Literacy Program

Unlocking a better future through access to written words

1 in 4 children in low- and lower middle-income countries are unable to read.

Help us make change possible by reaching **830,000+ students** with our Literacy Program this year.

Literacy: The Foundation for Learning

A quality education remains out of reach for millions of children around the world. Over the years, access to primary schooling has improved, but educational quality remains a major issue. UNESCO estimates that the world will need to recruit 24.4 million school teachers to provide every child with a primary education by 2030. In the rush to fill this gap, many countries are lowering standards, often leaving new teachers with little or no training. Without concerted efforts, these chronic shortages of teachers will continue to deny the fundamental right to primary education for millions of children for decades to come.

Room to Read is addressing both access to education and quality of education. We combine the science of learning to read with the magic of loving to read, developing a generation of independent readers who are breaking the cycle of illiteracy within their own families through our Literacy Program.

It is possible to break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty within a single generation, but we need to act now before millions of children are left behind.

OUR RESULTS

Children are reading with greater fluency.
Our reading skills evaluations show that children in the Literacy Program read more fluently than their peers in comparable schools. By the end of 2nd grade, students tested in program schools read twice as fast as their peers on average and, in some countries, nearly three times as fast.

Children are reading with greater comprehension.
Children supported by our program also read with greater comprehension. When asked reading comprehension questions about the passages they had just read, children in Room to Read programs gave, on average, 87% more correct answers than children in comparison schools.

Children are reading more.
Our Literacy Program is encouraging the development of reading habits and our libraries are a contributing factor. Over the course of 2017, children checked out an average of 3,261 books per library.

World Change Starts with Educated Children.®

Our Approach

Our Literacy Program transforms primary schools into child-friendly learning environments that enable children to become lifelong, independent readers (e.g. children who possesses both literacy skills and a habit of reading). We do this by ensuring that primary schools have libraries filled with books in the children's local languages, as well as teachers and librarians who are trained on how to engage a classroom of eager, young learners.

1 Teacher training and support

One of the most important elements of literacy learning is having an instructor who knows how to effectively teach and nurture reading and writing skills. We provide early grade teachers with professional development and in-class coaching to make sure they have the knowledge and tools to successfully support their students. The phonics-based instructional design that we provide helps children learn to decode sounds and words in a logical sequence and build confidence in their budding skills.

We also provide educators with training on how to effectively manage a library and conduct activities that encourage students to read independently. Our local staff regularly monitor the library environment and provide feedback, so communities know how to sustain a high-functioning library long after our support ends.
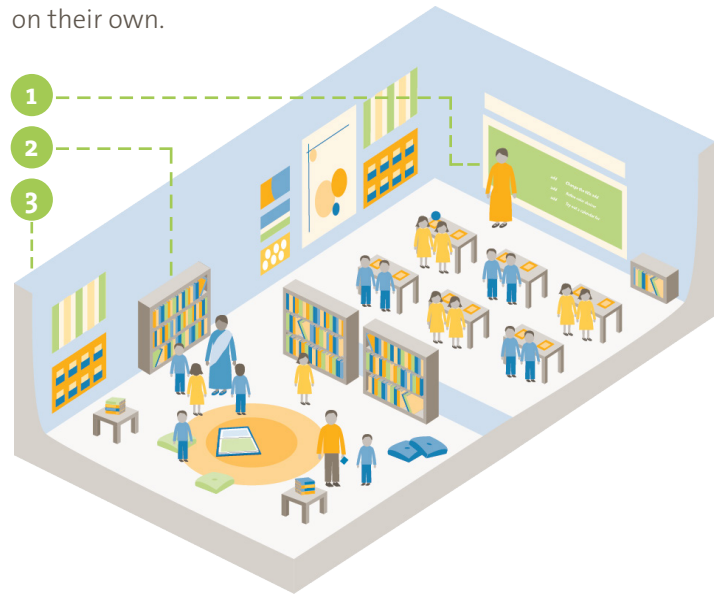
2 Quality reading materials

Beginning readers need books and instructional materials designed for their skill levels. Texts that are too challenging or complex can intimidate students and discourage them from wanting to practice reading. Unfortunately, early reader texts are often extremely limited or nonexistent in the countries where we work. To remedy this, we create local language storybooks that readers at various levels can enjoy. These books capture children's imaginations and share the joy of reading. We also develop book creators and book publishers, advocate with governments, and grow libraries and library programs in which children's literature can flourish. Our goal is to inspire children to read, expand their minds, and create a publishing ecosystem that will support a lifelong love of reading and learning.

3 Safe and child-friendly learning environments

Learning to read and write is challenging enough without also being distracted by hot, dark or overcrowded classrooms. We partner with communities to improve learning spaces so children have safe, child-friendly environments where they can focus on learning. Our projects include renovating existing school spaces to improve lighting, safety and ventilation, and establishing dedicated library spaces

where students can have fun, positive interactions with books. We also help procure child-sized furniture and provide direction on how to arrange learning materials so students can easily access them and practice reading on their own.

Strong community and government partnerships

To ensure the long-term impact of our program, we engage communities early in project planning and co-invest in project costs to establish local ownership. We also work with governments to promote widespread policy and curriculum changes that will improve literacy learning for children far beyond our program schools.

INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE

Fiscal Excellence
Received Charity Navigator's highest four-star rating for sound fiscal management 12 times since 2007.

Leader in Literacy
Received the 2014 U.S. Library of Congress Literacy award, the 2011 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, and recognized as a 2014 World's Children's Prize Honorary Laureate.

Social Innovator
Chosen as Twitter's first Corporate Social Innovation partner and three-time winner of the Skoll Foundation's Award for Social Entrepreneurship.

Have questions?
Contact us online at
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Room to Read Global Offices:
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