Nepal, we created **101** unique radio episodes that were broadcast

Hard Copy Materials

To provide more accessible resources for those without internet access, we created and adapted a range of hard copy materials to support girls’ learning during school closures, providing girls with physical materials like activity worksheets, educational newsletters, handouts and journals.

- In 2020:**
- We distributed hard copy materials to over **10,000 girls** across Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Tanzania

Adapting Life Skills Curriculum for Radio

As we continue benefiting secondary school girls in the coming years, we are expanding our capabilities in remote learning methods, particularly radio. We conducted a landscape analysis of key actors and best practices, identifying approaches for delivering radio programs in remote, low-income settings and recommendations for developing radio programming specifically for secondary school girls. We also partnered with Population Media Center, a non-governmental organization that specializes in developing educational entertainment through serialized radio programming, to integrate the use of radio into the delivery of our broader life skills education curriculum.

Girls’ Education Program Participant Return to School Rates, as of the end of 2020

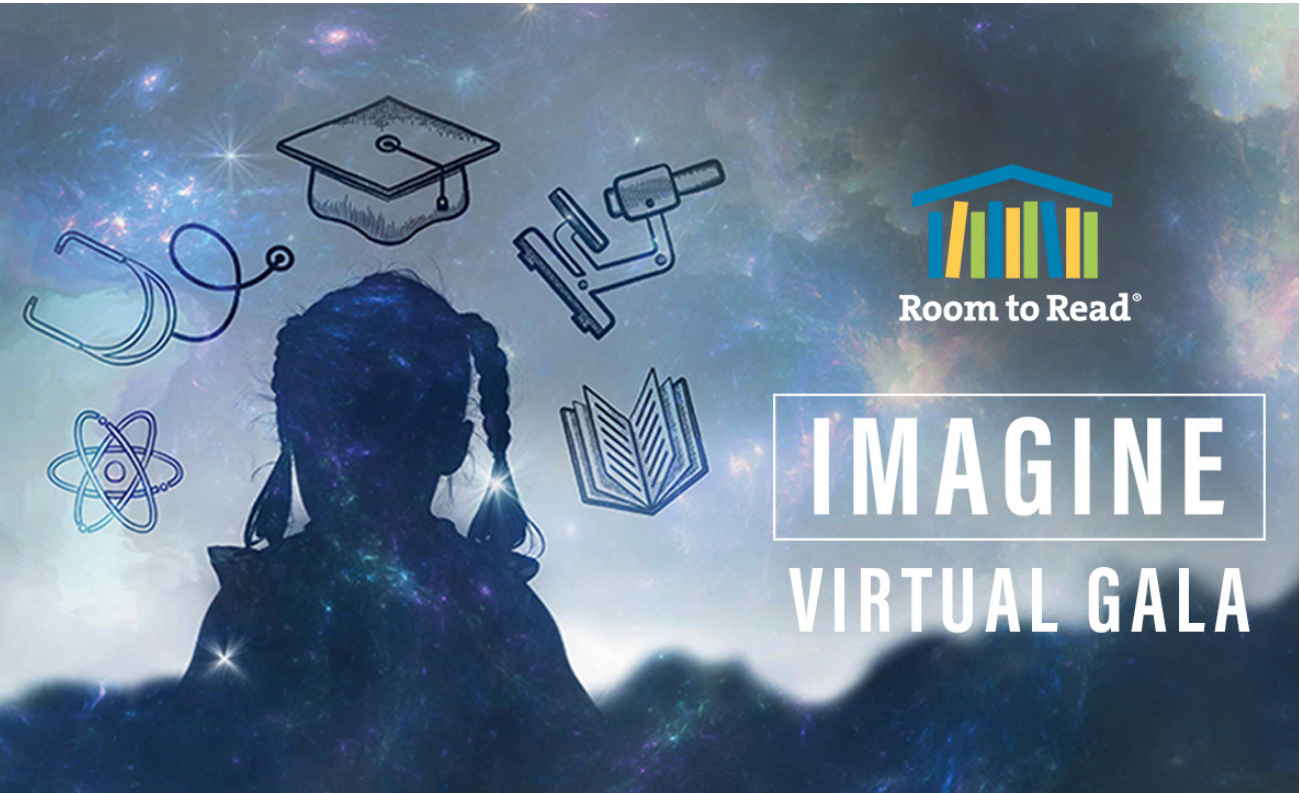
At the end of 2020, we assessed the percentage of participants who had returned to school in Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Vietnam, where schools had reopened. More specifically, we calculated the return rate by assessing the number of girls who were enrolled in school or had graduated from school as of December 31st as compared to our total enrollment as of February 28th, 2020.



ROOM TO READ'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Room to Read's global community of donors, advocates, ambassadors and staff rose to the challenge, recognizing the immense need and vulnerability of the children we serve. Through virtual events, special projects, media coverage and thought leadership, our community came together to uplift students who were at great risk of falling behind in their education. We thank you for your steadfast partnership through this education crisis. Our global network is crucial to Room to Read's success and to the resilience of the communities we support. The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing challenge in the areas where we work but we have no doubt that, together, we will stand strong and ensure that we mitigate the educational crisis.

These pages incorporate artwork from *The Squirrel's Journey*, a Room to Read title from Vietnam, illustrated and written by Đỗ Thái Thanh.



Top: [Imagine](#), our virtual gala series. Bottom right: [Be Brave](#) personalized children's book in partnership with Libro. Bottom left: [Rescue the Princess](#) as read by Actress Julia Roberts. Read alouds of Room to Read book titles can be found on [our YouTube channel](#). Middle left: Room to Read Author Advocates

In a year like no other, our community came together to help secure students' futures. We are so grateful for the steadfast support of all of our partners during the learning crisis and have no doubt that our collective resilience will continue as we navigate through the ongoing uncertainty caused by the global pandemic.

PARTNERS AND AMBASSADORS

Personalized Children's Book, *Be Brave*

In 2020, we launched a children's book, [Be Brave](#), in partnership with Libro, a creator of personalized children's books. *Be Brave* is the story of children starting school from around the world and includes beautiful hand-drawn illustrations from six artists spanning the globe.

Author Advocates

Room to Read's Author and Illustrator Advocates form a global network of book creators who have a shared passion for bringing diverse experiences to life through storytelling. We currently have four advocates — novelists Alka Joshi, Christina Baker Kline, Esther Wojcicki and Dr. Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai — who are helping us to raise awareness and funding through their own networks and platforms. We are honored to partner with these bestselling and world-renowned changemakers to build a more inclusive and just world.

Read-Alouds

Through The Peace Studio's [100 Offerings of Peace Campaign](#), we created a read-aloud with Maya Soetoro-Ng, co-founder of The Peace Studio, narrating the book *Vy's Special Gift*. Maya is a peace educator, a children's book author and an advisor to the Obama Foundation. Watch Maya's read aloud [here](#).

We were also featured in The Call to Unite, a 24-hour global broadcast event hosted by Tim Shriver and Oprah Winfrey, that celebrated acts of humanity during the pandemic. During the event, Julia Roberts read aloud [Rescue the Princess](#), a Room to Read title from Vietnam, and YouTube Creator Prajakta Koli read [The Village of Five Poles](#), a Room to Read title from India.

Virtual Galas

Room to Read's 2020 virtual gala series, IMAGINE, united our supporters across Australia, Europe, Hong Kong, India, Japan, the Middle East, North America, Singapore and the UK to help make education for all a reality. The live-streamed events included inspirational messages and performances by entertainers, authors, influencers, business leaders and Room to Read students who shared how they continue to pursue their education — and their dreams — despite the global pandemic. Highlights from the event series can be viewed [on our website](#).

"Creators for Change" Web Series

Room to Read is partnering with Michelle Obama, Liza Koshy, the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance and the entire "Creators for Change" team to show the world the power and importance of girls' education. Room to Read Girls' Education Program participants and alumnae in Vietnam were featured on the Emmy-winning web series' episode ["Why 98 Million Adolescent Girls Aren't In School."](#) In this episode, Michelle Obama and Executive Director of the Girls Opportunity Alliance Tiffany Drake join YouTube Creators Liza Koshy, Prajakta Koli and Thembe Mahlaba to discuss the importance of girls' education. The partnership is continuing with a series of webinars in 2021 to share innovative practices in supporting education for girls and the promotion of gender equality.



DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

Legacy Society

When you create a legacy gift by naming Room to Read as a beneficiary in your will, you are choosing to make a lasting commitment that will benefit children for generations to come. You can create a gift that honors both your loved ones and the mission of Room to Read.

- A few of the most common ways to create a legacy include:
- **Bequest:** Give a gift to Room to Read through a will or trust
 - **Life Insurance Policy:** You can name Room to Read as a primary beneficiary for a percentage or specified amount in your policy
 - **Retirement:** Those in the United States can designate Room to Read as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k) or other retirement or pension plan

Please consult with your tax, legal or professional advisor when creating your legacy.

Peter, a Room to Read supporter from Canada, shared what motivated him and his wife Sharon to name Room to Read as a beneficiary of their estate:

“Committing a legacy gift to Room to Read is not a flashy way to end one’s life. There are no parades, there are no children giving you bouquets nor will you be written up in the society papers. Rather, it’s a chance to spread seeds of opportunity, hope and resilience far and wide in ways that can never be quantified, yet will create positive waves for generations.”

Room to Read’s Single Largest Investment to Date

We thank Mackenzie Scott and Dan Jewett for their recent game-changing investment in Room to Read. Room to Read CEO Dr. Geetha Murali said of the generous donation, “This transformational capital comes at a time when it is critical to deploy funds to prevent dropout and learning loss, especially given the tremendous strain to education systems in many countries. This gift, the single largest in Room to Read’s history, allows us to not only address the immediate education emergency but to invest in scalable approaches across varying contexts to benefit more children’s learning outcomes more quickly than ever before. We are immensely grateful for this investment, which will shape our capacity to accelerate impact for many years to come.”

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Breakthrough Builders Podcast
[“Educating the World”](#) episode with CEO Dr. Geetha Murali

Brookings Institute Blog
[“Reimagining girls’ education during COVID-19: Lessons from adapting programs and measures”](#) by Senior Director of Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Christine H. Beggs and Senior Director of the Girls’ Education Program, Lucina Di-Meco

Leading Educational Change During a Pandemic: Reflections of Hope and Possibility -An Anthology by Fernando M. Reimers
[“An Atypical Anniversary: Re-engineering Room to Read”](#) by CEO Dr. Geetha Murali

Ms. Magazine
[“The First Woman in This Office, But Not the Last: Four Ways to Empower a New Generation of Women Political Leaders”](#) By Senior Director of the Girls’ Education Program Lucina Di-Meco

Al Jazeera English
[Interview](#) with Chief Program Officer Heather Simpson

BBC World News
[Interview](#) with CEO Dr. Geetha Murali

Euronews
[Interview](#) with Chief Development and Communications Officer Laurie McMahon

Tech for Impact
[“Tech can drive equality in education. You can help”](#) by Chief Operating Officer Nicole Sayres

RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Room to Read’s Research, Monitoring & Evaluation (RM&E) team continues to be a leader in the education space, producing groundbreaking research projects and sharing their knowledge with the rest of the international development sector.

Life Skills Measurement Technical Workshop

In 2016, Room to Read began developing and piloting our life skills assessment, an approach to objectively and reliably measure key life skills, such as self-confidence, communication and empathy, that we seek to build through our Girls’ Education Program. It is a complex challenge, given the growing global demand for reliable measures of life skills. In January 2020, Room to Read and the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution convened a two-day technical workshop for organizations working on measuring life skills to discuss progress made to date, mutual challenges and promising new approaches.

Participating in Working Groups

Our Research, Monitoring & Evaluation team members sit on the following working groups: The Basic Education Coalition’s

RM&E Working Group, the Soft Skills Measurement Working Group and the Scaling Up Community of Practice RM&E Working Group. Most recently, we have been invited to sit on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Science of Teaching Advisory Committee that will oversee an initiative to build and synthesize evidence to improve foundational learning outcomes in low-income countries.

Presenting in Key Forums

- Some highlights include:
- Webinar on the Equality of Learning Outcomes in collaboration with RTI International
 - Presentation on research, monitoring and evaluation strategies and activities in the context of COVID-19 to USAID Missions worldwide
 - Virtual workshop hosted by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in the context of the COVID-19 crisis
 - Presentation of our work on the assessment of reading skills at a webinar hosted by SurveyCTO





TOP INVESTORS


Top Organizational Investors in 2020

Organizational investors are critical to our success in improving the lives of children across low-income communities around the world. Whether through grants, employee engagement, cause marketing partnerships or in-kind donations, these partners help us scale our impact while meeting our shared goals.

Ananta Foundation enables the development and enhancement of projects critical to Room to Read’s mission. To date, Ananta has invested \$5.65 million in core support, helping Room to Read to progress toward our strategic goals and to reach more children than ever before with our life-changing programs.

 **Atlassian Foundation International** has donated more than US\$12.5 million toward Room to Read’s gender equality work supporting almost 30,000 years of girls’ education through the partnership to date. In 2020, Atlassian was our largest corporate investor in Australia. Atlassian staff also provide significant personal support to Room to Read through their “\$1 a Day” workplace giving program.


 **Citi** Through its *e for education* initiative, Citi donates to a number of education focused non-profit organizations. Room to Read and Citi have been partners since the inception of this campaign in 2013. In 2020, Room to Read was the recipient of a US\$1.125 million grant toward our areas of greatest need, the largest grant we have received to date from Citi’s *e for education* initiative.

 **Credit Suisse AG** has been a strong corporate partner since 2005, benefiting more than 140,000 children to date and funding multiple strategic projects, including the launch of Room to Read’s technical assistance work. Room to Read is one of the key partners in the Credit Suisse Financial Education for Girls Program,

implementing financial education and life skills clubs in Tanzania and Sri Lanka.

In addition, Credit Suisse launched a corporate matching program in 2020 to support our COVID-19 initiatives. Furthermore, Credit Suisse sponsored our 2020 virtual global gala, donates office space for Room to Read staff in Asia and provides capacity-building through its Global Citizens Program.

 **Dubai Cares** part of Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, is a key partner under Room to Read’s Goalkeepers Quality Education Accelerator, helping to scale up our Literacy Program to students and schools across Vietnam. Dubai Cares has also funded the development and distribution of over 600,000 Arabic storybooks in Jordan and over two million local language books in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Vietnam as part of its Reading Nation campaign. In addition, Dubai Cares has supported school reconstruction and Literacy Program activities in Nepal after the 2015 earthquakes.

 **Echidna Giving** invested in our Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs in 2020. Echidna Giving is a leading thought partner for Room to Read in the areas of innovation, analysis, learning and systemic change.

 **Google.org** has supported Room to Read with a multi-year grant that is helping to


improve the early reading experiences of more than 200,000 Indonesian students in two ways: increasing access to Bahasa Indonesia children’s stories through a new digital platform and training teachers on effective reading activities. The grant, coupled with Google.org’s year-end employee giving contributions, is creating much-needed educational opportunities for children around the world.


 **Goldman Sachs Gives** Through Goldman Sachs and Goldman Sachs Gives, the company and its senior executives have contributed more than US \$25.1 million to Room to Read. In 2020, Goldman Sachs supported our Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs, benefiting more than 16,700 children.

 **IKEA Foundation** has invested in Room to Read’s literacy work in Bangladesh and Indonesia since 2016. The IKEA Foundation has also supported Room to Read’s first-ever girls’ education-focused technical assistance project in India, providing thousands of girls with improved educational opportunities and the tools they need to navigate key life decisions.


 **IMC** Since 2016, IMC has invested generously in Room to Read’s Literacy Program in Tanzania. Throughout our partnership, IMC has contributed more than US\$9.8 million to Room to Read, helping to equip young learners with the powerful tool of literacy that will transform their own lives, as well as their communities and future generations.



 **Tatcha**, luxury skin-care brand, has been a corporate partner to Room to Read since 2014, with a percentage of every purchase supporting Room to Read’s global literacy and girls’ education work across Asia and Africa. To date, the partnership has funded over 5 million days of school for girls in Africa and Southeast Asia, and in 2020, Tatcha funded a U.S. program feasibility study for Room to Read. The goal of this study was to identify the geographical areas of under-served communities where investments in education equality would make the greatest impact. The study assessed inequities in access to children’s reading materials and the lack of diversity in picture books in the United States, and the findings will be instrumental in shaping Room to Read’s interventions and future impact on children in the United States.


 **Warburg Pincus** In 2020, Room to Read launched a partnership with Warburg Pincus to scale our Girls’ Education Program in India and develop a framework for our global climate justice curriculum. This support enabled Room to Read to reach girls in India during a critical time through a

mixed modality approach that considered all levels of access to technology.

 **UNICEF** partners with Room to Read across our program countries in Asia. Our partnership with UNICEF Bangladesh aims to improve learning outcomes of the host community students in Cox’s Bazar through professional development for educators, school governance and community engagement. Additionally, we collaborate to provide supplementary teaching and learning materials to educators and quality reading materials to the children in Rohingya refugee camps. Our partnership with UNICEF India supports the scale-up and institutionalization of our Literacy and Girls’ Education Programs in multiple states. In Sri Lanka, we partner with UNICEF to improve learning environments in Kilinochchi, provide quality learning materials and train teachers to promote improved reading habits among children.

 **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** In 2020, Room to Read worked on literacy projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Cambodia,

India, Laos and Rwanda, benefiting millions of children. These investments enabled us to innovate and scale our work to new regions.

 **World Food Programme** and Room to Read, with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture’s McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, implemented a technical assistance project in Cox’s Bazar from 2018 through 2020. This project supported 45,183 children from 135 government primary schools and 11 madrasahs, developed and published 30 new book titles, and distributed 593,289 books to 855 libraries. It also trained teachers on literacy instruction and library management and it trained head teachers and local government officials on school management, leadership development, monitoring and supervision.

We are grateful to all of our investors around the world and want to take a moment to recognize some of our most generous investors who have given more than \$50,000.

\$500,000 and more

Atlassian Foundation International
Citi
Credit Suisse AG
Dubai Cares
Echidna Giving
Goldman Sachs Gives
Google.org
IKEA Foundation
IMC
Save the Children
Tatcha
The Anonymous Foundation
UBS Optimus Foundation
UNICEF
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Warburg Pincus
World Food Programme

\$250,000-499,999

Ananta Foundation
Bajaj Auto
Bank of America
Bertin Family Foundation
BNP Paribas
Cartier Philanthropy
Comic Relief US | Red Nose Day
\$50,000-249,999
ABeam Consulting
All The Sky Foundation
Anglo American Foundation
Anonymous
BlackRock
Bloomberg
Boulé Foundation
Clariant Foundation
CMS
Dodge & Cox
Dr. Ausbüttel & Co. GmbH
Erol Foundation
Green Leaves Education Foundation

H.T Parekh Foundation
Hoglund Foundation
HS Chau Foundation
HSBC Sri Lanka
Humble Bundle
Librio AG
MetLife Foundation
Morgan Stanley India
Oracle
RG Manudhane Foundation for Excellence
Rising Tide Foundation
Select Equity Group Foundation
Skoll Foundation
The Boeing Company
The Empowerment Foundation
The Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation
The Library of Congress
The Sidgmore Family Foundation
The Townsend Foundation
Travel Sentry
Zenex Foundation



Top Individual Investors in 2020

\$250,000 and more

Andrea and Iqbal Khan
Dina Khreino-Alireza and Yusuf Alireza
The Kapnick Foundation
Camilla and John Lindfors
The Carroll Obremskey Charitable Fund
Kim Stafford and Ryan Korinke
Hilary Valentine
Erica Wax and Andrew Balls
Penelope Wyatt

\$100,000 – 249,999

Mary Byron
Richard and Sabine Chalmers
The Chin Family Fund
Asami and Benjamin Ferguson
Anna and Matt Freedman
Belma and Julius Gaudio
Ayako and Eric Golden
Laura Howard and Dieter Turowski
Hunter Family Foundation
Kim Jackson and Scott Farquhar
JAAM Foundation
Maria and Elio Leoni Sceti
Tamiko Lippit and Carl Huttenlocher
Angelina Oguma
Mary Lou and Marc Seidner
Susan and Theo Seltzer
Ria and Helman Sitohang
Steans Family Foundation
The Van Veenendaal Family Fund
The Anne Wojcicki Foundation
Troper Wojcicki Foundation
Catherine and David Zemans

\$50,000-99,999

The Aall Foundation
John and Patricia Adams
Amy Ahadizad and Ryan Thall
Malak Alireza and Ahmed El Maghraby
Jim Allen
Shaima and Mahdi Amjad
Cynthia and Christopher Bake
Bauer Family
David and Allison Blitzer
Sejel and Philippe Bodereau
Craig and Suzy Bruya
Tim Caflisch
Clare Chamberlain
HS Chau Foundation
Gaurav Dalmia
Raquel and Craig Dawson
Isabelle and Antoine Decitre
Jane and Jerry del Missier
Isabelle Ealet and John Corbani
Richard and Athena Eitel
Amin El Magrabi
Farah Foustok
Laura M. and Peter T. Grauer Foundation
Gruber Family Foundation
The Deena Jo Heide-Diesslin Foundation
Kit Hoh Foundation
Lauren and James Houghton
InMaat Foundation
Michelle and Sonny Kalsi
Gerald L. Lennard Foundation
The Lilac Foundation
Diksha and Divesh Makan
Yuri and Tomoya Masanao

Angel Mehta
Chris and Joe Popolo
Dominic Price
Karen Ray
Resonance Philanthropies
Bryan Rollins
Satter Foundation
Susan and Theodore Seltzer
David M. Solomon
The Spohler Foundation
The Spurlino Foundation
Tayloe and Cindy Stansbury
Bret and Karen Taylor
Lynne and Michael Taylor
Kari and Justin Teo
Frederick Towfigh
Turning Leaf Foundation
Tamara and Zoltan Varga
Jane Watts and Neil Smith
Crystal Wilson

In-Kind Donors

We would like to thank our corporate partners who provided gifts-in-kind support that was crucial to our success in 2020 including Salesforce.org, Scholastic, Workday and Capco.



BOARD AND LEADERSHIP

As of August 2021

Our board members are the backbone of our leadership and responded quickly to the education crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We gratefully recognize them here.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Byron (Chair), Owner, Cloud Nine Quilts and Former Partner, Goldman Sachs

Yusuf Alireza, CEO and Co-CIO, ARP Global Capital

Andrew Balls, Chief Investment Officer, Global Fixed Income, PIMCO

Mike Cannon-Brookes, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Atlassian

Sabine Chalmers, General Counsel, BT Group Plc

Dr. Luis Crouch, Senior Economist, RTI

Carl Huttenlocher, Managing Partner and Chief Investment Officer, Myriad Asset Management

Scott Kapnick, CEO, HPS Investment Partners, LLC

Dr. Elizabeth M. King, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

John Lindfors, Managing Partner, DST Investment Management

Dr. Geetha Murali, CEO, Room to Read

Stasia Obremskey, Managing Director, Rhia Ventures

John Ridding, CEO, Financial Times Group

Vicky Tsai, Founder, Tatcha

Frank van Veenendaal, Former Executive Vice President, Salesforce

Susan Wojcicki, CEO, YouTube

John Wood, Founder, Room to Read and Asia Partner, Concentric Equity Partners

EMERITUS BOARD

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Craig Bruya, Former Divisional CFO, Microsoft

Erin Ganju, Co-Founder and Former CEO, Room to Read and Managing Director, Echidna Giving

Peter T. Grauer, Chairman, Bloomberg L.P.

Tim Koogle, Former CEO and Chair, Yahoo!

Alastair Mactaggart, President, Second Street Fund; Founder & Chairman, Californians for Consumer Privacy

Jerry del Missier, Founder and Executive Chairman, Copper Street Capital LLP

Kim Anstatt Morton, Board Chair, Girl Rising

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Muneer A. Satter, Chair, Satter Investment Management



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Agnes and Tony Zameczkowski
Catherine and David Zemans

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Stasia Obremskey
Jesse Purewal
Mythili Sankaran and Shekar Ayyar
Pierre Towns
Hilary Valentine
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Priya Venkatesh
Susan Wojcicki and Dennis Troper

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Mickey Doshi
Vishal Mahadevia
Khozem Merchant
Sumati and Ravi C. Raheja
Jitu Virwani

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Asami and Ben Ferguson
Ayako and Eric Golden
Yuri and Tomoya Masanao
Susan and Theo Seltzer
Fred Towfigh

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Shima and Mahdi Amjad
Farah Foustok
Dina Khreino-Alireza and Yusuf Alireza
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Mindy and Adam Silverstein
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Jerry del Missier
Björn Nilsson
John Ridding
Erica Wax and Andrew Balls



LEADERSHIP TEAM

Executive Leadership Team

Dr. Geetha Murali, Chief Executive Officer

Shari Freedman, Chief Financial Officer

Laurie McMahon, Chief Development and Communications Officer

Nicole Sayres, Chief Operating Officer

Heather Simpson, Chief Program Officer

International Directors

Michael Bowers, Vice President, Program Operations

Dinesh Shrestha, Co-Founder and Director of Field Operations

Deepak Dogra, Director, Asia Program Operations

Paul Kilambya, Director, Africa Program Operations

Sourav Banerjee, Country Director, India

Vantha Chea, Country Director, Cambodia

Vanessa Francis, Country Director, South Africa

Shevanthi Jayasuriya, Country Director, Sri Lanka

Juvenalius Kuruletera, Country Director, Tanzania

Nuong Nguyen, Country Director, Vietnam

Rakhi Sarkar, Country Director, Bangladesh

Pushkar Shrestha, Country Director, Nepal

Norkham Souphanouvong, Country Director, Laos

FINANCIALS

Our work is possible because of the generosity of our worldwide network. We are deeply committed to operating with the utmost financial efficiency and transparency, so that you know your investments are providing the greatest benefit to the communities we serve.

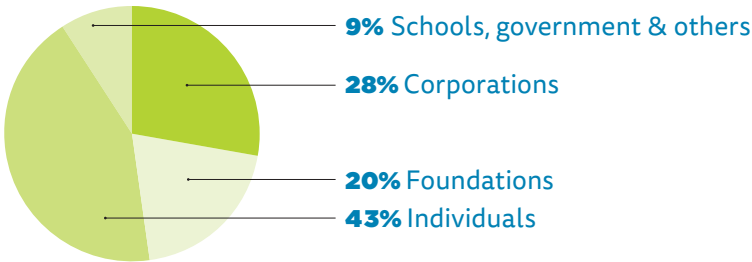
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

CASH DONATIONS
US\$57.2
MILLION

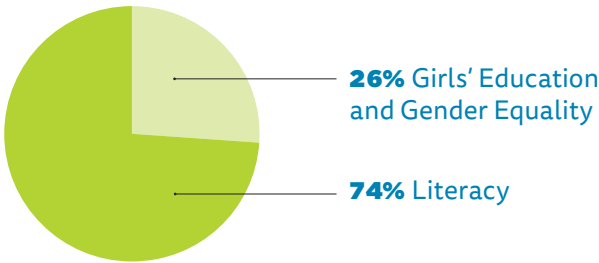
IN-KIND DONATIONS
US\$4.8
MILLION

SPENT ON PROGRAMS
87%

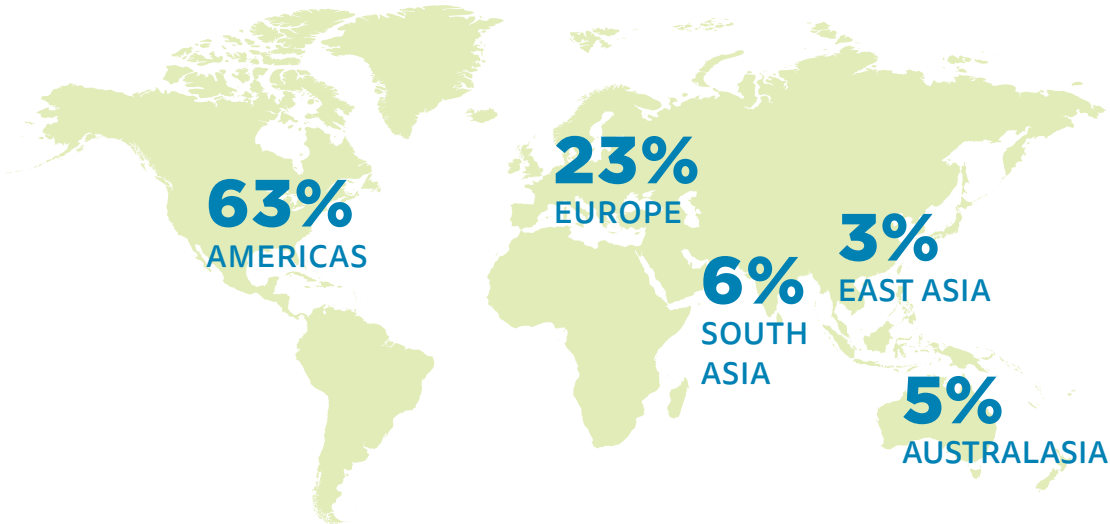
DONATIONS BY TYPE OF INVESTOR



PROGRAMMATIC Expense Breakdown



SOURCES OF REVENUE BY REGION



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ending December 31, 2020 and December 31, 2019 (USD)

Support and Revenue:	2020	2019
Corporations	\$15,862,424	\$15,976,393
Foundations	\$11,489,283	\$7,436,478
Individuals	\$24,755,890	\$26,536,366
Schools, governments and others	\$5,073,051	\$4,422,450
Total Donations	\$57,180,648	\$54,371,687
Contract Revenue	\$55,000	\$398,563
Donations In-Kind	\$4,757,294	\$6,009,462
Investment and Other Income (Loss), Special Event Expenses, Fees	\$66,114	\$(140,264)
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$62,059,056	\$60,639,448

Operating Expenses:	2020	2019
Program Services		
Literacy	\$31,101,264	\$35,020,489
Girls' Education and Gender Equality	\$10,700,299	\$11,361,030
Total Program Services	\$41,801,563	\$46,381,519
Management and General	\$1,876,847	\$1,960,470
Fundraising	\$4,344,585	\$5,176,125
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$48,022,995	\$53,518,114

Translation adjustments	\$315,627	\$8,867
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Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$12,013,585	\$2,622,538
Change in Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$2,338,103	\$4,507,663
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions at Beginning of the Year	\$14,818,793	\$12,196,255
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions at Beginning of the Year	\$15,123,776	\$10,616,113
TOTAL ASSETS AT END OF THE YEAR	\$44,294,257	\$29,942,569

Room to Read's financial statements have been audited by independent certified public accountants and are available on our website.

JOIN US



Invest in Education

A donation to Room to Read helps us to transform the lives of millions of children across the world through education.

Education Resilience Fund

Recent surges in the COVID-19 virus are placing so many things beyond our control — education doesn’t need to be one of them. In fact, education is a vital source of stability, comfort and hope for the millions who are grappling with challenges and loss. That is why we established our Education Resilience Fund — to support the children and families who are relying on education to help them get through this challenging time. Through the fund, we deploy resources where and when they are needed most, ensuring learning continues for children around the globe. Visit [our website](#) to see how you can support children in need today.

Join Our Global Movement

Thank you to the thousands of passionate and committed volunteers around the world who helped to fuel our work. Chapters help us succeed through fundraising and increasing awareness of our cause in their communities. See [our website](#) to find a Room to Read chapter near you.

See Our Work in Action

A visit to one of our partner communities gives you one-of-a-kind access to our projects, the opportunity to meet our local teams and a chance to interact with the children, parents and teachers in our programs. Whether you have been a supporter for years or are just beginning to learn about our work, this unique, firsthand experience will change the way you view your place in the world. While travel restrictions remain in place in many parts of the world, you can get a sense of our life-changing field trips through [this video](#).

Follow Us Online

Want to be a part of Room to Read’s global community? Join us online and commit to making illiteracy and gender inequality problems of the past.

Facebook: [/RoomtoRead](#)
Instagram: [@RoomtoRead](#)
Twitter: [@RoomtoRead](#)
YouTube: [/RoomtoRead](#)
LinkedIn: [/company/Room-to-Read](#)

To get involved, visit roomtoread.org/take-action.

Photography and Design Credits



This page features artwork from *The Squirrel’s Journey*, a Room to Read title from Vietnam, illustrated and written by Đỗ Thái Thanh.

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This page incorporates artwork from *Elephant Runs*, a Room to Read title from South Asia, illustrated by Ilana Exelby and written by Room to Read staff.