



# Room to Read COVID-19 Response: Pivot Activities Indicator Report



**Thank you for your investment in ensuring education endures for low-income children around the world.**

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1.5 billion children and youth were out of school, including students in all 16 countries where Room to Read works. Although school closures interrupted our typical program operations, the Room to Read team strategically pivoted program activities to create distance and remote learning opportunities for students.

We designed these programmatic pivots to be both evidence-based and context-specific, in order to reach as many children as possible despite obstacles such as lack of internet connectivity, financial hardship and low levels of parental engagement.

To complement these activities, our global research, monitoring and evaluation team developed an additional set of indicators to enable us to track and measure our pivot activities and emerge as an even stronger learning organization.

We are pleased to share the results from our pivot indicators for the period of April 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020. These indicators capture the scope and breadth of our COVID-19 response, as well as the resilience of the students in our programs.

## GLOBAL RESULTS

### LITERACY

**129,893,996 households**

broadcasted to via TV and radio

**1,439,722 direct messages**

sent via SMS, phone and social media

**75,305 individuals**

received direct messages

**3,697 hours**

of virtual training and support delivered

**523 children's book titles**

published in

**12 languages**

uploaded to Literacy Cloud digital library

### GIRLS' EDUCATION

**34,241 mentoring sessions**

delivered remotely to girls

**23,759 girls**

received remote individual mentoring

**223,690 direct messages**

sent via SMS, phone and social media

**24,893 households**

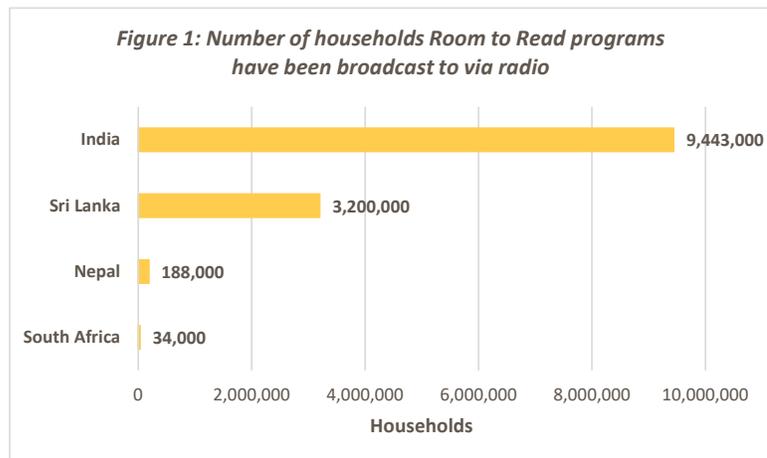
received direct messages

## LITERACY PROGRAM PIVOTS

### TV and Radio Programming

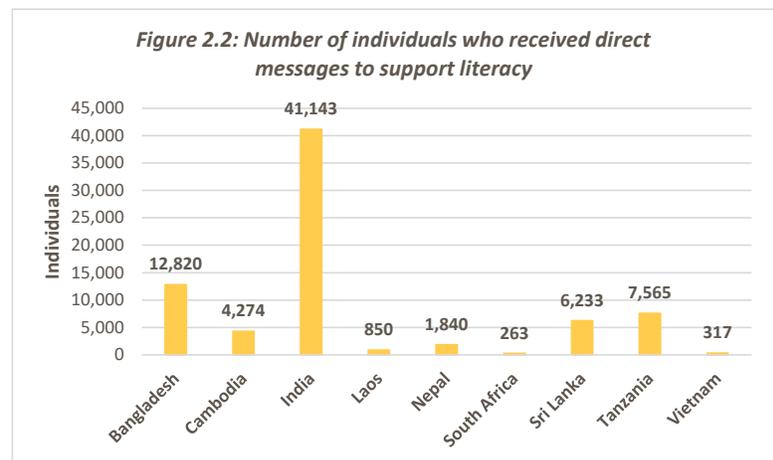
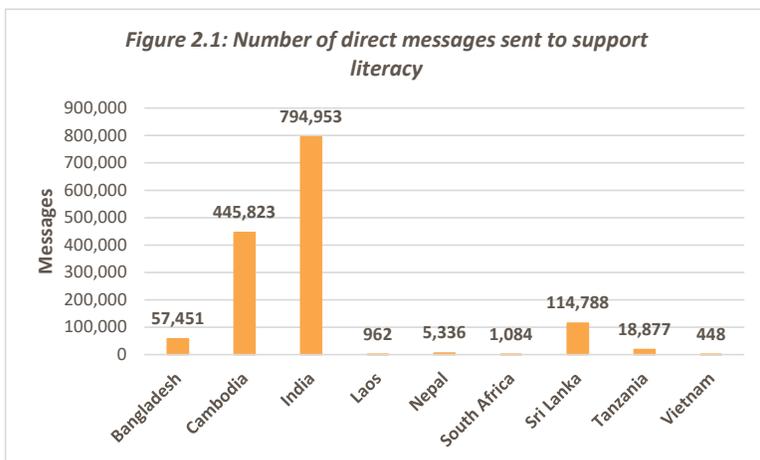
Reaching students in communities with limited access to the internet or smartphones can be challenging, but radio remains widely available. UNESCO reports that 75 percent of the world’s households have access to radio, so Room to Read is partnering with radio stations to deliver a range of educational programming for students in our Literacy Program. In response to demand from governments and communities, Room to Read radio programs have been broadcast to **12,865,000 households** since the start of the crisis across four countries, as seen in **Figure 1**.

Given the wide reach of television across South Asia, Room to Read is also working in India and Sri Lanka to collaborate with TV channels with maximum outreach in rural areas. The content for these channels includes storytelling videos and tips for parents to support their children’s reading habits while they are at home. As of May 2020, TV programs were broadcast to **117,028,996 households** in India alone.



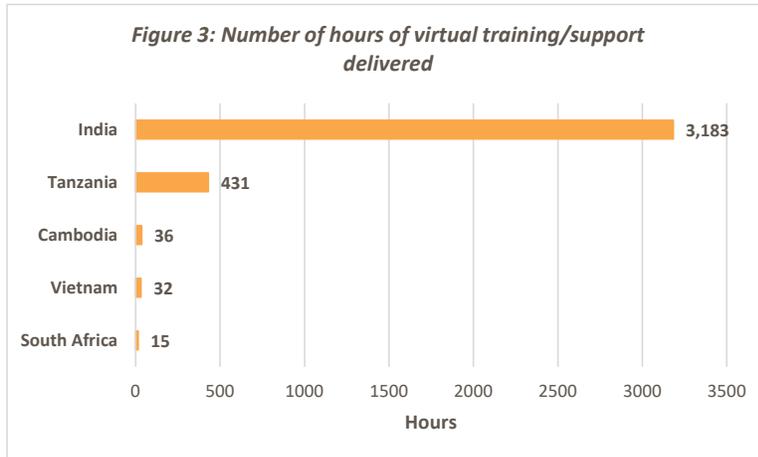
### Direct Messaging

Since texting and direct messaging offer a scalable and accessible way of communicating in many countries, Room to Read is using these forms of communication to prompt parents to engage in literacy activities with their children. Our country teams have been using a range of virtual platforms to reach teachers, students and their families to keep children learning, sending a total of **1,439,722 messages** from the start of the crisis through May 2020 (**Figure 2.1**). We have reached an estimated **75,305 individuals** through these direct messages, calls and emails to ensure children remain engaged in acquiring skills and a habit of reading while schools are closed (**Figure 2.2**).



## Virtual Training and Support

Capacity-building for the international education community is a vital part of Room to Read’s work. We need to provide support for teachers, administrators, authors and illustrators for our programs to be

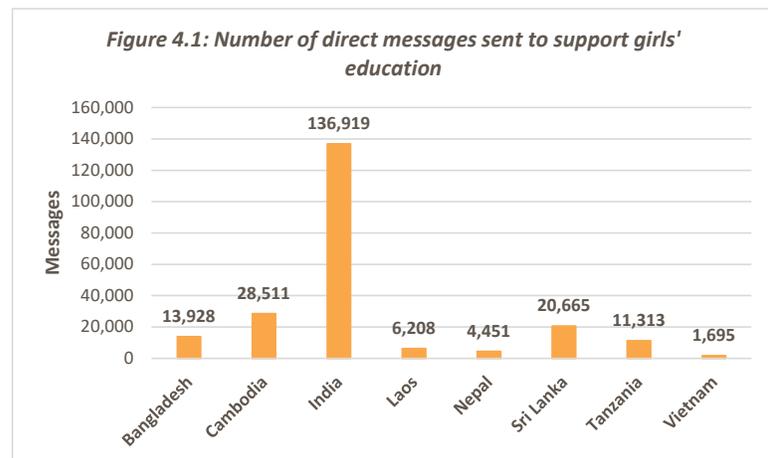


possible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been building the capacity of teachers, school leadership, book creators, parents and other stakeholders through virtual outreach to effectively support them remotely, as well as to ensure learning gets back on track when schools re-open. A total of **3,697 hours** of virtual training or support has been delivered as of May 2020 as seen in **Figure 3**.

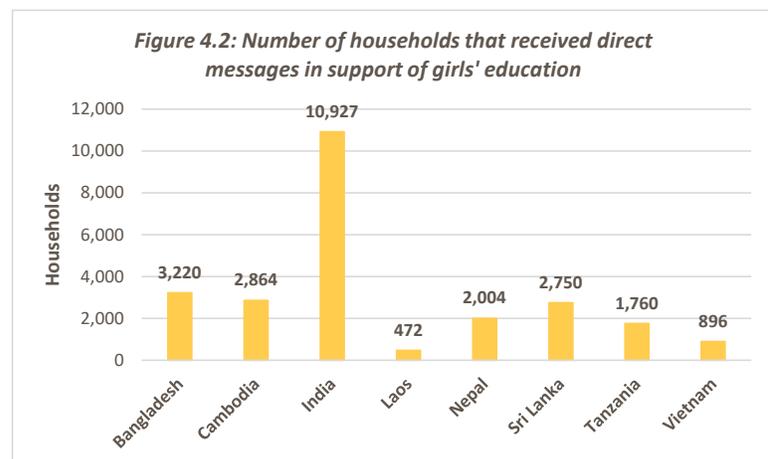
## GIRLS’ EDUCATION PROGRAM PIVOTS

### Direct Messaging

As with our Literacy Program pivot activities, texting and phone-based messaging is one of the best ways for social mobilizers to keep in touch with Girls’ Education Program participants while school is out. Our country teams are using a range of virtual platforms to reach our girls and their families. They have sent a total of **223,690 messages** since the start of the crisis, as shown in **Figure 4.1**.



Room to Read has reached **24,893 girls, parents, teachers and community members** through direct messages, phone calls and emails to ensure girls can return to school, finish their education and pursue their future. **Figure 4.2** illustrates households reached by country.



## Distance Mentoring

Mentorship and life skills education are two core components of Room to Read’s Girls’ Education Program. Our teams have worked quickly to find ways to continue mentoring and providing life skills sessions to girls despite school closures. For example, social mobilizers are conducting one-on-one mentoring sessions with girls over the phone. The goal of the sessions is to emotionally support girls during this crisis by regularly checking in on their mental and physical wellbeing, encouraging them to keep up with academic study, and sharing the latest information on staying safe and healthy.

Room to Read is providing a critical touchpoint for girls during school closures, delivering **34,241 remote mentoring sessions** to a total of **23,759 girls** in our program during April and May 2020 (**Figures 5.1 and 5.2**). This is equivalent to reaching 58 percent of the girls enrolled in our Girls’ Education Program.

Figure 5.1: Number of remote mentoring sessions delivered

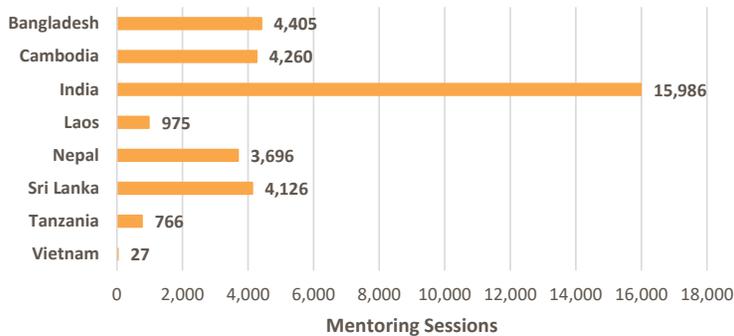
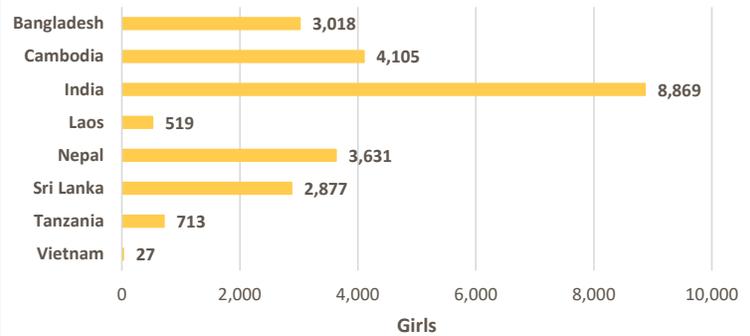


Figure 5.2: Number of girls who received remote individual mentoring



## Increased Monitoring of At-Risk Girls

Our research, monitoring and evaluation team created unique non-return risk indicators to track girls who are at-risk of not returning to schools when they reopen. The three risk factors we are tracking are: girls who are not continuing to study at home; girls in homes in which a family member has lost a job or source of income due to COVID-19; and girls who are concerned about being able to return to school once schools reopen. These questions were posed to nearly 24,000 girls across program countries via a survey, and the results are below.

Figure 6.1: Are you currently self-studying/keeping up with academic learning at home?

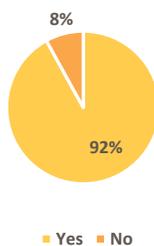


Figure 6.2: Has anyone in your household lost a job or source of income as a result of COVID-19?

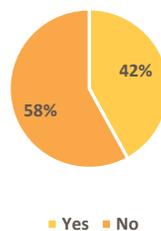
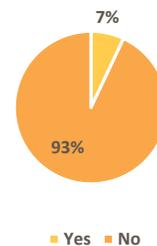


Figure 6.3: Are you concerned about being able to return to school once schools reopen?



Globally, **92 percent** of our Girls' Education Program participants are successfully maintaining their academic progress by studying at home during school closures. However, there remain **8 percent** and nearly **2,000 girls** who are struggling to maintain their academic progress by studying at home during school closures (**Figure 6.1**). The economic hardships affecting the girls in our program are stark, with nearly **42 percent** or **10,000 girls** responding to our risk survey that a household member has lost a job or source of income as a result of COVID-19 (**Figure 6.2**). Lastly, in **Figure 6.3**, **7 percent** or **1,640 girls**, answered "yes" to being concerned about returning to school.

Based on the complete results, we found that one in two girls, or **49 percent**, are in the high-risk category for not returning to school. We will continue to monitor and track our Girls' Education Program participants in order to provide proactive support, intervene when necessary, and encourage their enrollment and ongoing education.

## LOOKING AHEAD

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Room to Read is dedicated to ensuring that education endures for children around the world in the face of COVID-19. To facilitate that, Room to Read will continue to track students' progress and engagement using our pivot indicators. Even as schools begin to reopen, we know this does not mean that children will return to school or that their studies will resume as normal. During this re-entry period, our country teams are determining which pivot activities will continue to be useful as children re-enter classrooms. We anticipate that the channels we have built for distance learning will remain critical in ensuring stability and consistency for students, even as schools open their doors. Therefore, we are seeking to create a blended program approach that combines our pivot activities with our standard Literacy and Girls' Education Programs. This will provide the following benefits:

- 1) Consistency in the event that schools are re-closed due to an uptick in COVID-19 cases
- 2) Cost-efficiencies learned through adapted ways of working that can be valuable to overall programs (such as trainings and workshops conducted through multiple virtual platforms)
- 3) Deeper engagement by families and communities in children's education and more fully integrated learning at home

As we adapt our programs to support learning continuity, we are grateful for your support and look forward to updating you regularly as our work continues to evolve.

