



Our Work in the Middle East

ROOM TO READ OVERVIEW

Room to Read envisions a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to their community and the world. Room to Read furthers this vision through our work in literacy and gender equality in 16 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Middle East. Our goal is to scale our impact in new contexts and geographies so that millions more children can benefit. Since 2000, Room to Read, with the help of its investors and partners, has built a reputation for being effective and efficient, combining best practices from the for-profit and non-profit sectors.

Room to Read has country offices in nine countries in Asia and Africa where we implement our programs through direct implementation and by providing technical assistance to governments and partners. In the Middle East, custom projects are designed with the intent to provide technical assistance that disseminates knowledge to a wider audience, thereby, maximizing our impact. The focus of our technical assistance work is to share our expertise and resources with partner organizations through the provision of training materials, workshops, periodic support and monitoring, to maximize the quality of implementation and, in turn, replicate our work. Our work in Indonesia and Myanmar for example, is gaining momentum with the government and local organizations seeking our expertise. We are also currently launching our first project in Pakistan and gearing up for potential projects in Sierra Leone and Uganda.



THE CONTEXT

1 in 5

CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IS NOT IN SCHOOL.¹

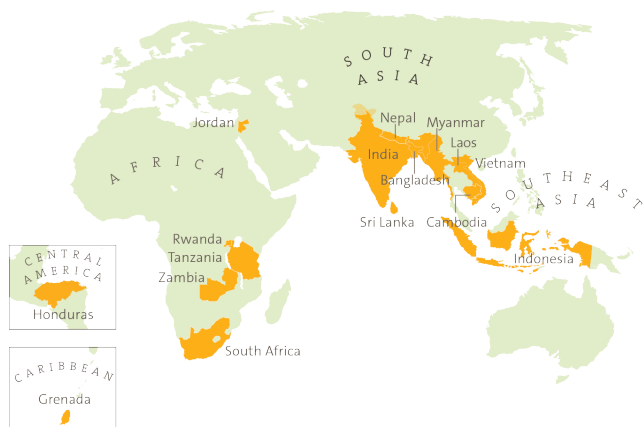
OF THOSE WHO DO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION, MANY FIND THEMSELVES UNEQUIPPED FOR THE LABOUR MARKET, AND UNABLE TO ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL AND DIGNIFIED WORK.

¹<https://www.unicef.org/mena/education>

ROOM TO READ IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Room to Read's initial work in the Middle East started in Jordan. Through our recent work with Sesame Workshop, our reach will extend to Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. With the success of this work, we have developed a vision for expanding our reach in the region to benefit children across multiple countries, including Egypt. By establishing relationships with potential partner organizations to implement our programs with local communities, schools and governments, we believe we can greatly impact the lives of children across the region.

Room to Read is a leading international nonprofit founded on the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children.® Since 2000, we have benefited 16.8 million children in more than 37,000 communities across 16 countries.



OUR IMPACT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Room to Read's first project in Jordan, supported by Dubai Cares, was focused on building the capacity of local partners to develop high-quality storybooks in Arabic. We trained writers, illustrators and publishers in Jordan and as a result 600,000 copies of 20 new storybooks were distributed across the country, to local Jordanian children and to refugee girls and boys. In the next five years, we aim to deepen our impact in Jordan by collaborating with strong partner organizations to implement a library program that supports children fostering a habit of reading.

As a result of our first book publishing project in Jordan, Room to Read was selected to be the Print Content Creator for Ahlan Simsim, a joint, five-year project between Sesame Workshop and the International Rescue Committee serving the needs of Syrian children displaced by conflict in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. The overall project targets young children and their caregivers and seeks to provide them with training and learning materials around early childhood education, including the domains of literacy, numeracy and socioemotional skills. Over a nine-month period, Room to Read led the development of 12 storybooks and activity sheets that feature Sesame Street's Ahlan Simsim characters. Room to Read writer and illustrator workshops took place in Jordan, and the books which were developed to meet the needs of Syrian refugee and host community children ages 3-6, will be distributed in **Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.**

Expanding to Egypt: Room to Read is eager to replicate the Jordan book publishing project in Egypt by partnering with the Ministry of Education, local authors, illustrators and publishers to develop, print and distribute 20 new Arabic titles. We also propose to adapt 10-15 titles that Room to Read developed in Jordan, choosing those that we consider relevant to the Egyptian context. These books would be re-versioned into Egyptian Arabic and collectively we would work to have these titles distributed throughout the country. Additionally, we are interested in exploring the opportunity to establish school libraries in the country in order to provide models of a space filled with engaging resources for children to foster their habit of reading and where teachers are trained to conduct reading activities that support the development of strong reading skills.



OUR LITERACY PROGRAM MODEL

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. Our Literacy Program transforms primary schools into child-friendly learning environments that enable girls and boys to become lifelong, independent readers (e.g. children who possess both literacy skills and a habit of reading). We ensure 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.

Our program consists of these four components:

- **Libraries:** Safe and child-friendly learning environments
- **Teacher training and support**
- **Quality reading materials**
- **Family and community engagement**

OUR KEY PARTNERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

