



EDUCATION EQUALS



ROOM TO READ INDIA







EDUCATION EQUALS

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COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S









Country Director, Room to Read India

Dear Friends,

nce again, I have the pleasure of presenting Room to Read India's Annual Report. As the oganization nears two decades of its work in India, I reflect on the pride I have felt over the years whenever I've heard stories of children, especially girls, finding their voice through education. That's what our work has always been about — creating a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that prepares them to be fulfilled and to make positive change in their families, their communities and the world. Decades of work and witnessing positive change through education has taught us that education is a great equalizer. The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on local communities have reinforced this belief.

The humanitarian crisis caused by COVID-19 in 2020 further intensified this year, increasing the number of challenges children faced in accessing education. On a personal level, 2021 also proved to be far more gruelling. Grief, stress and anxiety had a profound effect on teachers, children, our staff, supporters and well-wishers. Yet, we were determined to deliver solutions that would help children continue their education. We started by strategizing pandemic-specific interventions that would meet the immediate needs of children. At the same time, we remained focused on the future and new opportunities that would allow us to rebuild and address learning loss once schools reopened.

During school and library closures, we adapted our Literacy Program to benefit children in innovative ways. First, we implemented 'Home as a Learning Space', where we helped ensure children had the space, resources and support needed to continue learning at home.

Through our flagship campaign, "#IndiaGetsReadingAtHome," we aligned our activities with the Ministry of Education's "Guidelines for Parent Participation in Home-based Learning during School Closures and Beyond." Reaching out to more than seven lakh people across nine states, we created a powerful, widespread movement in children's learning journey. Our other flagship campaign, '#HARKADAMBETIKESANG: Leadership Ki Tarang 2021', reaching out to one lakh people across six states, created a space for girls to thrive as leaders.

Our Literacy Cloud digital library and physical copies of new storybooks brought comfort to children by providing engaging content in their local languages. I am proud to share that our Hindi adaptation of "A World Without Wheels" won the first prize in the children's book category of the Federation of Indian Publishers' Awards for Excellence in Book Production 2021.

In addition to these innovative adaptations and pandemic interventions, our team did the steady, every-day work, across our programs, to create continuity in children's education. You will read about this and so much more in this annual report. Through our consolidated efforts across various activities, in 2021 we were able to benefit 1.11.52.524 children.



Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Slowly but surely, schools are reopening, and Room to Read India has more work to do. For starters, our team is working with schools, educators and caregivers to get children, especially the adolescent girls back to school and addressing their huge learning loss will be one of the bigger challenges. Addressing this loss will take considerable time, but we are ready for the work ahead!

Our engagement with the government has been fruitful. The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) and National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) have created a strong policy environment for our work. It is humbling to have already received requests from various governments for support with development of state curricular framework and NIPUN planning.

We celebrated another success this year when we were featured as a 'Great Place to Work' for seventh straight year. This recognition reiterates that CARES (Collaboration, Action, Respect, Education, Scale) values are at the core of what we do at Room to Read India. We were also listed in the top 50 mid-sized category workplaces across all sectors in India.

I congratulate the Room to Read India team for their commitment to transforming the lives of millions of children through education and creating a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality. Our Governing Board has been phenomenal with the strategic direction and guidance to us. Our partners – government, corporate and others share equally in all our successes, and I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to them.

In the coming year, together with our stakeholders, we hope to build a world where all children have the education and life skills to realize their full potential and prosper.



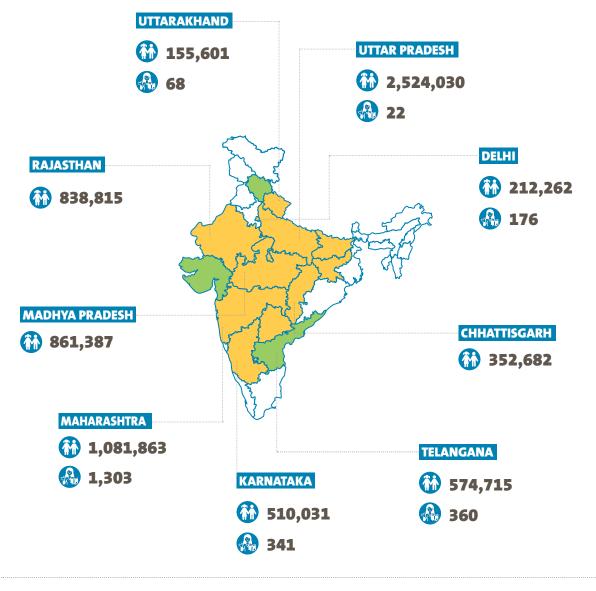






INDIA COUNTRY BENEFIT

Room to Read India had worked countrywide across 14 states, positively influencing the lives of millions of children and thousands of teachers, parents and caregivers. The data below represents our active intervention across states in 2021. We were able to benefit a significantly high number of stakeholders through the use of mass media channels including television and radio. Our digital content, disseminated through popular mediums like WhatsApp, Email, Telegram, etc., also benefited stakeholders far and wide.



Children **Benefited**

Teachers **Benefited**

Active Intervention States

Dormant Intervention States







LITERACY PROGRAM

Total Active Schools

Total Libraries **Established**

Total Titles **Published**

Total **New Books Adaptations**

Total Books **Distributed**

Total Instruction **Based Projects**

Total Teachers Trained







82









348

219,563

245

2,270

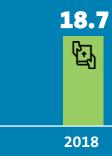
Total Children Benefited

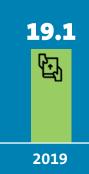
6,821,622

CHECK IN-CHECK OUT* OF BOOKS

Per-student-per-year from libraries







0.0 2020

0.4 囹

2021

*Due to lockdown & school closures owing to the pandemic, most school libraries were not utilized in 2020 & 2021.

GIRLS EDUCATION PROGRAM (GEP)

Total Girls Benefited

294,202

Girls Attending Life Skills Training

2016



78%

Advancement **Rate Among Girls** Who Stayed in GEP



99%

Total GEP Graduated **Scholars**



543

Scholars Passed Gatekeeping Exams (%)



100%

Scholars

Total Active



January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021

DUCATION **EOUALS**

DUCATION **EQUALS**





LITERACY PROGRAM

ducation brings waves of opportunity for children so that they can become independent, lifelong readers. Having strong foundational literacy improves children's overall quality of life and prepares them to make positive change in their families, communities and the world. Room to Read India's Literacy Program builds a thriving ecosystem that focuses extensively on early grade learning by training and coaching teachers, creating quality books and curricular materials, and establishing libraries filled with children's books in local languages.

With over two decades of experience and scientific research, the program offers children a well-researched comprehensive literacy approach, to develop independent and fluent early grade readers. Room to Read India combines the science of learning with the magic of reading, to enable an environment that helps early learners acquire knowledge, unlock their potential, achieve their goals and actively participate in their community and society at large.



SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH LEARNING AT HOME OPPORTUNITIES

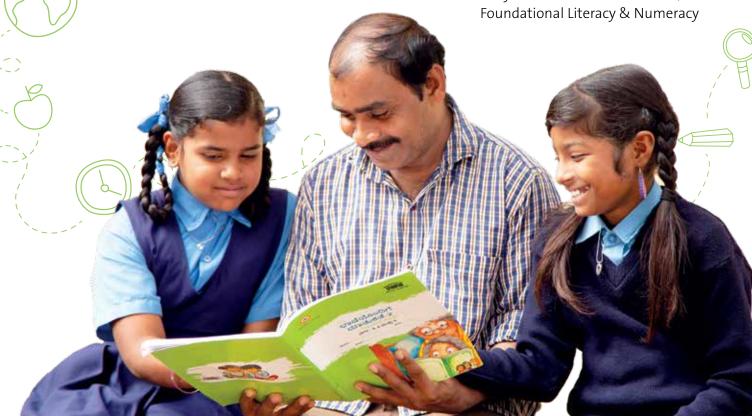
he COVID-19 pandemic severely affected education by worsening learning gaps, even in 2021. While primary schools continued to remain closed, children carried on learning at home with the support of Room to Read India's mixed modality approach (online and offline resources) and effective initiatives from 2020. Our emphasis was on making our "Home as a Learning Space" intervention more structured in order to better engage and provide support to parents and caregivers so that they were well prepared to help their children participate in educational activities in the home.

Furthermore, Room to Read India improved the policy and system level preparation across all intervention states focusing on the COVID-19 learning crisis, the National Education Policy 2020, and NIPUN Bharat 2021. During testing times, we identified learning gaps in education and explored opportunities for collaboration, especially opportunities for system strengthening and curriculum development capacity building, educators knowledge sharing creations and a continuous online engagement plan for 'teachers'.

Some notable mentions include our contributions in preparing a five-year perspective plan on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. These contributions were made considering the NIPUN Bharat mission as a leading technical partner to the State government in the SCF (State Curriculum Framework) development process. It particularly included assisting the government with four positions papers:

- Language education
- Teacher education

- Role of community in Education
- Early Childhood Care Education, and





NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVES CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

oom to Read India devised strategies and initiatives and partnered with key stakeholders in the field of education to enable a conducive learning environment for early learners and their parents.



One of the digital resources for COVID-19 developed by Room to Read India

Digital

- Read Aloud Videos
- Audio Stories

Unique Initiatives

- Balvatika Package
- Twelve Week School Readiness Package

Learning at Home

Parent Calendar & Handbook



- Reading Campaign
- Pledge Reading Time: Reading Together with Children in Home, School & Community
- Nalanda at Home WhatsApp Chatbot Launch for Teachers and Students
- Literacy Kit Distribution
- TV & Radio Episodes

Collaborative Activities

Knowledge sharing in KINDLE, a joint initiative by UNICEF, YuWaah, and World Economic Forum

 Information, Education & Communication (IEC) material developed for Information, Education and Communication in

Successful Reading Campaign #MainJahanSeekhnaWahan which benefited

> 13,16,908 people







FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY

An opportunity to build an educated nation

Room to Read India works across the country with an in-depth understanding of factors that can help develop well-read and educated generations. Our Literacy Program enhances and supports six pillars of Foundational Literacy under the Government of India's NIPUN Bharat Mission:



Simplifying the NIPUN Bharat mission, goals and Target for the government, schools, parents and communities. Communicating simply understandable goals to all for developing a truly thriving learning environment for every child.



For early grade learners, developing age and level-appropriate quality books using the GROWBY Model and effective instructional reading materials to nurture comprehensive reading skills and reading habits. Innovating and implementing comprehensive classroom teaching practices to enhance interactive learning experience.



Developing comprehensive teaching learning materials and methodologies that help teachers enhance early learners' reading ability and comprehensive literacy skills. Notable materials include multilingual self-learning packages (MLSLP), different grades literature for children, student's handbooks and teaching manuals with daily lesson plans.

*GROWBY Model: Room to Read India's color-coded book leveling system (Green, Red, Orange, White, Blue, Yellow) for teachers to accurately identify books that children with different reading skill levels will be able to read successfully.



Building capacities by consistently engaging and training teachers, library coaches and master trainers, through tailor-made skill-building initiatives and resources, delivered either independently or in collaboration with SCERT or DIETs.



PILLAR 5 **ENGAGEMENT**

Implementing "Home as a Learning Space" initiative to reduce learning loss caused by school closures. Supporting parents, caregivers and teachers in creating a learning environment at home by providing online and offline resources.



Focused on developing holistic assessment benchmarks and techniques to assess early grade learners' progress and growth, and teachers' mentoring technique and capacity.

DUCATION **EOUALS**



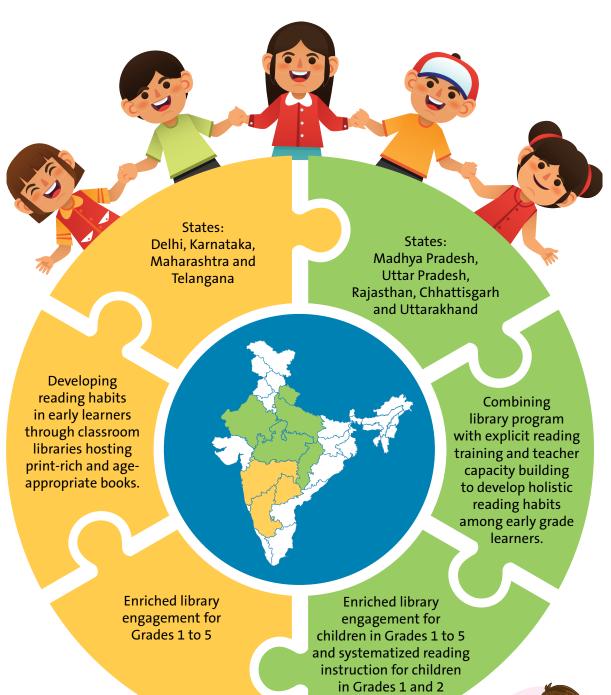
COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY APPROACH

DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT READERS

oom to Read India develops effective reading and comprehension skills in all early grade learners and fosters a lifelong love of learning. Understanding the diverse needs of students, our Literacy Program is implemented with two approaches:

- Library-only approach
- Comprehensive literacy approach





One of our most significant initiative has been the circulation of content-rich level-appropriate library books. As of December 2021, 11,476,414 books were circulated across the country. These books are conceptualized and developed by Room to Read India's distinct Quality Reading Material Team.

LIBRARY-ONLY APPROACH





BOOK PUBLICATIONS

An opportunity to create early readers

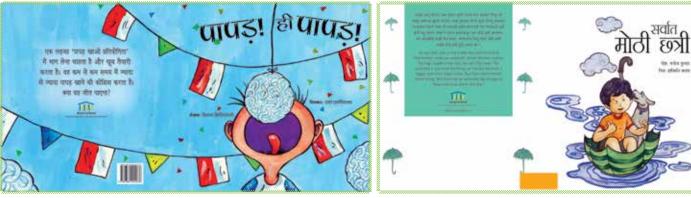
ith a new year came new opportunities to transform local and regional folklores into engaging storybooks in four different languages — Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada. This year, six new unique titles were published, resulting in a total of 220 Room to Read original publications.

Our book publishing work ensures age-appropriate and culturally relevant books, in local languages, that correspond to young readers' reading skills and social-emotional learning levels. These stories, characters and themes resonate with young readers, capturing their imaginations and making reading fun.



'Sawallo ke Sawaal' was penned by the acclaimed feminist, activist and poet, Late Kamla Bhasin Seven international Room to Read titles were translated into four Indian vernacular languages in 2021. These titles — part of Room to Read's Peace & Equality Collection — explored opportunities related to creating a peaceful and just world.

Additionally, two titles that addressed issues of climate change were published last year. These storybooks were developed by Room to Read India team in a global workshop where more than 10 countries came together to ideate and create thought provoking books for children. The first title focused on a legend of the valley of flowers in Uttarakhand, and the growing risk to the environment due to climate change. The second title portrayed a snow leopard searching for a home amidst significant habitat loss. These books help to educate children about environmental sustainability and prepare them to be future citizens of the world.







One of our most exciting projects of 2021 was the development of children's literature on transgender lives and community at the request of the Chhattisgarh Government. After the initial workshop was organized with educationists, experts, activists and members of the transgender community, Room to Read India began developing two titles for Grades 5 and 8, and Grades 9 and 12.







LITERACY CLOUD

An open-to-all opportunity to read and learn anytime and anywhere





oom to Read offers Literacy Cloud as a simple, technology-driven and freely accessible digital library for children to read, learn and grow with high-quality children's literature in their local languages. The open-to-all platform offers easy-to-access online books, developed by children's authors and illustrators from around the world.

The titles are published in 24 different languages including six Indian regional languages. Access them at www.literacycloud.org

The digital library is an ever-expanding ocean of resources, featuring easy-to-read books, read-aloud videos by well-known personalities including domain experts, education leaders and government officials, and professional development resources for teachers, authors and illustrators. With nearly 1,600 book titles, Literacy Cloud serves as an online knowledge hub to promote effective foundational literacy skills among early-grade learners.







Room to Read India's Literacy Program's extensive collaboration with government, local and school communities enabled our leaders to help create opportunities for primary school children to develop literacy skills and a habit of reading.



www.literacycloud.org



SNEHA'S LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

hen Sneha's sister accidentally dropped her phone and broke it, Sneha's whole world of learning opportunities came crashing down. An ocean of worries came into her mind instantly. How will she continue her classes? Can her mother afford to purchase a new phone? Will she be able to view and learn digital learning materials independently?

Sneha, a first-generation learner, is a Grade 5 student in a government school in Bangalore. Sneha has shown impeccable learning growth as part of the Room to Read India's Library Program since 2019.

As the first lockdowns started and classes shifted online, Sneha began using her mother's smartphone — the only smartphone in her house. It was her first time using the device, but Sneha eagerly carried on with all the assigned tasks. As classes resumed online, Sneha started receiving activity sheets and workbooks — developed by Room to Read India — via her school's WhatsApp groups. Along with the study material, Room to Read India also disseminated digitized storybooks and read-aloud videos, which were also circulated in the group. Storybooks engaged and excited Sneha, and they took her mind away from being stuck at home. Sneha's siblings thoroughly enjoyed it as Sneha read out the stories to them. It was all working well until that unfortunate

When the phone slipped and fell from her sister's hand, Sneha panicked. She shared the situation with her mother but didn't ask for a new phone, knowing their financial situation. Determined to continue her education, she approached her teachers and Room to Read India staff, who assured Sneha they would have a solution soon.

Within days, an opportunity for relief materialized in the form of "Literacy Kits," developed by Room to Read India, the kits included activity sheets, storybooks and many other engaging learning materials to support students learning remotely without reliable internet or access to technology. Another opportunity followed, in the form of "Radio Episodes" which allowed Sneha and many early learners like her to listen to stories and lessons without incurring the cost of a smartphone. After listening to the stories, Sneha and her siblings would often narrate the stories to their mother.

Room to Read India's focus was on coming up with innovative opportunities to mitigate the learning loss caused by pandemic lockdowns and the digital divide. By creating

opportunities to benefit children through low-tech solutions, Room to Read India ensured that students even in the remotest of areas continued to receive the support they needed to continue their education remotely. These innovations from Room to Read India's Literacy Program team have helped millions of students like Sneha continue learning.





GIRLS EDUCATION PROGRAM

ducation is at the center of helping young adolescent girls fulfill their dreams. Pandemic-related lockdowns have affected the lives of thousands of girls. Many were forced to drop out of school under severe pressure from family, leaving their dreams unfulfilled. This year has been riddled with challenges in supporting girls to continue their education.

Room to Read India's Girls Education Program helps to ensure that adolescent girls can complete their secondary education with the necessary life skills to negotiate key life decisions and make informed choices about their own lives. Room to Read India works closely with families, schools and local communities through local mentors, known as social mobilizers, to understand gender-specific challenges and find solutions using an evolved mixed modality approach:





EDUCATION **EQUALS**

BUILDING BIGGER DREAMS

n 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the social-emotional and psychological health of adolescent girls due to the enforced restrictions and altered teaching-learning environments. The situation worsened for adolescent girls from low-income households and rural areas who faced pressure to dropout. A survey conducted by Room to Read India among 10,132 Girls' Education Program participants (April – June 2020) revealed that almost 50 percent of the girls were affected in some way and were unsure if they could continue with their education.

To deal with this crisis for the adolescent girls, Room to Read India adopted the following action points:

Action Point #1



Mixed modality approach and innovations: A blend of offline and online methods woven in a comprehensive strategy — life skills education and gender equality based on innovative self-reflection and learning materials coupled with phone-based programming (internet and non-internet-enabled), postal service-based component, and campaigning for girls' education and gender equality.

Action Point #2



System strengthening and technical assistance: Utilizing innovative reflection and self-learning materials at Government Education Portals and Platforms for improving access to quality learning materials for adolescent girls and working with State Education Bodies to incorporate life skills education into the mainstream curriculum.

Action Point #3

Active Collaborations: Engaging teachers, parents, caregivers, and adolescent girls in dealing with the issues of girls' education and gender equality through life skills approach.







Using a mixed modality approach, Room to Read India developed, disseminated and oriented adolescent girls, social mobilizers, teachers and parents on innovations for providing safe space and material support to adolescent girls. In addition, the delivery of life skills resources has been ensured via remote means through virtual platforms, telephonic conversations and remote mentoring support. We have undertaken regular capacity-building sessions for teachers under the Continuous Learning Enhancement Training Program (CLET) in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Room to Read India has established a strong collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, and Government of NCT Delhi, to encompass the Life Skills Program pilot in five Child Care Institutes for Girls and then further design a program for all members of the Child Care Institution. Further, Room to Read India collaborated with Dhad in Uttarakhand, the first-of-a-kind engagement with a membership-based organization involving a citizens group that has evolved on the premise of mass cooperation. The collaborative engagement through a state-level seminar discussed why women role models and women leadership inspire girls. The collaboration promoted system integration and advocacy with a like-minded organization.

Room to Read India developed its first-ever online course for life skills educators to be housed on the government's Learning Management System (LMS) — Diksha. The prototype of the final course and the script of the first course for the Chhattisgarh government was submitted in December 2021.

Room to Read India actively contributed to the formulation of the focus group papers as part of the State Curriculum Framework workshops organized by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in Rajasthan, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. We incorporated a gender-sensitive outlook in 24 papers, and assisted with its chapterization.







NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVESWEAVING DREAMS

oom to Read India evolved and adapted its program components and introduced several unique initiatives in 2021 to continue empowering adolescent girls across different geographies in the country.

Remote Mentoring & Support

- Phone-based program implementation
- Home visits by teachers and social mobilizers

Life Skills Innovation

- Conversation Box for adolescent girls to share their experiences and opinions anonymously
- Reflection circles

Mass Media to Amplify Reach

- Radio Programming
- TV Programming

Self-Learning Initiatives: Learn at Home Materials

- Swayam Audio-Visual Series
- Life Skills in a Box
- Life Skills on Wheels
- Self-Learning Worksheets
- New Teacher Handbooks
- New Self-Help Books
- Master Trainer Manuals
- Satrangi Comics Book Series
- Gupshup Newsletter
- Soojh Bhooj ka Chashma

Collaborative Initiatives

- Model Life Skills Centre with focused Information, Education & Communication materials in Telangana
- Life Skills Collaborative Work in Uttarakhand
- Knowledge sharing in KINDLE, a joint initiative by UNICEF, YuWaah, and World Economic Forum



Satrangi OF Comics
Book Series









NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

A dream for a gender-equal world

ational Education Policy 2020 envisions the development of 21st-century learners with enhanced critical thinking and analysis skills. The policy embodies objectives that Room to Read India has been aiming since it started working in India nearly two decades back.



PILLAR 1

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS Developing strategies to reduce adolescent girls' dropout rates by establishing necessary action plans.



PILLAR 2

CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

Developing life skills education programs that address the capacity building needs of adolescent girls.



PILLAR 3

TEACHERS' CAPACITY BUILDING

Building teacher and master trainer capacity through flagship training programs and specially developed teaching learning materials.



PILLAR 4

SCALING UP INITIATIVE

Working with state resource groups to provide technical assistance on promoting girls' education and sharing knowledge and expertise on inclusive gendertransformative practices.



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Developing safety frameworks for schools, creating cross-learning opportunities for government authorities and school administration, and sharing resources for awareness initiatives and activities. Advocating for the inclusion of such gender-sensitive parameters in the National Curriculum Framework, State Curriculum Framework by State Council of Educational Research and Training and overall National Education Policy 2020 by the government.



DUCATION **EQUALS**



SUCCESS STORY#2



SEEMA BREAKS BARRIERS

Ithough Seema looks like any other girl studying for her 10th standard, her life is unlike the lives of her peers. She was married at the age of 12, as is the custom in her community. Even though she stayed with her parents until she completed her education, she was constantly pressured to drop out of school and move in with her husband's family during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Seema was adamant about continuing her studies, but she was afraid her parents would give in to cultural pressures.

Seema was born in the Ajmer district in Rajasthan. Seema's father works as a construction laborer and her mother is a housewife and occasionally works as a farm laborer to support the family. In Seema's community, early marriage is a common practice. Describing her marriage, Seema recounted that it felt like her dreams were being taken away before she could make her own decisions. Seema has participated in the life skills lessons as part of Room to Read India's Girls Education Program since she was promoted to Grade 6. Since then, life skills lessons have helped her find her voice. Sessions that have addressed safe and unsafe touch, covered under the ARSH module (Adolescent Reproductive & Sexual Health), have resonated with her in understanding her own needs and wishes. The communication and critical thinking modules have enabled her to polish her negotiation skills and enabled her to communicate how she feels clearly. She admitted that, initially, talking to her parents scared her, but now she can articulate her thoughts clearly and confidently on the issue of

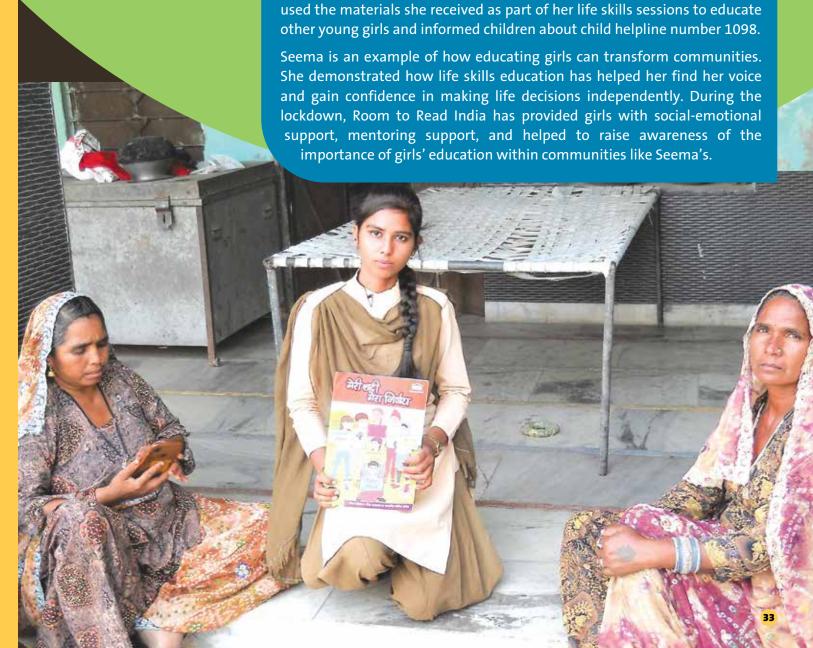
child marriage.

Life skills
education gave me
the courage to stand
up for my education
despite the decision of
my family members
for my life.

— Seema

During the lockdown, Seema faced constant pressure to discontinue her education and move in with her husband's family. She knew that she would be unable to complete her Grade 10 exam if she shifted to her inlaw's place. Seema made the decision to continue her education and reached out to her social mobilizer to help negotiate matters with her parents. She made it clear to everyone that she would not move anywhere before completing her 12th standard exams and if she was harassed about the matter further, she would be willing to call off her wedding. Seema's mother became her biggest supporter on her decision to continue further education.

Seema dreams of becoming a police constable one day and helping other girls fight this social injustice. Having been a victim of child marrige, she has already started expressing her opinions on early marriage to help other young girls. Displaying strong leadership skills during the lockdown, she used the materials she received as part of her life skills sessions to educate other young girls and informed children about child helpline number 1098.







COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WITH PARTNER AGENCIES

oom to Read India's partnerships have been critical for us to ensure results through our Literacy Program and Girls' Education Program.

Home as a Learning Space

Partner – UNICEF

In Jharkhand and Rajasthan, a COVID-19 learning response was initated to minimize learning loss under the Home as a Learning Space Project. The project started in October 2021 and continues to support parents and caregivers to create childfriendly learning spaces with the materials and instruction needed for children to continue their education at home.

Home as a learning space was implemented with the support of strong schoolcommunity partnerships and buy-in from the larger community, which has become part of the larger learning ecosystem. The digital and non-digital educational resources distributed through this project benefited 20,000 students studying in Grades 1 through 5 from 349 schools.



India Partnership for Early Learning (IPEL) Project

Partners – USAID, CARE India, Central Square Foundation, KPMG

The USAID-funded IPEL is a five-year project aligned with the NIPUN Bharat Mission. The project is managed by a consortium of partners led by CARE USA to work with state governments toward transforming foundational learning. Room to Read India acts as a technical partner for literacy in the consortium. IPEL will benefit public and private schools in 137 districts in Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC). Over five years, the project will benefit 66 million primary public school-going children in India.

Room to Read India came together with the consortium partners — CARE India, Central Square Foundation and KPMG Advisory Services Limited India — to initiate the India Partnership for Early Learning in September 2021.

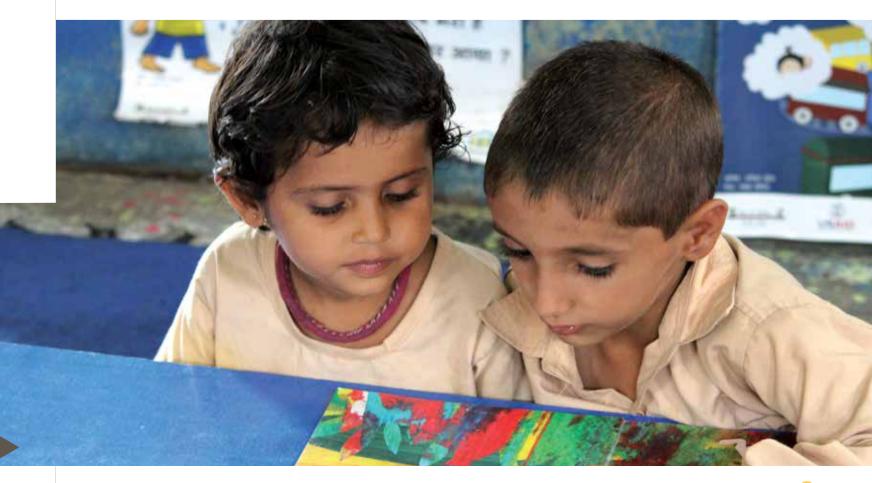
Life Skills Collaborative (LSC)

Partners – Government of Uttarakhand and 18 partners including CAF America

Life Skills Collaborative is a collective of 18 like-minded organizations. Since January 2021, Room to Read India anchors the Life Skill Collaborative as a government engagement partner. In collaboration with the Uttarakhand Education Department, Room to Read India facilitated a pilot project to develop a life skills glossary and assessment tools in three districts of the state, incorporating state-specific contextualized inputs.

The project will provide evidence of community and system readiness and help the government in establishing a state-wide assessment framework for key life skills among children. Room to Read India utilizes the assessment tools across three districts of Uttarakhand to benefit 5,000 adolescents and 250 teachers across the districts.





DUCATION **EQUALS**







Mission Ankur has a two-pronged approach towards the design and delivery of FLN initiatives across Madhya Pradesh:

- State level FLN reform across 51 districts
- Demonstration of pilot innovations and research in two innovation districts –
 Sehore and Shajapur

Using the two-pronged approach, Room to Read India plays the role of technical partner and simultaneously anchors the program implementation in two innovation districts.



Nashik School Library Program for Primary Grades

Partner – R. G. Manudhane Foundation for Excellence

In 2019, Room to Read India launched the library program across Nashik district in Maharashtra. The project supports children as they develop a 'love for reading' and 'reading habits' through 247 school libraries in 1,90,000 early grade learners from 3,300 schools over four years (2019–2023) in the district. In addition, the project will train 3,300 teachers and 244 Kendra Pramukhs (Cluster Cadre).



Project Vijayi

Partner – IKEA Foundation

Room to Read India and IKEA Foundation partnered to support 68,700 adolescent girls in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. Starting in 2019, a three-year-long Project Vijayi helped adolescent girls complete their education, acquire critical employability skills and negotiate key life decisions that prepared them to make positive change for themselves, their families and ultimately for future generations. The project also focused on improving government policies and support from parents to provide additional support to adolescent girls.

In Chhattisgarh, Project Vijayi focused on growth and development of adolescent girls from Grades 6 through 8 in all Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), Porta-Cabins, Ashramshalas and Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission hostels. In Rajasthan, Project Vijayi focused on supporting adolescent girls from 186 KGBVs from Grades 9 through 12.

Scaling up Early Reading Intervention (SERI)

Partner - USAID

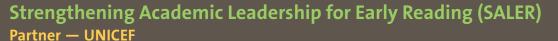
Since 2015, Room to Read India has received extensive support from the United States Agency for International Development India for an innovative early grade reading program at scale, benefitting children in government primary schools across Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Scaling up the Early Reading Intervention (SERI) project supported nearly 4,00,000 early grade learners and helped build capacities of more than 19,000 teachers to become more efficient mentors for young children.

The SERI project has successfully reached the 'You Do'* phase of project interventions and activities. Room to Read India has now taken the lead on the technical assistance and now works strategically for systematic change and scale-up to increase the benefit to early grade learners.



^{*}Room to Read India works on a scaffolded "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach, whereby we first demonstrate the model in selected government schools (Demonstration schools – I Do), then work in close collaboration with the government to scale up this model, where we support the program's implementation (Partnership Schools – We Do), and finally, we plan a larger spread along with increased government ownership for sustainability of the approach (You Do).

36



2018 marked the beginning of SALER, where Room to Read India, with the support of UNICEF, began the project in Barwani, Madhya Pradesh, to ensure that children acquire reading skills with fluency and comprehension by the end of Grade 3 and develop the habit of reading by the end of Grade 5. Room to Read India incorporated the approach to strengthen and systematically empower the government and school-level agents, including Cluster Academic Coordinators (CACs), Block Academic Coordinators (BACs), master trainers and teachers.

Room to Read India undertook the following activities in 2021 as part of the SALER Project:

- Capacity building of CACs, BACs, master trainers and teachers, including the Early Literacy Initiative (ELI) handout book, nine articles on language learning were distributed to 122 officials (94 CACs, 22 BACs, and 6 BRCCs)
- Finalization and roll out of the Multilingual Self-learning Package and upscaling of learning from Multilingual Self-learning Package to other districts in the Indore Division
- Dissemination of 30 read aloud videos, 30 digital flip books, and 30 audio games via the government-led DigiLEP platform
- In November 2021, the following materials were distributed to address learning loss -
- » 48,000 worksheets in 1,600 schools
- » 24,490 library storybooks in Hindi in 62 clusters
- 6,230 library books in English in 62 clusters





The COVID-19 Learning Response

Partner — Wells Fargo

A short project from January 2021 to August 2021 was undertaken by Room to Read India to support immediate COVID-19 response activities in Karnataka. The project helped to prevent temporary school closures from becoming permanent barriers to early grade learners' completion of schooling.

Understanding the challenges in access to technology, Room to Read India prepared and broadcasted literacy episodes in the Kannada language via radio, developed a new Distance-Learning Literacy Kit, and developed a series of 10 audio-visual teaching-learning materials and reading cards for

While the initiatives through mass media benefited children and households across the state, Room to Read India provided learning solutions to 15,876 students from 147 schools in Grades 1 through 5 across three districts.



Rethinking Girls Education Program

Partner — Warburg Pincus

Starting in 2020, Room to Read India worked across the state of Telangana to swiftly design three efficient strategies to meet the immediate, pandemic-specific educational needs of the adolescent girls in our Girls' Education Program.

STRATEGY

Intensify community mobilization and support for girls' education

STRATEGY

Promote genderresponsive life skills education across the state (offline & online)

STRATEGY

Demonstrate an in-school life skills intervention (post-school reopening) in 72 KGBVs in five districts

Benefit



500.000

Girls benefited (7,000 girls directly benefited, 493,000 girls benefited through distance

Community Members

benefited (based on goal for

the statewide campaign to reach

approximately 15 percent of rural

population)

14.000

Villages benefited



KGBV teachers and wardens benefited

officials benefited



600 **Master trainers**

benefited

100

Government

These strategies helped girls in Room to Read India's Girls Education Program navigate the pressures to drop out of school to work, marry or to otherwise support their families. They also provided motivation for girls to return to the classroom as schools reopened. While working directly with 72 KGBVs across five districts (Gadwal, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Narayanpet and Waranparthy), Room to Read India used mixed modality approach to increase the reach and positive effects

Endures

of Education

(COVID-19

Response)





COVID-19 RESPONSE

ducation and resilience have become synonymous with each other in the ongoing learning crisis brought about by COVID-19. India experienced one of the longest school closures in the world (ASER* 21). As the pandemic affected the livelihood of low-income families, drop-out rates rose, and continue to rise, especially among older children and adolescent girls. ASER 2020 reported the proportion of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years not currently enrolled in school increased from 2.5 percent to 4.6 percent between 2018 and 2020. The largest drop in enrollment was for the youngest age group of 6 to 10 yearolds. Understanding the growing requirements to improve resilience in early learners and adolescent girls, we assessed and accumulated the opportunities and gaps in the learning cycle of each child. To ensure education continuity, quick innovation, and adaptation of nontraditional teaching and learning practices needed to be ushered in.

As a result, Room to Read India undertook a mixed modality model of online and offline resources and delivery to ensure and enrich the learning journey of children. While online resources played their role, we made extensive use of offline resources and traditional media channels to extend our outreach to children, even beyond Room to Read India intervention states.



COVID-19 REACH DATA

Literacy Program (January to December 2021)



Direct households benefited

1,67,057



Direct messages shared

1,82,25,738



Virtual training to teachers and parents (in hours) 14,780



Non-digital materials benefited

3,01,657



Radio programs

104



TV programs



Children benefited from radio programs 42,84,725



Households benefited from radio programs .45.88.683

*Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), India's largest NGO-run annual survey, has been conducted by Pratham since 2005 to evaluate the relevance and impact of its programs. Findings are disseminated at national, state, district, and village levels, and influence education policies at both state and central levels

Girls Education Program (January to December 2021)



Girls benefited

Government teachers





Guided material support delivered 16,23,220



Government officials benefited



DUCATION **EQUALS**

benefited

1.070



Schools benefited









EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS

EVENTS

India Partnership for Early Learning — IPEL Project Launch in Bihar



The IPEL project partners signed an Memorandum of Understanding with the Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC) to officially launch the project in the state. An MoU signing event was held in the presence of the Honorable Minister of Education, Shri Vijay Kumar Chaudhary on 22nd November 2021 at Patna. The event was attended by the Principal Secretary, the Secretary of

the Department of Women and Child Development, and the State Project Director from the Bihar Education Project Council as well as officials from the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). In addition, key officials from the USAID India Mission team and the IPEL Consortium members were also present.

Addressing the Gender Gap in Education with ET Now



In collaboration with Economic Times Now, Room to Read took a step forward in addressing the gender gap in education. In an hour-long discussion, industry leaders and experts deliberated on 360-degree strategies to mitigate the gender gap within the education system. The panel included Dr. Kiran Bedi – Former IPS officer, Social Activist; Vrinda Swarup -Former Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy.

UCATION **EOUALS**

Ministry of HRD, Government of India; Narayanan Ramaswamy – National Leader Education and Skill Development KPMG in India; and Sourav Banerjee – Country Director, Room to Read India. The panel discussion was telecasted on the ET Now News channel.

CAMPAIGNS

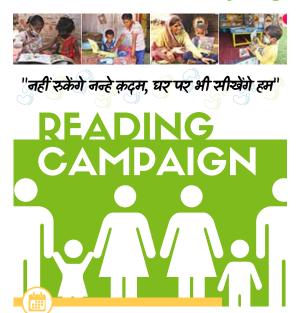
Girls' Education Program Campaign: #HarKadamBetiKeSang: Leadership ki Tarang 2021



Room to Read's annual Girls' Education Campaign — #Harkadambetikesang: Leadership ki Tarang 2021 was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 from July 18th to July 31st and Phase 2 from September 28th to October 12th. The campaign brought to light powerful stories of girls, their families and caregivers that demonstrated resilience and leadership since the onset of COVID-19. Covering six states Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttarakhand, the campaign received overwhelming support from 2,117 government officials

and local bodies. Through a mixed modality approach the campaign reached more than 1,20,000 people in offline mode and garnered 4,45,000+ impressions online across the social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

#MainJahanSeekhnaWahan #IndiaGetsReadingAtHome: **Literacy Program Campaign**



Room to Read India's flagship Literacy campaign #IndiaGetsReadingAtHome was launched in August and culminated on International Literacy Day in September. The three-week-long campaign focused on bolstering community awareness around literacy and the importance of at-home learning spaces, and equipping parents with the resources needed to support their children's learning at home. The campaign benefited children 3 to 8 years of age and their parents, guardians and caregivers directly across Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The campaign received massive support from government officials and local bodies, with 849 amplifying the cause and expanding the reach of the campaign. Room to Read India used unique and creative solutions such as a camel cart library, a bullock cart library, a boat library, and facilitated family reading time activities to support reading and

learning at home. The campaign benefited 7 lakh+ people offline, including children, teachers, parents and caregivers. The online activation registered more than 6 lakh impressions across Room to Read India's social media channels. The campaign was also widely covered by the traditional and online news platforms resulting in 300+ media coverages.

UCATION **EQUALS**





Learning in the New Normal: Multiple Ecosystems

In September 2021, Room to Read India organized a webinar to explore ways and methods to ensure learning endures throughout the pandemic. During the webinar, prominent national and international experts brainstormed ideas to ensure #MainJahanSeekhnaWahan. Dr. Tami Katzir Cohen, Head of Language and Literacy Program, Haifa University; Madhav Chavan, CEO, Pratham; Sheshagiri Madhusudan,



Education Specialist, UNICEF: and Uma Mahadevan, Principal Secretary, Karnataka, and senior Room to Read Leadership India Team shared their unique insights into the matter along more than 1,800+ participants. The webinar vital answered questions about how to shape, leverage and unite all the

ecosystems surrounding a child — be it home, community or school — to ensure that all children have a learning-friendly environment enriched with cognitive development opportunities. Room to Read and the honorable keynote speakers and panelists discussed the challenges and solutions to reach the unreachable, strengthen the educational system and empower parents, community and school to ensure that learning continues despite all odds.



Children's Literature: Contemporary Perspectives

Room to Read India organized a week-long webinar series with USAID India and Doon University on "Children's Perspective: Contemporary Perspectives" in December 2021. The series focused on various aspects and issues concerning children's literature



such as Anthropocene, Children's literature in the context of National Education Policy 2020, feminism, the influence of digital on children's literature, and posthumanism. Prominent academicians, authors and illustrators contributed to the rich webinar discussions.

Some of the key topics discussed included initiatives of National Education Policy 2020 — the need to address issues concerning children's literature, such as ecology, gender and technology, and human relationships with our surroundings. The webinar also elaborated on how reading and writing help children overcome boundaries and the myriad benefits of age-appropriate books on young learners.

International Women's Day 2021

To commemorate International Women's Day, Room to Read India organized a series of webinars on the themes "Classroom to Boardroom: Challenges & Opportunities for Indian Women" and "Gender Equality: From Classroom to Boardroom". The webinars



DUCATION **EQUALS**

brought together women leaders like Nishath Usmani (KPMG), Vandna Ramchandani (Bloomberg), Minoti Bahri (Shikshantar School), Sonali Khan (Sesame Workshop India), and Sangeeta Kumar (Bank of America), who spoke about the need to create and support avenues for gender equality. A twelve-day-long campaign in March was also observed across Room to Read India intervention states to celebrate women's leadership through different activities.



45





AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Room to Read India Ranked Among the Top 50 Great Mid-Sized **Workplaces in India**



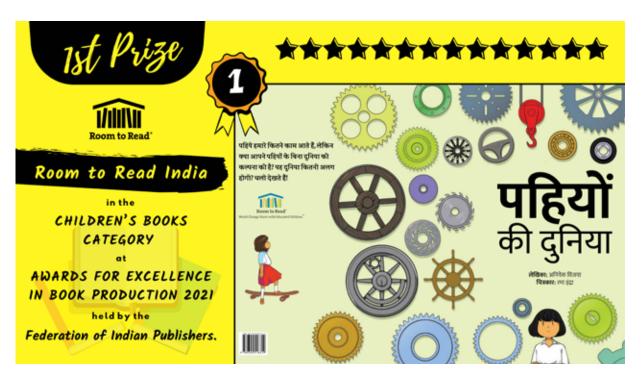
Room to Read India is thrilled to be recognized among India's Great Mid-Sized Workplaces - 2021: Top 50 on 25 June 2021. From being one of the best NGOs in the social sector in India, Room to Read India has now become the 37th best mid-sized category workplace across all the sectors in India.

Click to learn more: https://youtu.be/UFp6BPfJh-M?t=4476

First prize in children's book category: Federation of Indian Publishers' Awards for Excellence

In September 2021, a Room to Read India Hindi adaptation of "A World Without Wheels/Pahiyon ki Duniya" won first prize in the children's book category as part of the Federation of Indian Publishers' Awards for Excellence in Book Production 2021.

The book was adapted into Indian languages in 2020 from the original Indonesian version. The title asks children to imagine a world without wheels - How different would this world be?



Room to Read India Recognized Among India's Top 10 Best NGOs to Work For – 2021

Room to Read India marked its position in India's Great Mid-Sized Workplaces 2021: Top 10 in October of 2021.

For inspiring trust, instilling pride and promoting camaraderie in each employee, Room to Read India was recognized for a seventh straight year as a great place to work. Being certified as a 'Great Place to Work' stands as a testimony to the collective experience of people working at Room to Read India.

In addition, working consistently as a High-Trust, and High-Performance Culture™ organization, Room to Read India's name has featured on Hall of Fame on the Great Place to Work website in the exclusive section dedicated for Great Place to Work-Certified™ organizations.





Room to Read India was recognized for a seventh straight year as a great place to work.







MEDIA COVERAGE

Reading Material

National and regional online and offline

media coverage. Most notable among them are:

The Times of India

- Indian Express
- India Today
- BW Education
- Business Standard
- Economic Times
- ETV Bharat

ducation is one sector which has been hit hard by the pandemic with over 1.5 billion

bally out of school states JNESCO. In the eye of

tion & Literacy, Min

ointed out that there

ture for the girl child, the

DUCATION

"There is a need to make these girls aware of their own rights and its sense of empowerment. It would give them the power to negotiate their life."

ir own terms," she explained. ation is also the vital link be-the empowered life and a life

of Human Resource Develop-t, Government of India- Vrinda

s been a lot of work done by the te and the central gove

- The Pioneer
- News 18
- Dainik Bhaskar
- Rajasthan Patrika
- Lokmat
- Eeanadu



ENSURING EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Poverty is a major reason for the girls dropping out. In a

functional due to lack of upkeep for

functional due to lack of upcorpo-almost two years of the pandemic. So, if the schools don't have the funds to do the repairs then, we are seeing a situation which could be a big deterrent for girls to come to school," he said.

National Leader, Education and

There is a need to change the mindset of the

that almost 46 percent of the girl child post the pandemic feel

that their education would be discontinued due to financial

constraints. It could just be a

perception, but it does exist

SOURAV BANERJEE Country Director, Room to Read

India Trust

mindset of the patriarchal society. We found

You must have a curriculum which gives the girls self-confidence and strength to believe that they can reach the sky through education

VRINDA SWAROOP Former Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Re-

important in ensuring the education of the girl child DR KIRAN BEDI Former IPS officer and social activist ource Development, Government of India

family atmosphere,

education at the right time, and impressing upon the and impressing upon the fact that educated girls are going to supplement family income would make the thinking of the parent is very a big difference

NARAYANAN RAMASWAMY

National Leader, Education and Skill Development, KPMG India

education, so the whole mindset revolves around making her literate and not to fully educate her. Former IPS officer and social activ-ist, Dr Kiran Bedi informed that par-ents tend to skill and educate the boy

ents tend to skill and educate the boy but make the girl literate, so that she can manage herself. "Suppose the girl does go to a private school, there is a cost involved. So, if the cost is raised by the school, the girl is dropped out ents," Dr Bedi stated

There could be several reasons why girls could be dropping out of schools. Access to sanitation facility, sibling management, distance from and early marriage could be some o

Room to Read India Trust, revealed that access to toilets were one of the solved in a big way, it does not n that it has been resolved completely "A lot of toilets may not be

dia- Narayanan Ramaswamy ned that a lot of dropouts ary school levels due to distance from the schools. "Policies should not only address girls who are enrolled in schools. It should also dress their needs before and after school. The mindset of what people think of the need for girls to go to school needs to change

Adding to this, Vrinda Swaroop explained that there is a need to retain the girls there. "Teachers should exhibit no gender biasne in school," she infor

Reducing the girl students from ropping out would need more than the government's policy financial support to the family of

AMW Satish part to be the pione y quality access for the girl child historica: changed in schooling in the last few year ment in Right to Education Act and free education provided by the state, a lot mo

Learning in a post-Covid

World

MORE GIR STUDEN

life skills of the

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said girl co

explained

Lack of Acc

Teachers should be pioneers on girls' life skills: DEO Govindaraj

Kurnool, May29: (Bharatsamachar) DEO Govindaraju said that in menden the churairal mendel and excitat semante of estudants of the mendel and excitat semante of estudants. rKurnool, May29: (Bharatsamachar) DEO Govindaraju said that in the same of the

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meeting for the last 4 days. Nagar Kumool Distriction of the last 4 days. Nagar Kumool Distriction of the Virtual met.

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physical, psychological and social aspects of students and provide;
support to their growth, "Parents of girls should be made fully applying the social requires the solid plans were afout strike to archive another requires the solid plans."

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Learning in a post

support to their growth."Parents of girls should be made ful strive to achieve good results. He said plans were alout strive to achieve good results. He chaits were considered these prevenues in KCRVs first Mrs. Chaitsman, Cirl Chait stress prevenues in KCRVs first Mrs. Chaitsman.

ed to monitor the physical, mental and social aspects of students of the dolescence rests with the special officers and teachers on the banar Kurnon/The District Education Department and Room to banar Kurnon/The District

Girls also dropping out of school distance from home, family's fin condition and early

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TRUSTEE & LEADERSHIP TEAM



Geetha Murali Room to Read



Narasimhan Raghavan **Board Member** Room to Read

Room to Read India (P) Ltd. represented by.....



Apala Majumdar Director



Pooja Vinayak Sharma Director

India Regional Board.....

Room to Read India's eminent and committed Regional Board continues to mentor us and strengthen our strategic growth in India. The Board's invaluable support has helped us advance our work through network introductions, stewardship events and resource development throughout the year. The members of the India Regional Board include:



Board Chair Gaurav Dalmia Chairman of Dalmia Group Holdings



Jitu Virwani Chairman and Managing Director of Embassy Group



Khozem Merchant Partner – India Head at Brunswick Group



Mickey Doshi Managing Director and Country CEO of Credit Suisse India



Ravi Raheja Group President of K Raheja Corp



Sumati Raheja General Manager of K Raheja Corp



Vishal Mahadevia Managing Director, member of the Executive Management Group at Warburg Pincus

Country Leadership Team



Puja Trisal Program Operations Director



Sourav **Banerjee** Country Director



Poornima Garg Deputy Country Director





Saktibrata Sen **Programs Director**

State Leadership Team

Protik Banerjee State Coordinator Chhattisgarh





Roopak Chauhan Field Manager Delhi and Uttar Pradesh

Pushplata Rawat Field Manager Uttarakhand







Raja Sekhar Field Manager Maharashtra

Nishant Shrivastava State Coordinator

Rajasthan





Chary Narsimha Field Manager Telangana

Yeshvardhan Unival State Coordinator, Madhya Pradesh







- Aurobindo Pharma Foundation
- BAE Systems India (Services) Pvt. Ltd.
- Bajaj Auto Ltd.
- Bank of America BA Continuum India Pvt. Limited.
- Bloomberg
- BNP Paribas
- Restaurant Brands Asia Limited
- Central Square Foundation
- CAF America
- CARE U.S.
- CapitaLand Investment India
- Dalmia Group Holdings
- Delhi Aviation Fuel Facility Private Limited
- Embassy Group
- Future Generali India Insurance Company Ltd.
- H T Parekh Foundation
- Kodak India Private Limited
- K Raheja Group
- Morgan Stanley India
- RG Manudhane Foundation for Excellence
- Room to Read Global Services Private Ltd.
- The Boeing Company
- The Hans Foundation
- Trent Limited
- UBS India
- UNICEF
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- UPS SCS (India) Pvt. Limited.
- Wells Fargo
- Warburg Pincus India Private Limited





Along with Room to Read India, I believe many problems in the world can be addressed through a simple solution — education. Because knowing how to read makes people aware, more self-sufficient, and therefore safer and healthier. We are proud to partner with Room to Read India, having helped transform 155 school communities and benefit over 19,000 children over the last seven years. I greatly appreciate Room to Read India's commitment to increasing educational opportunities in low-income communities and the impact they continue to make among our communities.

PRAVEENA YAGNAMBHAT, Chief of Staff, Boeing India



Women's voices have always been important, but they haven't always been heard. I strongly believe we can change that. We at BNP Paribas believe that every step in helping young girls to continue education is important for achieving gender equality in our communities. In 2021, our partnership with Room to Read India helped 4169 girls to complete one year of secondary school and ensure these young girls build the skills to succeed in school and make key decisions in their lives.

AYMAR DE LIEDEKERKE BEAUFORT, Head of Territory, India and Head of Corporate and Institutional Banking (CIB), India; BNP Paribas



R G Manudhane Foundation for Excellence partners with Room to Read India in scaling its literacy program. We are delighted that our partnership on the library initiative across the entire Nashik district in Maharashtra benefited over 146,700 children from 2,139 school communities in the 2021 school year. Room to Read India's good work delivers the gift of education to rural communities in India. Particularly impressive to us is Room to Read India's immense commitment and innovative adaption of their model in COVID times to continue achieving results, scale, and sustainability.

SHAILA ASAVE, Managing Trustee, R G Manudhane Foundation for Excellence





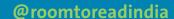


FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF ROOM TO READ INDIA TRUST

(Figures in INR)

				(Figures III IINK)	
April 2020 to March 2021					
Support & Revenue	2020-21 (%)	2019-20 (%)	2020-21	2019-20	
Project & General Fund	16.92%	14.81%	12,31,82,613	10,10,96,658	
Grant Revenue	2020-21 (%)	2019-20 (%)	2020-21	2019-20	
Room to Read US	54.73%	51.22%	39,84,20,510	34,96,08,783	
UNICEF	0.98%	2.39%	71,67,758	1,63,18,209	
USAID India	4.67%	7.30%	3,40,25,467	4,98,51,323	
Corporations	17.23%	15.89%	12,54,32,741	10,84,51,148	
Foundations	4.60%	7.28%	3,34,78,070	4,96,99,665	
Donations (Individuals)	0.47%	0.11%	34,38,945	7,29,408	
Investment/Interest Income	0.39%	1.00%	28,47,734	68,25,689	
Total of Support & Revenue	100%	100%	72,79,93,839	68,25,80,883	
Operating & Administrative Expenses					
Program Expenses	2020-21 (%)	2019-20 (%)	2020-21	2019-20	
Literacy & Instruction Program	35.21%	47.49%	19,07,04,220	26,56,33,120	
Girls' Education Program	39.54%	23.05%	21,41,19,674	12,89,37,165	
Book Publishing Program	1.67%	1.81%	90,41,486	1,01,14,319	
Indirect Expenses	21.22%	25.27%	11,49,13,941	14,13,79,985	
Fund Raising Expenses	2.36%	2.38%	1,27,86,307	1,33,33,681	
Total of Operating & Administrative Expenses	100%	100%	54,15,65,628	55,93,98,270	
Net Current Assets			18,64,28,211	12,31,82,613	







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