



**A**mid the challenges presented by COVID-19, we are proud to share that 2021 was a year filled with an abundance of innovative activities that enabled us to benefit more than **8 million new children** in 2021 alone – a new record.

This work has never been more critical, as the pandemic continues to present educational barriers for an entire generation of children. As 2021 closed, a joint report by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank provided an updated glimpse into the state of education worldwide and charted a path to educational recovery. The report highlighted an array of essential components to the recovery process, including evidence-based strategies, innovative interventions and socioemotional support — all of which are pillars of Room to Read's approach.

We are well-equipped to lead these efforts, and we are more determined than ever to help children acquire the skills they need to learn and chart their own futures.

Thanks to generous, dedicated supporters like you, we are already laying the groundwork to benefit more children, in more geographies, using more innovative methods than ever before in the coming year. Your contribution to Room to Read is proof that hope is never out of sight, and that **when education endures, resilience rises.**

Thank you for standing by Room to Read and making it possible for us to benefit millions of children across the globe. With your steadfast partnership, we are ready to make 2022 another record-breaking year.



# Our Results

**32mm+**  
CHILDREN BENEFITED

**21**  
COUNTRIES  
BENEFITED

MORE THAN  
**49,000**  
ACTIVE PARTNER  
COMMUNITIES

*These figures, and the data throughout this report, are conservative estimates as of the end of 2021 and have yet to be audited. They are, therefore, subject to change as our data are verified.*

## Where We Work



A 'camel cart' delivers books to children in India. This is just one innovative approach Room to Read used during the pandemic to ensure continued learning.





As the educational landscape continued to shift across the globe throughout 2021, we maintained flexibility in our programs and evaluation methodologies to best match the evolving needs of children and the education systems that support them. We made exciting new advancements in each of our countries of operation, **benefiting more than 8 million additional children and collaborating with 937 additional schools**, bringing us to a total of **more than 28 million children** benefited through our Literacy Program since we started work in 2000. The following are some highlights:

### NEW LANGUAGES ACROSS AFRICA

Our team in Africa has long been focused on creating materials in underrepresented languages in the children's publishing industry. In 2021, they continued producing materials in Sepedi and isiZulu in South Africa and Kiswahili in Tanzania. They also began the creation of learning materials in four new languages: Xitsonga and isiNdebele in South Africa and Luganda and Ruyankore-Rukiga in Uganda.

### SCALING OUR WORK IN CAMBODIA

In early 2021, our Cambodia literacy team and the country's Ministry of Education worked together to create a National Primary School Library Package. The national package is modeled on Room to Read's library approach. Also in 2021, Room to Read's Cambodia team distributed Home Library Packages to primary school students across the country. The packages included curated sets of storybooks and accompanying guidance for parents. This initiative resulted in the distribution of more than 1.5 million books to 95,000 students in Grades 1-6. During a virtual event, the Cambodian Minister of Education praised Room to Read's efforts to support children and families.

### SUPPORTING BURMESE CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

Over the past two years, our books have helped children cope with the impact of COVID-19 by supporting young learners' social and emotional needs while developing their literacy skills. In Bangladesh, our team selected 10 storybooks that touch on pandemic-related challenges and translated them into Burmese for children in the Rohingya refugee camps. Thirty more quality storybooks were translated into Burmese and English so children in the camps could benefit from a variety of engaging content.



**415**

ROOM TO READ  
PROGRAMS  
BROADCAST VIA  
RADIO

**292,799**

CHILDREN RECEIVING  
NON-DIGITAL MATERIALS

**178**

ROOM TO READ  
PROGRAMS  
BROADCAST  
VIA TV

**50,501**

HOURS OF VIRTUAL  
TRAINING FOR  
TEACHERS, AUTHORS  
AND ILLUSTRATORS

**24,632,088**

DIRECT MESSAGES SENT THAT  
FURTHER LITERACY PROGRAM  
PROGRAMMATIC OBJECTIVES

## READING CAMPAIGNS AND DIGITAL LEARNING INITIATIVES IN INDIA

To facilitate learning at home during the pandemic, our team in India launched a campaign, “India Gets Reading at Home.” Through this initiative, Room to Read created a variety of innovative mobile libraries – including libraries via camel cart, boats and bikes – across nine different states to ensure that learning continued regardless of location. In addition, Room to Read participated in several state and national webinars on education and provided technical support for governmental digital learning initiatives and professional development for teachers.

## LAOS NATIONAL CURRICULUM SUPPORT

Our Laos team has begun to implement an updated instructional model to support the national reading curriculums for Grades 1 and 2. Under

this updated model, the Literacy Program team focuses on cultivating principals’ literacy expertise and coaching skills so that they are well equipped to directly support teachers with implementing the national curriculum. The team will also support principals to facilitate monthly Teacher Learning Circles, where teachers come together in small groups to learn and practice new teaching techniques.

## INFLUENCING NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN TANZANIA

Our literacy team in Tanzania led two workshops with the Tanzania Institute of Education in preparation for the country’s revision of the national literacy curriculum. The first workshop led participants through a collaborative process to determine the letter teaching order for government textbooks. The second crafted a tool that stakeholders will use to identify the gaps in current textbooks. Room to Read then facilitated a four-day workshop to use the tool to review government books. Once new textbooks are completed, they will be distributed to more than 16,000 schools across the country.

## PARTNERING WITH THE SUNDAY TIMES IN SRI LANKA

Room to Read Sri Lanka partnered with *The Sunday Times*, a leading Sri Lankan newspaper, to publish a series of stories titled “Let’s read with Room to Read.” Young readers were also given a chance to win a book by Room to Read by answering trivia questions every week.

## BOOK PUBLISHING

In 2021, we continued to expand [Literacy Cloud](#), our digital library, to include more of our hard copy titles and make our books available in more local languages. To date, Literacy Cloud has **more than 2,128 digital titles in 32 languages**. We also expanded our quality reading materials, which included:

- Distributing more than **2 million books** in 2021
- Publishing **102 original and adapted book titles**
- Adding five new languages (Runyankore Rukiga, Jarai, Sindhi, Garifuna and Miskito)



Through the implementation of innovative programming that combines remote and in-person activities, we continued to provide vital support to girls around the world, many of whom are facing unprecedented pressure to drop out of school due to early marriage or economic constraints. In 2021, we **benefited approximately 400,000 new girls and welcomed 1,919 girls to our growing group of 13,355 secondary school graduates.**

In addition, through distance learning methods, including radio and television programming, we were able to benefit girls outside of our program and provide life skills lessons to help them stay in school and advocate for themselves. Through these initiatives, we have **benefited 3 million new girls** since the start of the pandemic. The following are additional Girls' Education Program (GEP) highlights from 2021:

## GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT IN TANZANIA

In partnership with the Tanzania Institute for Education (TIE), Room to Read helped create national Life Skills Education (LSE) guidelines. Much of this new curriculum is based on Room to Read's LSE framework, and, with the support of TIE, will reach many more students beyond our direct program implementation. Also in Tanzania, Room to Read signed an agreement with the Chalinze District Council in June 2021 to launch a new project centered on supporting girls through life skills and financial literacy. The two-year project will be carried out through July 2023 and will benefit more than 8,000 girls across the district.

## GENDER EQUALITY CURRICULUM FOR BOYS IN CAMBODIA

We know that achieving gender equality is a pursuit that everyone, not just women and girls, must work toward together. We have, therefore, been working

with Promundo and Gender and Development for Cambodia to develop and deliver a life skills curriculum for boys. The curriculum is specifically designed to help boys examine gender norms and stereotypes and is the result of extensive research and pilot assessments that our team in Cambodia has carried out across the country in recent years. In 2021, our team provided training to teachers and other program facilitators so that the curriculum can be delivered at scale.

## TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUAL HEALTH IN INDIA

Our India team conducted a week-long campaign to normalize the conversation around menstrual health and hygiene. Activities included documenting menstruation experiences across several generations and holding virtual discussions with GEP participants and their families as well as prominent reproductive health experts.





## RADIO PROGRAMMING IN NEPAL

Our Nepal team created and released more than 100 unique radio episodes to provide life skills lessons and answer questions from adolescent girls and their families on topics such as managing emotions, creating healthy relationships, delaying marriage, studying at home and setting goals. This content has enabled us to benefit girls who don't have access to TV and the internet during the pandemic.

## VIDEO LIFE SKILLS LESSONS IN VIETNAM

The Vietnam team introduced a series of life skills videos for girls in Grades 7 and 8 that have kept them learning and connected with their teachers during the pandemic. The videos were made available via YouTube and cover topics ranging from critical thinking to reproductive health. Girls would then watch the videos and then participate in virtual discussion groups managed by teachers.

## EVALUATING DISTANCE LEARNING METHODS

To assess the impact of our adapted activities, our Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) team is partnering with Oxford MeasurEd and Fab Inc. to conduct a study, starting with Cambodia, India and Nepal. The research, which began in 2021 and will continue through the first half of 2022, includes interviews with our GEP participants and social mobilizers aimed at gauging how effective our adapted programming has been in meeting the unique needs presented by the global pandemic.



2021 COVID-19 Pandemic Response by the Numbers – Girls' Education

**210**

ROOM TO READ  
PROGRAMS  
BROADCAST VIA TV

**159**

ROOM TO READ  
PROGRAMS  
BROADCAST VIA  
RADIO

**31,322**

UNIQUE GIRLS  
RECEIVING INDIVIDUAL  
REMOTE MENTORING

**11,175**

GIRLS RECEIVING  
NON-DIGITAL  
MATERIALS

**282,242**

REMOTE INDIVIDUAL  
MENTORING SESSIONS



## Strategic Investment Areas

### CLIMATE JUSTICE

Room to Read's strategic plan includes a commitment to strengthening environmentally sustainable practices through our operations and programs. As an organization, we are implementing an impactful and sustainable strategy that will institutionalize environmentally friendly practices at Room to Read. Programatically, our Girls' Education Program team has studied the strong relationship between girls' education and climate justice based on research by academics and practitioners. As a result, we are developing a two-year gender and climate justice curriculum that will help girls build adaptive capacity and become active leaders in climate action. In 2021, we completed the two-year curriculum and in 2022 we will focus on developing the accompanying professional development materials, as well as building out a monitoring and evaluation system before piloting the curriculum in several countries. With this program expansion and our Climate Change book series we are establishing Room to Read as a thought leader in children's climate education.

### GLOBAL LEADER IN QUALITY LEARNING MATERIALS

In our strategic plan, we committed to understanding what role Room to Read can play in our core programs within historically low-income communities. After a feasibility study in our literacy work, we have taken on a book publishing project in the United States.

Similarly, for our girls' education and gender equality focus, we initiated a project in Italy, which

has one of the highest gender gaps in employment in Europe. In addition, we are continuing to publish our stories in minority languages to provide all children with quality learning materials. The following includes some project details:

#### UNITED STATES

To provide high-quality, diverse children's books to children in the U.S. who have limited access to engaging reading materials, we began distributing 6,805 printed sets of our 10-book Peace & Equality Book Collection to more than 40,000 children across underserved communities in California's Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area in 2021. In 2022, we will continue to distribute diverse books to children in underserved areas.

#### ITALY

In Italy, we are developing a content strategy to reach adolescent girls and share our life skills curriculum. This will include engaging with the existing learning framework, as well as creating graphic comics that can be designed to motivate girls to continue their education and plan a life of future employment.

#### PUBLISHING IN MORE MINORITY LANGUAGES

In 2021, our Quality Reading Materials team worked with translators to publish our [Peace & Equality Book Collection](#) in Jarai, an indigenous language of the Montagnard Jarai people, and a minority language in Vietnam and Cambodia. This is part of our overall goal of [expanding storybook languages](#) to be inclusive of minority cultures.





## GIFT FROM MACKENZIE SCOTT AND DAN JEWETT

In 2021, we received a \$25 million gift from MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett – our largest donation to date. This generous gift will help us mitigate the risks to our goals posed by COVID-19, thereby ensuring that education endures for millions of children. It also will enable us to boost efficiencies – amplifying the impact of every donation made to Room to Read.

## GLOBAL BOARD TRANSITIONS

We welcomed several new Global Board members in 2021, including Vicky Tsai, CEO of Tatcha; Lydie Hudson, Chief Executive Officer of Sustainability, Research and

Investment Solutions at Credit Suisse; and Najoh Tita-Reid, Chief Marketing Officer of Logitech. In addition, our Founder John Wood transitioned off of our Global Board of Directors. John will always remain an active member of the Room to Read family as Room to Read’s Founder, and we know he will continue to make a meaningful impact.

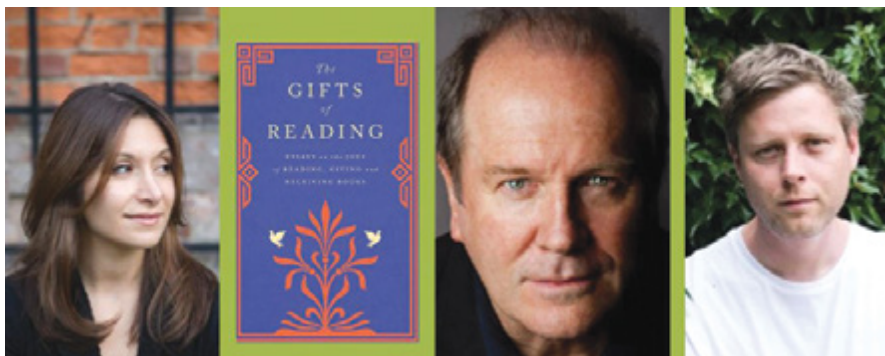
## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Our robust chapter network continued to provide crucial support through events and other activities, including an in-person anniversary event in Chicago, and a virtual discussion with authors who contributed to “The Gifts of Reading” hosted by the Paris Chapter.



## NEW CHARITY NAVIGATOR DISTINCTION

In 2021, we received a perfect score on Charity Navigator’s new Leadership and Adaptability Beacon, an assessment of an organization’s leadership capacity, strategic planning and ability to readily innovate and respond to changes and constituent demands. This is in addition to our “4 Star” rating, which we have received 14 times.







## Thank you

As we continue to write the pages of this new chapter in education, we extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated network of supporters. Your steadfast belief in our work is the reason we have been able to benefit more than 8 million children across the globe in 2021. We look forward to partnering with you in 2022 and creating a world free of illiteracy and gender inequality!



World Change Starts with Educated Children.®