



Gender Equality Portfolio Fact Sheet

Room to Read's Gender Equality Portfolio supports all adolescents, particularly girls, to develop life skills that promote gender equality – enabling them to pursue lifelong learning and make informed decisions.

We support young people, in all their diversity, to overcome gender biases and build the skills and knowledge to create a gender-equal world. Our programming develops five key skills for adolescents – collaboration, resilience, leadership, decision-making and critical thinking – through which they learn to self-advocate and chart successful life paths that they choose for themselves. Our programming also builds content knowledge that adolescents need to make informed decisions about their lives in areas such as financial literacy, health and hygiene, climate change, safety and rights, and gender norms.



615,724

adolescents benefited in 2025, with **4.4MM** adolescents benefited cumulatively

4,598

adolescents graduated secondary school through our comprehensive Girls' Education Program in 2025, with **32,967** adolescents having graduated cumulatively



Our Gender Equality Portfolio results

Adolescents build life skills.

Across contexts, our programs boost adolescent life skills. Programming drives statistically significant changes in key domains after just two years versus comparison schools, proving we are supporting the development of more confident, equity-minded youth. As an example, a recent Girls' Education Program evaluation in Bangladesh found statistically significant improvements in girls' abilities to express and manage emotions, build relationships, communicate effectively, and increase gender knowledge and attitudes.

The inclusion of boys matters.

Changing boys' gender attitudes is essential to their own well-being as well as to advancing girls' education and promoting equality. Because adolescence is a critical window to shift harmful norms, we have begun piloting life skills programs for boys in co-ed settings. In a recent pilot in Cambodia, boys reported better anger management, while girls gained confidence in speaking up and raised their ideal marriage age. Both groups showed significant gains in gender knowledge, education aspirations, and life skills.

Adolescents pursue ongoing education and career aspirations.

Girls in our program report a strong interest in continuing their education. In Laos, with the support of our life skills content and curriculum, as well as local mentorship, our 2024 endline evaluation confirmed our program is shaping educational and career aspirations, with more girls aspiring to pursue higher education and entrepreneurial opportunities and showing a stronger interest in financial planning and vocational pathways.

In our Girls' Education Program, **90%+** of enrolled girls advance to the next grade and **80%+** secure work or enroll in tertiary education



Questions?
Contact us at
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Room to Read is a partner of choice.

We develop and adapt our programming to respond to the needs of adolescents across countries, regions and cultural contexts. As a result, Room to Read is often invited by local, state and national governments to join advisory committees to inform system-level integration of life skills curriculum and gender-aware approaches to education.

We are working alongside ministries of education in several countries to adapt and integrate key parts of our life skills curriculum at the systems level. In Uttarakhand, India, our partnership with the government recently led to the development of a comprehensive life skills handbook and activity bank, now embedded into the state's regular training curriculum. By institutionalizing life skills education, we equip more adolescents with the critical thinking skills, confidence and resilience needed to chart their own paths.

Our programmatic core competencies

Creating content for gender equality: We develop and contextualize our life skills curriculum to be locally relevant and provide supporting content, including adolescent literature, film, radio and television broadcasts. By employing all available tools to deliver our programming, we provide varying ports of entry for adolescents, particularly girls, to build the foundational skills they need to create change in their lives and communities.

Our multimedia storytelling initiative *She Creates Change* is a dynamic anthology of films, books and audio stories that highlights the magic that happens when girls discover their power and gain access to role models, both on the page and in person. Featuring six animated short films combined with mini documentaries, the film series showcases narratives of courageous young women from historically low-income communities who confront challenges — like harassment, food scarcity, a lack of economic opportunities — with the use of life skills. With the launch of shecreateschange.org, these films are available in multiple languages and lengths, accessible to adolescents, families, educators and partners in all corners of the globe — with lesson plans and learning activities that align with the stories and target life skill development.

Enabling educators to elevate equality: We know that mentoring yields positive educational outcomes. That's why our Girls' Education Program matches cohorts of girls with a local mentor or teacher from their community. Trained by Room to Read, educators are supported to be champions, confidants and advocates for the adolescents in our program, helping them build the skills they need to exercise agency.

Shaping structures for gender equality: Room to Read establishes safe learning environments, including mentor-led afterschool clubs and classes, and integrates structured opportunities, like summer life skills camps and career exposure field trips, that nurture peer connection and provide individual mentoring. These structures help adolescents develop self-worth, practice leadership and envision new possibilities — creating the foundation for more equitable futures.

Tailoring tools for equality: Our commitment to meaningful data is at the heart of our success. We measure what works — and what doesn't — so we can continuously improve and deliver effective programming. We develop innovative measurement tools shaped by our program participants, including our cutting-edge Adolescent Life Skills Assessment, ensuring both the effectiveness and the cultural relevance of our programming. Our evaluations provide evidence of adolescents' changing life skills and gender attitudes across contexts — and demonstrate how these shifts influence long-term outcomes.