

# THE END OF IMPOSSIBLE



Room to Read® | 2018 Annual Report

# EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

The power of education can help every child become an engaged, compassionate member of society with the opportunity to thrive. Through the end of 2018, Room to Read has benefited more than 16.8 million children and has created new possibilities for their futures.



Room to Read® | 2018 Annual Report

One in four children in low-income countries is unable to read. Additionally, only half of all countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary school, dropping to one-quarter of all countries in upper secondary school. While these numbers are staggering, the solution is not impossible. Through education, we can make illiteracy and gender inequality problems of the past.

**WELCOME TO  
THE END OF  
IMPOSSIBLE.**



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শিশু বয়ঃ ১০০৪ খ্রঃ  
শিক্ষার্থীদের মাঝে বই পড়ানো  
মাসিক পত্রিকার মাধ্যমে

“आधुनिक शिक्षा अविद्वेष”  
तिरुवाणमल २०२४-२५





# ROOM TO READ 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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## DEAR ROOM TO READ FAMILY,

As Room to Read’s CEO, I spend a good part of my time bearing witness to the transformation that stems from education — learning about children like Kien, a fourth-grader in Vietnam, whose habit of reading 100 books each year has earned him his school’s “Reading Star Award” and fueled his ambition to become a teacher, or Hawa, who stayed in school thanks to our Girls’ Education Program and is now pursuing a career in public policymaking. These stories strengthen my long-standing belief that education is the world’s most powerful agent of change.

Yet 750 million people in the world remain illiterate. And due to societal pressures, female student enrollment drops dramatically in secondary school. At Room to Read, we know that illiteracy and gender inequality are problems that can be solved through education, and we are doing just that. By the end of 2019, we will have benefited 18 million children worldwide, supporting educational journeys that pave the way to a lifetime of success.

Finding inspiration from the visionaries throughout these pages, Room to Read is eager to take on the seemingly “impossible” task of ending illiteracy and gender inequality. Already, we’re extending our reach in unprecedented ways through partnerships with governments and other nonprofit organizations. One of the most exciting examples of system-level change is the 47 percent increase in the number of girls benefiting from our Girls’ Education Program in a single year based on our partnership with the IKEA Foundation and the governments of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in India. Through this unique public-private collaboration, thousands of girls are learning life skills that enable them to confidently navigate complex gender-related obstacles.

As an Indian-American woman whose mother was pressured to marry early, I am sensitive to the overwhelming challenges girls face when attempting to forge new paths. My own mother’s willingness to defy her family tradition and pursue an education changed the course of her life. Even more significantly, it changed the lives of her four sisters, her daughter, her granddaughter and beyond.

The women in my family aren’t the only ones to give rise to new life choices that promote gender equality. My life is full of teachers and role models, men and women, who have made my success possible. My experience underscores that creating a gender-equal world involves everyone, and the momentum



behind this idea is growing stronger. That’s why, as we finalize our strategic plan for 2020 to 2024, Room to Read will more actively involve boys and men in our movement toward gender equality.

It is only by banding together that we ensure that a child’s gender or place of birth will not dictate what she or he becomes. Our generous supporters don’t just invest in education — they invest in a better future for all of us. Today’s youth become tomorrow’s parents, teachers and community leaders.

Looking to the future, we are doubling down on our investment in human potential by continuing to advance literacy and gender equality at a faster pace than ever before. Through your unwavering generosity and commitment, we are well poised to do so, opening up endless possibilities for millions of children around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geetha".

**Dr. Geetha Murali, CEO**

## DEAR FRIENDS,

An exciting new chapter is being written at Room to Read. After the leadership succession of last year, the expansion of our regional board network, and senior management reorganization and recruitment, we are now finalizing an ambitious new strategic plan.

It's a tribute to the caliber of the leadership team, and the commitment of the global organization, that these changes, which are each challenging on their own, have been accomplished successfully without any loss of momentum to our mission. Indeed, the past year has seen record revenues and, most importantly, a significant increase in children reached via our programs — now approaching 18 million. Our coveted four-star Charity Navigator rating has been retained again, proving that we continue to combine growth with efficiency.

Geetha speaks for herself on the previous page, but from the privileged perspective of board chair, I can say she has brought energy, innovation and a spirit of collaboration to her new role of CEO. She hit the ground running, building on the solid foundation established by the organization's founders, and Room to Read hasn't looked back since.

Instead, we have much to look forward to. A series of initiatives will give us the means to scale effectively and efficiently — the Room to Read way. One of my abiding memories of the past year came from the board trip to Vietnam, where we saw firsthand how the government is adopting the Room to Read system and literacy approach in its schools. This is just one example of how we are innovating and partnering to take our mission to the next level and to more children.

There are many other plans to drive scale while holding tight to the discipline, measurement and metrics which run through the organization and our approach. Taken together, they underpin the bold objectives of the new strategic plan — to reach 40 million children by 2025, twice the number we have reached in our 20-year history. Our track record, and our global movement, from the outstanding teams on the ground to our growing regional boards (now extended to India and California), should give us confidence that we can achieve it.

We will broaden and deepen our impact in other ways, too. It has become ever clearer, through our experience, and through relevant research, that educating girls, while such a powerful



driver of change, can't be achieved in isolation. The more that boys (and men) understand the importance of educating girls, the more momentum we will build. So, we are developing plans to expand our gender equality portfolio to include the participation of boys.

There is much positive change, but there also are some essential constants, including our commitment to providing quality education, achieving sustainable outcomes and delivering with discipline and rigor. Above all, our guiding principle remains as strong and relevant as ever: World Change Starts with Educated Children®. Unlike most other NGOs, we address the causes of global challenges and crises, not just the symptoms. And unlike many other worthy campaigns, our mission can be achieved. Illiteracy and gender inequality can be ended. That is our ultimate goal, and thanks to all our supporters, our partners and our dedicated team, it is a realistic ambition.

**John Ridding**, Board Chair



# AN IMPOSSIBLE BREAK- THROUGH

When Nelson Mandela was young, the idea of a black president was unimaginable, especially in South Africa amid apartheid. With persistence and courage, he spent his life fighting to create a just society. At the age of 77, Mandela was elected president of South Africa and set the country on a course toward equality.

# A BREAK- THROUGH IN EDUCATION

Our resolve and expertise have enabled us to make enormous strides toward providing quality education for children in low-income communities around the world. The challenges of illiteracy and gender inequality have historically seemed impossible to solve. But with your help, Room to Read is removing barriers to quality education for all. We have the solutions, and we are transforming the lives of millions of children through our work.





# OUR IMPACT

## GLOBAL RESULTS

CHILDREN BENEFITED\*

**16.8**  
MILLION+

COUNTRIES

**16**

COMMUNITIES

**38,000+**

## GIRLS' EDUCATION

NEW GIRLS BENEFITED  
IN 2018

**25,300+**

CUMULATIVE GIRLS  
BENEFITED

**81,800+**

ACTIVE PROGRAM  
PARTICIPANTS  
IN 2018

**59,400+**

NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL  
GRADUATES IN 2018

**2,100+**

CUMULATIVE  
SECONDARY  
SCHOOL GRADUATES

**6,900+**

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



## LITERACY

NEW CHILDREN  
BENEFITED IN 2018

**2.7**  
MILLION+

CUMULATIVE CHILDREN  
BENEFITED

**15.8**  
MILLION+

NEW TEACHERS &  
LIBRARIANS TRAINED  
IN 2018

**15,000+**

CUMULATIVE  
TEACHERS &  
LIBRARIANS TRAINED

**130,000+**

NEW PARTNER SCHOOLS  
IN 2018

**7,800+**

CUMULATIVE  
PARTNER SCHOOLS

**38,000+**

TOTAL ACTIVE PARTNER  
SCHOOLS IN 2018

**19,500+**

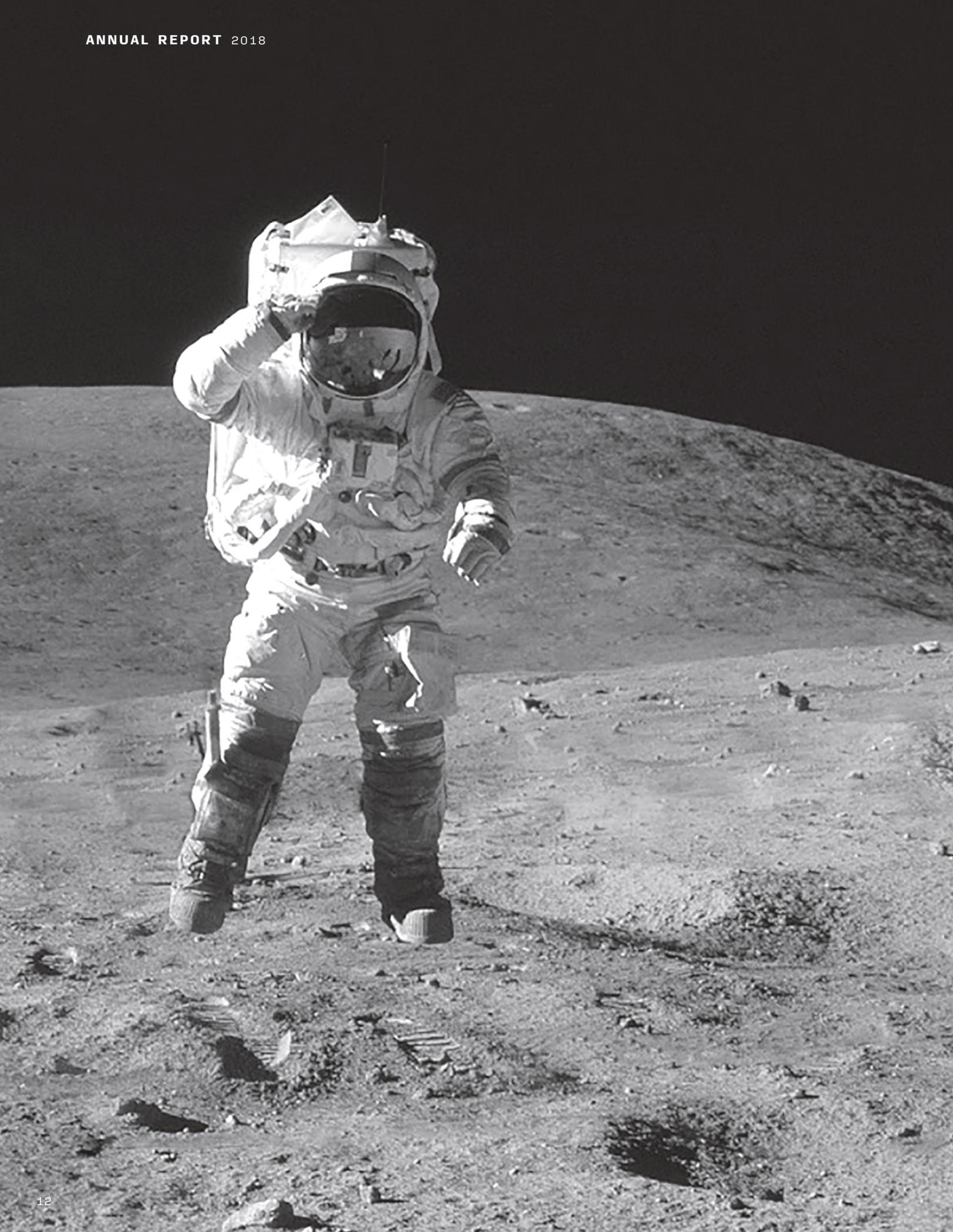
CHILDREN'S BOOK TITLES  
PUBLISHED\* IN 2018

**360**

CUMULATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK TITLES  
PUBLISHED

**1,576**

\*Includes new and adapted titles



# AN IMPOSSIBLE STEP

For most of human history, sending a person to the moon seemed like an unachievable dream. Then, in 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the lunar surface. With this one triumph, humankind realized that anything is possible if we aim high and work hard.

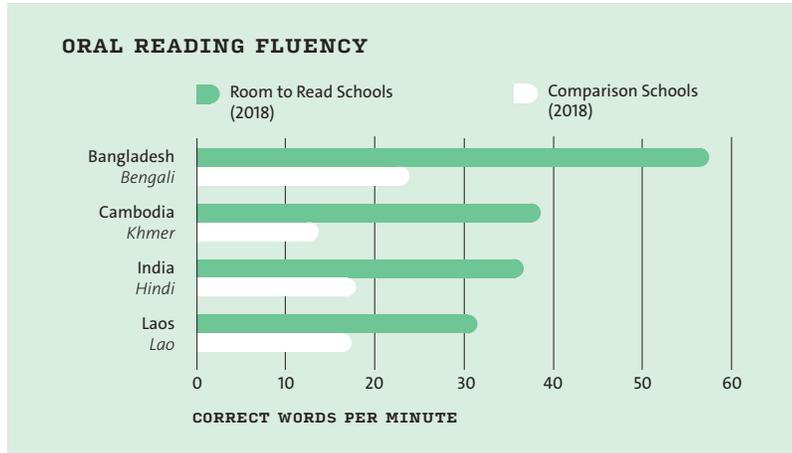
# A STEP TOWARD A BRIGHT FUTURE

In the communities where we work, children often lack the necessary resources for literacy development, causing them to struggle throughout school or drop out. Many have illiterate parents, but our work can end the cycle of illiteracy in a single generation. Through a combination of training teachers, creating reading materials and establishing school libraries, Room to Read transforms schools into high-quality learning environments that enable children to become lifelong, independent readers.



# LITERACY

## OUTSTANDING RESULTS AMONG PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



In 2018, Room to Read conducted reading skills evaluations of grade two students in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India** and **Laos** after they had been in our program for two years (countries are tested in two groups during alternating years). Oral reading fluency is crucial because research shows that children who read too slowly are not able to retain and comprehend what they are reading. Results from our evaluations demonstrated that children in Room to Read-supported schools had oral reading fluency rates approximately two to three times better than those of children in comparison schools.





## EXPANDING OUR REACH

In order to create sustained positive change, governments must recognize the benefits of adapting Room to Read's model at the subnational and national levels. We are thrilled that in many of our program countries, we have partnered with government agencies to expand the reach of our literacy work.

In **India**, we are engaged in a five-year project with USAID and the Indian government to scale up our Literacy Program in four states: Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The project is building the states' capacities to carry out independent literacy interventions in the future. Since

its start in 2015, the project has benefited more than 261,000 children and 5,200 teachers in 2,012 schools.

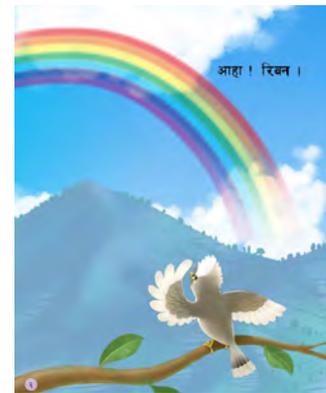
In 2018, Room to Read began an initiative in **Vietnam** with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to achieve a country-wide library scale-up and incorporate our library model into national policies. Over time, we will establish thousands of libraries through an innovative, three-tiered "I do, We do, You do" approach, which incorporates the MOET's partnership through demonstration libraries, collaboration libraries and expansion libraries. This project will enable the government to independently establish libraries in high-need regions nationwide.



### Saraswoti

*Mother of Literacy Program Student, Samit, Nepal*

"It made me really happy when I first saw the children's books provided by Room to Read in my son's school. I couldn't be any more grateful than I am right now. The books are perfectly designed for primary grade students and have just the right amount of words and pictures. My son is now learning fast and developing his reading habit. The books have helped him to expand his knowledge and imagination."



## A LEADER IN BOOK PUBLISHING

Each year, Room to Read publishes local-language children’s books and trains local authors and illustrators in order to build capacity.

In **Nepal**, our book *Wow! A Ribbon* (above) was awarded the prestigious Nepalese Society of Children’s Literature Award for Best Illustration. We also collaborated with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development to launch two new books, *Dhuwako Sansar* and *Chanchaleko Yatra*, written and designed by local illustrators and writers. These two titles focus on air pollution, a critical concern around Kathmandu and other cities in South Asia. To date, we have published 321 Nepali children’s book titles.

In **Bangladesh**, an animated television show called “Rong Beronger Golpo” was based on Room to Read storybooks and aired on one of the leading children’s channels, Duronto. The series is among the top listed TV shows in Bangladesh and is inspiring a love of stories in thousands of children.

Five local writers in **Sri Lanka** who were trained by Room to Read’s book publishing staff have been chosen as members of a government team that reviews books for use in Sri Lanka’s public schools. Having professionals trained by Room to Read on this team is a great way to sustain our organization’s national impact on the quality of children’s books.

## Dehemi

*Literacy Program Student, Sri Lanka*

“Every Friday, I borrow books from the Room to Read library. I love reading because it helps me to imagine so many things. I now have a shelf of books at home. These books are my happy place. I enjoy reading them out loud to my parents and neighbors. I am teaching them.”



## SHARING OUR EXPERTISE

Through our technical assistance projects, Room to Read partners with and trains other organizations to implement high quality literacy and gender equality initiatives around the world.

We are engaged in a multiyear USAID-funded project in **Rwanda**, for example, to improve reading instruction for 1 million children. Through this project, we led a national study to better understand the amount and quality of reading instruction time provided in a typical student's early years of school. Room to Read developed an innovative classroom observation instrument that allowed for detailed analysis of reading instruction time. Our findings showed that 29 percent of planned instruction time was lost due to teacher and student absence and tardiness. An additional 19 percent of time was lost due to non-learning activities — meaning only 52 percent of allocated instruction time was spent on learning activities. The study also found that pedagogy matters — students learn better when teachers spend more time on “active” instructional activities, such as creating words from syllables and practicing new vocabulary through storytelling. These findings will support the government of Rwanda in their efforts to improve early grade reading outcomes nationally.

Room to Read creates high-quality early grade reading materials, including decodable readers, stories that progressively incorporate new words as students learn sounds and letters. This approach enables new readers to sound out words and gain confidence in their literacy skills. In **Rwanda**, we held a workshop for 25 writers, artists, designers and government employees. Participants worked in groups to create 24 decodable stories for grade one students. These fully illustrated supplemental stories will be published in 12 books that children can take home to read. Additionally, in **Laos**, in partnership with the Basic Education Quality and Access Project for Laos PDR (BEQUAL), sponsored by Australian Aid and the European Union, we developed 36 decodable readers and a teacher's guide. Both the readers and the teacher's guide will be distributed to all grade one and grade two classrooms in the country.

In 2018, we launched our first Room to Read initiative in Latin America through the USAID-funded Avanzando con Libros (ACL) project in **Honduras**. Bringing together publishers, writers and illustrators with the Ministry of Education, this project works to get books into the hands of more children throughout the public school system.





# AN IMPOSSIBLE JOURNEY

In an era when women were fighting for equality on many fronts, pilot Amelia Earhart was a courageous pioneer. In 1932, Earhart became the first woman to fly nonstop and solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Ever since, her success has inspired women and girls everywhere to dream big and believe that anything is possible.

# A JOURNEY TOWARD SUCCESS

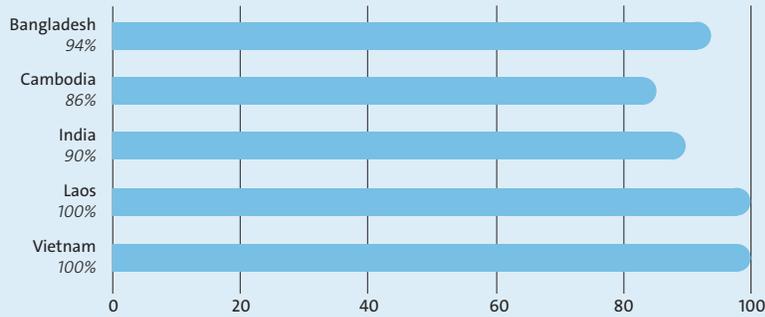
Room to Read works in contexts where girls face many obstacles to receiving an education, leading to higher dropout rates than their male counterparts. Secondary school-age girls, in particular, face cultural biases, gender discrimination, economic pressures and safety concerns that discourage them from completing their schooling. Through our girls' education work, we provide girls in secondary school with female mentors and the life skills essential for success in school and adulthood. With this support, participants become equipped to make important decisions about their futures and pursue their dreams.



# GIRLS' EDUCATION

## OUTSTANDING RESULTS AMONG PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

**PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS WHO PASSED THEIR NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS**



In **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos** and **Vietnam**, students in our Girls' Education Program passed their graduation exams at impressive rates. Program participants in these featured countries exceeded national pass rates by as much as 19 percent. These young women will now have access to even more opportunities in the future.





## PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

In many of the countries where we work, girls are overlooked when it comes to schooling. Room to Read takes an active role in advocating for the importance of girls' education internationally.

In **Bangladesh**, we joined forces with the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum during an annual International Girl Child Day celebration. This gave us the chance to spread our message on a national level. Through the same collaboration, we celebrated

International Women's Day with an event hosted by the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs.

In **India**, we advocated for girls' education and gender equality initiatives to be included within the federal education budget. We hosted a national forum in Delhi called *Budgeting for Girls' Education in Formal Schooling: Through a Gender Lens*. The forum provided recommendations for educational programs targeting girls countrywide.



### Rachel

*Social Mobilizer, Tanzania*

"I'm proud and happy to be part of Room to Read's staff. It's given me an opportunity to help girls, to support them, to encourage them and to coach them based on the challenges they are facing in their daily lives."

## TEACHING LIFE SKILLS TO YOUNG GIRLS

Girls in the areas where we work often do not have the opportunity to learn the life skills they need to be successful in school and beyond. These skills are especially crucial given the significant obstacles girls face in low-income communities.

In **India**, Room to Read launched a three-year project to empower adolescent girls across Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan — our first girls' education-focused technical assistance project. Through this project, we are implementing our life skills curriculum and training government teachers to train other educators. We aim to benefit more than 68,000 secondary school age girls, teaching them to think critically and preparing them to meet day-to-day challenges.

In **Laos**, we are testing an alternative approach to our girls' education work by introducing our life skills education curriculum in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools, in addition to our typical work in government secondary schools. Girls in these TVET schools often come from particularly disadvantaged economic backgrounds and, therefore, could greatly benefit from life skills education. Through this project, teachers are learning to deliver a condensed life skills education curriculum with Room to Read staff providing support and coaching.



## Sony

*Girls' Education Program Alumna, Cambodia*

"If I hadn't joined Room to Read's program, I wouldn't have had the chance to study in a good school and continue on to university. I would not have become the strong, brave woman I am today. I hope girls who are in similar or more difficult circumstances will persevere. I hope they will work to overcome the barriers in their lives so they can reach their goals. If I could, I would tell them, 'Don't stop studying, because education can truly help you have a better life.'"



## STUDYING THE IMPACT OF OUR MODEL

In the last year, we have been conducting several studies to enhance our girls' education work.

We've assessed girls in seven countries — **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania** and **Vietnam** — using our Life Skills Assessment in order to gain a better understanding of how our program participants' life skills evolve over time. Over the next year, we will also use this tool in a pilot test with a small group of boys in **Cambodia**. This will be the first time we formally explore the potential of including boys in our gender equality work.

We have also completed an in-depth study of Girls' Education Program alumnae in **India**, which showed that Room to Read has had a lasting beneficial effect on their education, work opportunities, relationships and quality of life. Specifically, we found that program alumnae have delayed marriage, have begun tertiary education at a high rate, are pursuing careers and have healthy approaches to their goals, their relationships and their futures.





# AN IMPOSSIBLE CLIMB

The world's highest and most treacherous peak was considered insurmountable, until Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay scaled Mt. Everest in 1953. Hillary and Norgay, from New Zealand and Nepal, respectively, reached the peak at 29,029 feet above sea level after many years of unsuccessful attempts by others. Together, they were able to achieve what neither would have been able to do alone.

# A CLIMB TO NEW HEIGHTS

Room to Read's success is due in large part to our powerful network of supporters. In 2018, our global community supported our mission through advocacy and fundraising. Thank you for partnering with us to unlock the potential of children across the world. Together, we have proven that "impossible" is no match for our collective determination.



रागुके किलमेल



# GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



## HIGHLIGHTS AND CELEBRITY ENGAGEMENT

**1. Room to Read** has partnered with **Maiden Factor**, a sailing team that made history in 1990 as the first all-female crew to complete the Whitbread Round the World Race in their yacht, Maiden. Maiden has embarked on a new mission to empower and educate girls around the world by supporting six partner charities, including Room to Read. At a launch event in 2018, our CEO Geetha Murali was joined by Room to Read Global Chair John Ridding and Girls' Education Program graduate Thirumagal from Sri Lanka to see Maiden before the yacht set off on a three-year global tour. They also met the

**Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall**, who attended the event.

**2. Olympic bronze medalist, writer, swim teacher and motivational speaker Kim Vandenberg** became a Room to Read ambassador in 2018. Vandenberg has set a personal commitment to support 50 girls through our Girls' Education Program and witnessed our impact firsthand when she visited program participants in Sri Lanka.

**3. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** named Room to Read a 2018 Goalkeepers Accelerator in recognition of our ability to

catalyze progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals through our Literacy Program. Through the Goalkeepers initiative, **Credit Suisse, Dubai Cares** and **Four Acre Trust** have partnered with us to scale our work in India, South Africa and Vietnam. Their commitments of more than \$3.5 million will support our goal of reaching 1.1 million additional children in these countries over the next three years.

**4. Lilly Singh, YouTube star and soon-to-be host of NBC's show "A Little Late with Lilly Singh,"** advocated for Room to Read in a number of ways in 2018. She hosted a literacy-focused event



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in South Africa in July and spoke at our San Francisco Benefit in October to celebrate International Day of the Girl.

5 & 6. Room to Read Founder, John Wood, and Board Chair, John Ridding (5), joined more than 200 business executives who participated in our annual **Fastest Executive Races** (6) in Hong Kong, Sydney and London to raise more than \$800,000 for Room to Read.

### ROOM TO READ IN THE MEDIA



NewStatesman

GLAMOUR

Forbes



BUSTLE

TC TechCrunch



marie claire



7. To celebrate what would have been Nelson Mandela's 100th birthday in July and honor his commitment to education in South Africa, Room to Read was invited to **ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange**. Our partner IMC joined us for this exciting honor.

8. **Miss Universe Vietnam, H'Hen Niê**, became a Room to Read ambassador and is personally funding both our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs in Vietnam. H'Hen Niê visited a Room to Read partner school in Lâm Đồng province in 2018 to see our work in action.

9. On his 68th birthday in September, Indian **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** visited a Room to Read partner school in Uttar Pradesh. During the visit, he spent time with children in the library, where they read their favorite stories to him.



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## DONOR SPOTLIGHT



### LEGACY SOCIETY

#### Jodi Morris

*Room to Read Donor Since 2007*

"I believe we're all global citizens. I believe to whom much is given, much is expected. I encourage every person to connect to the world. Find the problem you wish to address and leverage your unique personal and financial assets to help solve it, in the way that best reflects you. For me, that's girls' education and leadership in emerging economies. Room to Read's strategic, collaborative and transparent approach reflects the standard I wish to see for all companies. This message and Room to Read's work need to carry on long after my lifetime."



### MONTHLY GIVING

#### Kristi Mallios

*Room to Read Donor Since 2003*

"I'm excited to give monthly because it creates a set recurring revenue stream Room to Read can count on to invest in their literacy initiatives. The more people who do this, the more Room to Read can proactively plan their programs and related expenditures. It took less than one minute to set up my monthly contribution plan on Room to Read's website. It's such an efficient way for me to continue to support Room to Read for many years to come."

# 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 for the communities we serve.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### CASH DONATIONS

**US\$52.1**

MILLION

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

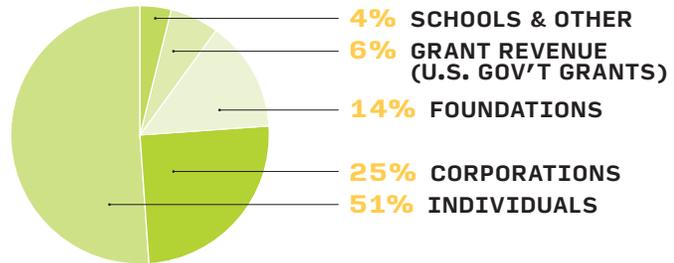
**US\$2.8**

MILLION

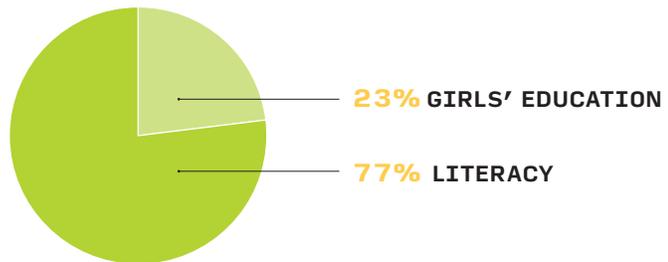
### SPENT ON PROGRAMS

**85%**

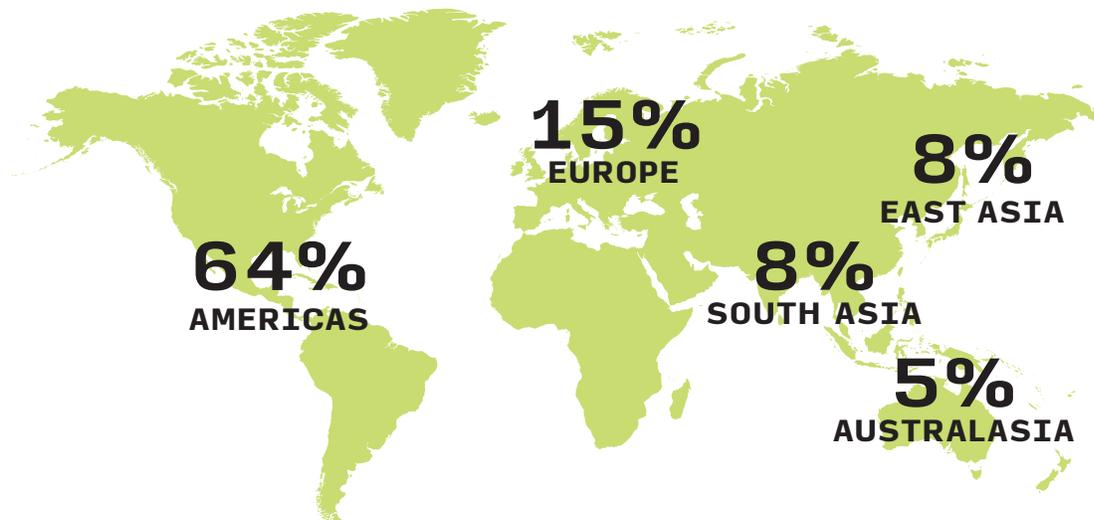
## DONATIONS BY TYPE OF INVESTOR



## PROGRAMMATIC EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



## SOURCES OF REVENUE BY REGION



## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ending December 31, 2018 and December 31, 2017 (USD)

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Corporations	\$13,372,443	\$13,147,452
Foundations	\$7,154,647	\$5,485,416
Individuals	\$26,463,290	\$27,231,726
Schools and Other	\$2,089,709	\$2,100,169
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$49,080,089</b>	<b>\$47,964,763</b>
Grant Revenue	\$3,021,963	\$1,291,498
Donations In-Kind	\$2,759,734	\$5,621,152
Investment and Other Income (Loss), Special Event Expenses, Fees	\$(513,170)	\$(852,581)
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>\$54,348,616</b>	<b>\$54,024,832</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES:</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Literacy	\$6,805,792	\$8,057,134
Girls' Education	\$1,954,295	\$2,241,720
Technical Assistance	\$2,289,564	\$2,032,707
Donated Books and Supplies	\$1,599,672	\$5,321,821
Conferences, Travel and Meeting Costs	\$1,719,913	\$1,451,137
Information Technology Expenses	\$1,129,002	\$1,299,191
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$172,192	\$189,559
Professional Fees	\$1,506,436	\$1,404,835
Program Operating Expenses	\$2,654,227	\$2,783,022
Program Personnel Expenses	\$22,082,020	\$20,866,566
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$41,913,113</b>	<b>\$45,647,692</b>
<b>Management and General</b>	<b>\$2,096,688</b>	<b>\$2,230,405</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>\$5,057,016</b>	<b>\$5,501,518</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES*</b>	<b>\$49,066,817</b>	<b>\$53,379,615</b>
Translation adjustments	\$(909,656)	\$216,081
<b>Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>\$4,321,830</b>	<b>\$2,070,615</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets With Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>\$50,313</b>	<b>\$(1,209,317)</b>
<b>Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions at Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>\$7,874,425</b>	<b>\$5,803,810</b>
<b>Net Assets With Donor Restrictions at Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>\$10,565,800</b>	<b>\$11,775,117</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS AT END OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$22,812,368</b>	<b>\$18,440,225</b>

\*Our lowered operating expenses in 2018 were due to fewer donations in-kind, which resulted in increased contribution to our reserves.

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

# ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDERS

Organizational funders 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.

 **Artha Capital** enables the development and enhancement of projects critical to Room to Read's mission. To date, Artha Capital has invested US\$5.15 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\$10 million toward Room to Read's programs. In 2018, Atlassian was the largest investor in our Girls' Education Program in Cambodia and the largest corporate investor from Australia. Atlassian staff also provide significant personal support to Room to Read through their "\$1 a Day" workplace giving program.

 Since 2015, **Bank of America – BA Continuum India (BACI)** has supported Room to Read's literacy efforts in India through the establishment of 169 libraries. BACI is also supporting thousands of girls in the Girls' Education Program in India.

 **The Bertin Family Foundation** supports the implementation of Room to Read's Oral Language Unit in Laos. With this investment, Room to Read will be able to improve early-grade reading skills in the many regions in Laos where students are not native Lao speakers.

 **BNP Paribas** BNP Paribas group entities supported our Girls' Education Program across India in 2018 through their corporate social responsibility grants and employee engagement. This partnership has helped 4,700 girls to succeed in secondary school and develop key life skills.

 **BURGER KING McLAMORE<sup>SM</sup>** Foundation has supported Room to Read through donations from BURGER KING® brand employees,

franchisees and restaurant guests in select areas in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific, as well as donations directly from the Foundation.

 Through its *e for Education* initiative, **CitiFX®** donated US\$1 to education-focused nonprofits for every US\$1 million notional of foreign exchange traded on various electronic platforms during the campaign. Room to Read and Citi have been partners since the inception of the campaign in 2013. In 2018, Citi donated more than US\$869,000, bringing the firm's total support for Room to Read to over US\$3.9 million and benefiting more than 79,000 children.

 **CREDIT SUISSE** Credit Suisse has been one of our largest corporate supporters since 2005, benefiting more than 138,000 children and funding multiple strategic projects, including the development of our last strategic plan and the launch of Room to Read Accelerator. Room to Read is a key partner in the Credit Suisse Financial Education for Girls Program, applying their model to our Girls' Education Program in Tanzania and Sri Lanka. Credit Suisse also 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, has funded the development and distribution of over 600,000 Arabic storybooks in Jordan and over 2 million local language books in Asia and Africa. Dubai Cares has also supported school reconstruction and literacy program activities in Nepal after the 2015 earthquakes. In 2018, Dubai Cares became a key partner under Room to Read's Goalkeepers Quality Education Accelerator, helping to scale up our school library interventions throughout schools in Vietnam.

 In 2018, **Echidna Giving** invested in our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs. Echidna Giving is a leading thought partner for Room to Read in the areas of innovation, analysis, learning and systemic change.

 Through **Goldman Sachs and Goldman Sachs Gives**, the company and its senior executives have contributed more than US\$23.4 million to Room to Read. In 2018, Goldman Sachs supported our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs, benefiting more than 24,000 children.

 In 2017, **Google.org** committed to a multiyear grant that will help 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.

 Since 2016, the **IKEA Foundation** has invested generously in Room to Read's literacy work in Bangladesh and Indonesia. In 2018, the IKEA Foundation expanded its reach to include Room to Read's first ever girls' education-focused technical assistance project in India. Through our partnership to date, the IKEA Foundation has supported improved educational opportunities for 1,130,000 children.

 Since 2016, **IMC** has transformed Room to Read's Literacy Program in Tanzania. Throughout our partnership, IMC has contributed more than US\$5.1 million to Room to Read, helping to equip young learners with the powerful tool of literacy that will transform their own lives, their communities and future generations.



**Myriad Asset Management** has been a key partner of Room to Read's since 2011. The Hong Kong-based company has helped more than 34,000 children to pursue a brighter future through education.



In 2017, the **Stone Family Foundation** invested in Room to Read's Girls' Education Program with a two-year grant to enhance gender equality in post-conflict settings. This partnership enables Room to Read to transform the lives of girls in Tanzania and share learnings and best practices across our other program countries.



Through their Beautiful Faces, Beautiful Futures initiative, each **Tatcha** purchase supports girls' education around the world. Since launching this partnership with Room to Read in 2014, Tatcha has supported more than 2 million days of school for girls.



**THE WORLD BANK** The Results in Education for All Children (REACH) trust fund, through **The World Bank** and the Global Book Alliance, is supporting Room to Read's work in South Africa to strengthen the national book supply chain. Along with creating recommendations for producing high-quality and relevant African-language storybooks for early readers, Room to Read is also training five local publishers to develop 20 early-grade books in five African languages and English, resulting in 120 new book titles. Room to Read will distribute at least 62,300 copies of these books to children through government schools and NGOs.



In 2018, Room to Read worked on literacy projects funded by the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** in Honduras, India, Laos, Rwanda and Tanzania, benefiting millions of children across the world. These investments enabled us to innovate and scale our work to new regions.



The **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, are partnering to implement a three-year technical assistance project in Cox's Bazar from 2018 through 2020. This project will benefit 45,012 children from 146 schools, train 722 teachers on Bangla literacy instruction and library management, train 146 head teachers and 20 local government officials on school management, publish 10 new book titles and distribute 500,000 books to 877 libraries.

## TOP ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDERS 2018

### \$500,000+

Atlassian Foundation International  
BNP Paribas  
Citi  
Credit Suisse AG  
Dubai Cares  
Echidna Giving  
Goldman Sachs  
Google.org  
IKEA Foundation  
IMC  
Tatcha  
United States Agency for International Development  
World Food Programme

### \$100,000 – \$249,999

Bajaj Auto Ltd.  
CMS  
The Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation  
Four Acre Trust  
GlaxoSmithKline  
MetLife Foundation  
Oracle  
The PIMCO Foundation  
Sensato Investors  
Swarovski Foundation  
Townsend Press  
UNICEF

Hilton  
The Hoglund Foundation  
HSBC  
H T Parekh Foundation  
Kendeda Fund  
Matthews Asia  
MoneyGram Foundation  
Monotype Imaging Inc.  
Rosewood Hotel Group  
The Spurlino Foundation  
STUDY FOR TWO  
Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd.  
Vitol Foundation  
Whitehaven Coal

### \$250,000 – \$499,999

Artha Capital  
Bank of America - BA Continuum India Pvt. Ltd.  
Bertin Family Foundation  
BURGER KING McLAMORE<sup>SM</sup> Foundation  
Caerus Foundation, Inc.  
Myriad Asset Management Ltd.  
The Stone Family Foundation  
The World Bank

### \$50,000 – \$99,999

AT&T Communication Services India Private Limited  
Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
The Boeing Company  
Dining Concepts  
Dodge & Cox  
Dr. Ausbüttel & Co. GmbH  
Eastman Chemical  
Ecove Group  
Facebook  
Gruber Family Foundation  
The Hans Foundation

### IN-KIND DONORS

Books For Africa  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
Credit Suisse AG  
GS Sales  
Gumdrop Books  
Hilton  
Ketchum  
Moët Hennessy Diageo  
Scholastic  
Swire Hotels  
Reliance Capital  
Rosewood Hotel Group  
Tableau

We would like to thank the following organizations for sharing their office space with Room to Read in 2018: Credit Suisse (Hong Kong and Tokyo), Financial Times (London) and Reliance Capital (Mumbai)

# BOARD AND LEADERSHIP

As of August 2019

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

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

**Mary Byron**, Former Partner, Goldman Sachs

**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

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**Dr. Elizabeth M. King**, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

**John Lindfors**, Managing Partner, DST Investment Management

**Dr. Geetha Murali**, CEO, Room to Read

**Stasia Obreskey**, Strategy Director for Contraceptive Technology Development, Rhia Ventures

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**Susan Wojcicki**, CEO, YouTube

**John Wood**, Founder, Room to Read

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**Craig Bruya**, Former CFO, Microsoft Business Solutions

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

**Peter T. Grauer**, Chairman, Bloomberg Inc.

**Tim Koogle**, Former CEO and Chair, Yahoo!

**Alastair Mactaggart**, President, Emerald Fund

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**Dr. Fernando Reimers**, Director of Global Education and International Education Policy, Harvard University

**Muneer Satter**, Chair, Satter Investment Management

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Lynne and Michael Taylor

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Koh Toh Tzu and Antony Ng

David and Catherine Zemans

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Marisa Drew

Maria and Elio Leoni-Sceti

Art Mbanefo

Jane del Missier

Björn Nilsson

John Ridding

Erica Wax and Andrew Balls

Randy Work

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**Shari Freedman**, Chief Financial Officer

**Laurie McMahon**, Chief Development and Communications Officer

**Nicole Sayres**, Chief Operating Officer

**Heather Simpson**, Chief Program Officer

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**Dinesh Shrestha**, Co-Founder and Director of Field Operations

**Deepak Dogra**, Director, Asia Program Operations

**Paul Kilambya**, Director, Africa Program Operations

**Rakhi Sarkar**, Country Director, Bangladesh

**Vantha Chea**, Country Director, Cambodia

**Sourav Banerjee**, Country Director, India

**Norkham Souphanouvong**, Country Director, Laos

**Pushkar Shrestha**, Country Director, Nepal

**Vanessa Francis**, Country Director, South Africa

**Shevanthi Jayasuriya**, Country Director, Sri Lanka

**Peter Mwakabwale**, Country Director, Tanzania

**Nuong Nguyen**, Country Director, Vietnam





frishi na Maisha  
**Jithamini**

**Tatu na Paka Wake**

USAID  
UNICEF

# JOIN US.

Quality education for millions of children is within our reach because of you.

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## INVEST IN EDUCATION

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

## JOIN OUR CHAPTER NETWORK

Room to Read has more than 11,000 volunteer chapter members across 35 cities globally. Our chapter network helps the organization succeed through fundraising, hosting events and increasing awareness of our cause. See our website to find a 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.

## FOLLOW US ONLINE

Want to be a part of Room to Read's global community? Join us online to see how we're making illiteracy and gender inequality problems of the past.

-  Facebook: /RoomtoRead
-  Instagram: @RoomtoRead
-  Twitter: @RoomtoRead
-  YouTube: /RoomtoRead
-  LinkedIn: /company/Room-to-Read

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To get involved, visit  
[roomtoread.org/take-action](http://roomtoread.org/take-action).

**Design:** Melanie Doherty Design **Photos:** Inner Cover: Emdadul Islam; 1 & 2: Faruque Azam; 4: Chester Makana; 5: Thanh Tung Nguyen and Khang Thai; 9: William de Lange; 10 & 11: Thien Trang; 15: Julius Mahela; 16: Anne Holmes; 17: Shriluna Shrestha; 18: Sonam Syangden (illustrations), Umeshi Rajeeendra (bottom); 19: USAID Soma Umenye; 23: Socheata Pors; 24: Ngan Bui; 25: Emdadul Islam (top), Julius Mahela (bottom); 26: Varun Chaudhury; 27: Vouchsim Srin (top), Daniel Hayduk (bottom); 31: Sanjog Manandhar; 32: (Clockwise from top left) Tim Anderson, Ithi Fahim, Adam Hollier Photography, Kelly Sullivan/Getty Images for Room to Read, Gates Archive; 33: Adam Hollier Photography; 34: NYSE, Dao Mai Vinh; 35: ANI/PMO (top), Palitha Khamphipa (bottom left); 41: Sharni Jayawadene; Inner Back Cover: Julius Mahela

**TOGETHER,  
THE  
POSSIBILITIES  
ARE  
ENDLESS.**



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**WORLD CHANGE STARTS WITH EDUCATED CHILDREN.®**

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