Room to Read, Rooms for Change

Former Microsoft business development director and award-winning social entrepreneur John Wood does not merely recount triumphs and challenges in "Creating Room to Read: A Story of Hope in the Battle for Global Literacy". His second book is an inspiring and ethical business success manual, as well as a clarion call to change the world – one read at a time.

BY CLAIRE ONG
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

He looked forward to garbage night on Thursdays.

Camouflaged in the dark, he scoured white people’s dustbins to satiate a different kind of hunger – for books. Through the tomes he salvaged, he taught himself mathematics, geography, and even how to drive a car.

Today, armed with undergraduate and Master’s degrees, as well as notable teaching and leadership portfolios, Chris Mothupi is the South African country director of Room to Read. The award-winning organisation is one of the world’s fastest growing non-profits engaged in global literacy and gender equality in education projects, in the developing parts of Asia and Africa.

Mothupi’s tale was only one of many extraordinary accounts read by John Wood from his new book, ‘Creating Room to Read: A Story of Hope in the Battle for Global Literacy’, at National Library’s The Pod on March 13. The founder and board co-chair of Room to Read, who wrote ‘Leaving Microsoft to Change the World’, was in Singapore on Days 36 to 37 of his international book tour.

Discussion session between Room to Read’s John Wood (R) and Gene Tan, Director of National Library Board, moderated by John Bailey (L).
Today, Room to Read is one of the biggest children publishers in the developing world and one of the world’s most successful international literacy organizations, winning accolades like the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2011.

Some graduates from the program do not attend any further education after high school, others are going back to school to learn more about the basic needs of their families, and many are attending to their needs and helping others.

Room to Read is especially important in the current political climate where the support of the local community is especially needed. The organization is dedicated to ensuring that children have access to educational materials and support, regardless of their background.

To Those Who Are Purposeful in True

To those who read might not have achieved its success today. Room to Read had not also been transported with themselves.

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Creating Room to Read: A Story of Hope in the Battle for Global Literacy

The year of reading from a young age, Wood said as the book launch.

Room to Read has reached one million readers in 15 countries, and the organization has expanded its reach to more than 60 countries worldwide.

Wood and his team are working tirelessly to achieve their goal of educating children globally, aiming to bring literacy to every corner of the world.

Room to Read has also opened over 100,000 libraries from 1999 to 2013.

"When I first saw Room to Read in action, I was amazed by the impact it was having on children’s lives," Wood said. "It was clear that the organization was making a difference, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it."