



2024-25 Annual Report



World Change Starts with Educated Children.®

Room to Read envisions a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality, where all children have Room to Read, learn and grow, create lasting changes.



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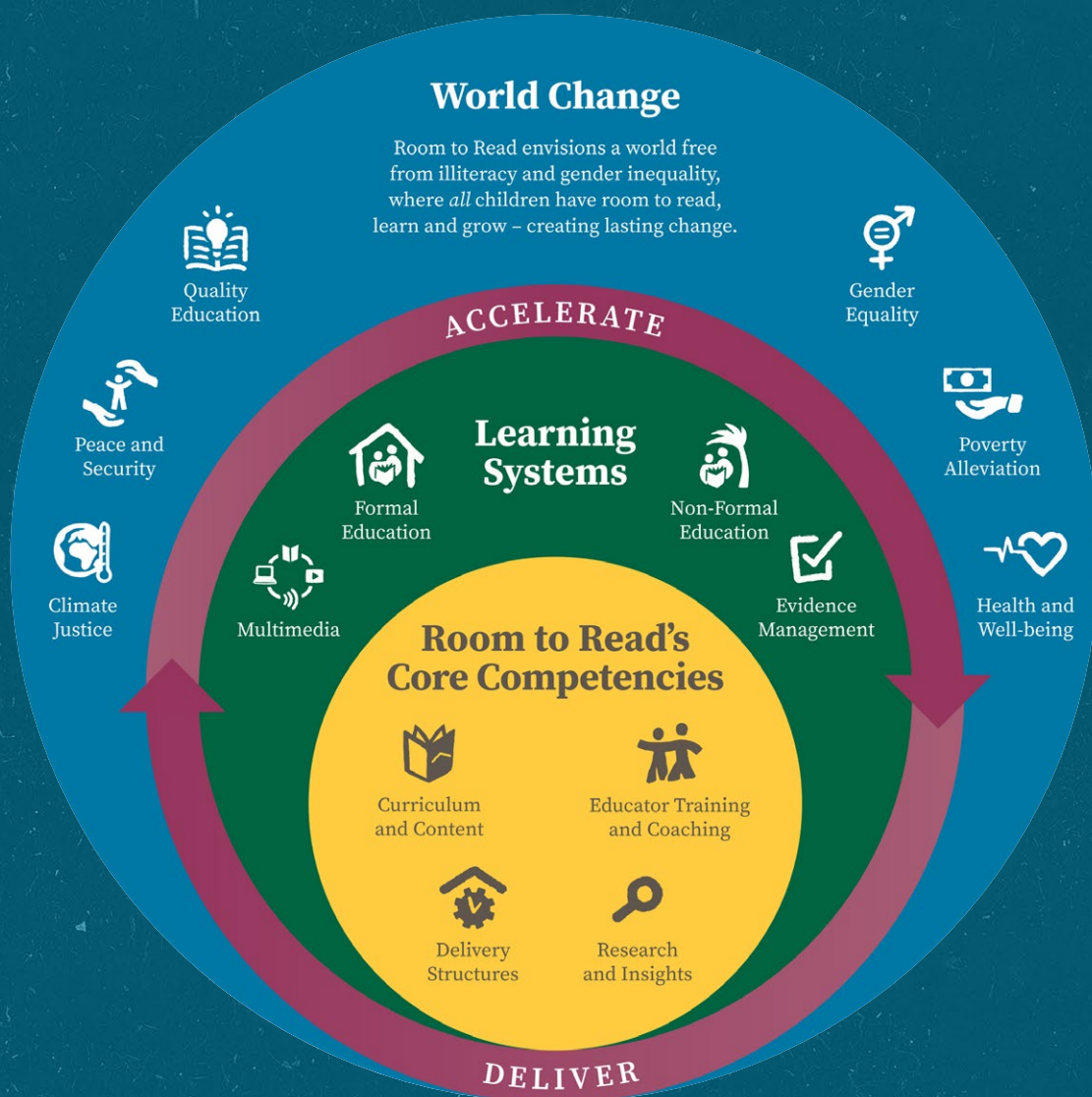
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Theory of Change

At Room to Read, we work with children and educators, delivering quality programs directly and with partners, we also accelerate learning outcomes for more children, more quickly, by strengthening government school system, other learning systems and associated partner programs in the areas of our core expertise.

Through a focused learning agenda with targeted innovations, we are generating evidence of program quality and continuously evolving our materials and approaches. We believe that by using evidence-based materials and approaches, learning systems will enable all children to develop foundational learning skills, equipping them to create equitable solutions for the most pressing challenges they face.



Message from Country Director



We are filled with deep appreciation and pride for the 25 years journey that Room to Read Nepal has made toward building a more literate and gender-equal world. As we reflect on 2024–25, the Literacy and Gender Equality Portfolio reached over 85,953 children, along with an additional 2.5 million children through our radio program. During this period, we supported 2,789 educators through trainings and worked with 885 schools across 43 palikas in 7 districts of 4 provinces, strengthening quality education and gender-responsive learning environments.

Our Literacy Portfolio continued to support joyful learning environments, strengthen early grade reading skills, and enhance the capacity of schools to sustain quality library systems. In 18 palikas, we were able to increase our support accelerating our Literacy Portfolio, where local government leads and we provide technical assistance, ensuring sustainable change. We supported the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in drafting comprehensive Children’s Book Development and Selection Guideline. This guideline serves as a key reference for schools, children’s book creators, and publishers, guiding the production and selection of quality books that enrich children’s learning experiences.

Meanwhile, our Gender Equality Portfolio provided life skills sessions, mentorship, and material support to more than 7,330 girls, helping them stay in school and develop confidence to shape their own paths. We provided dedicated training to educators for life skills delivery supporting sustainability of skills in the schools even after we phase out.

None of this would have been possible without our dedicated team, the tireless support of educators, the trust of parents and caregivers, and the unwavering collaboration of government at all level and partner NGOs.

As Room to Read Celebrates 25th Anniversary - we are reminded of the power of sustained investment in education. This milestone invites us to celebrate the collective progress achieved in education, while reaffirming our commitment to ensuring that every child regardless of gender, social status, financial background, or geography has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

Thank you for walking this journey with us. Together, we are not just imagining a better world—we are building it, one book, one girl, one community at a time.

Pushkar Lal Shrestha

Our Reach

Our Reach Globally



52M

Children benefited globally in 29 countries



28,351

Adolescents have graduated secondary school cumulatively



153.4M

Books checked out from Room to Read libraries cumulatively



44.5M

Original and adapted children's books distributed cumulatively



4.4M

Children benefited in 32 district across Nepal



413

Original and adapted children's books published in Nepali language

Our Reach in Nepal



10.6M

Books distributed



2,039

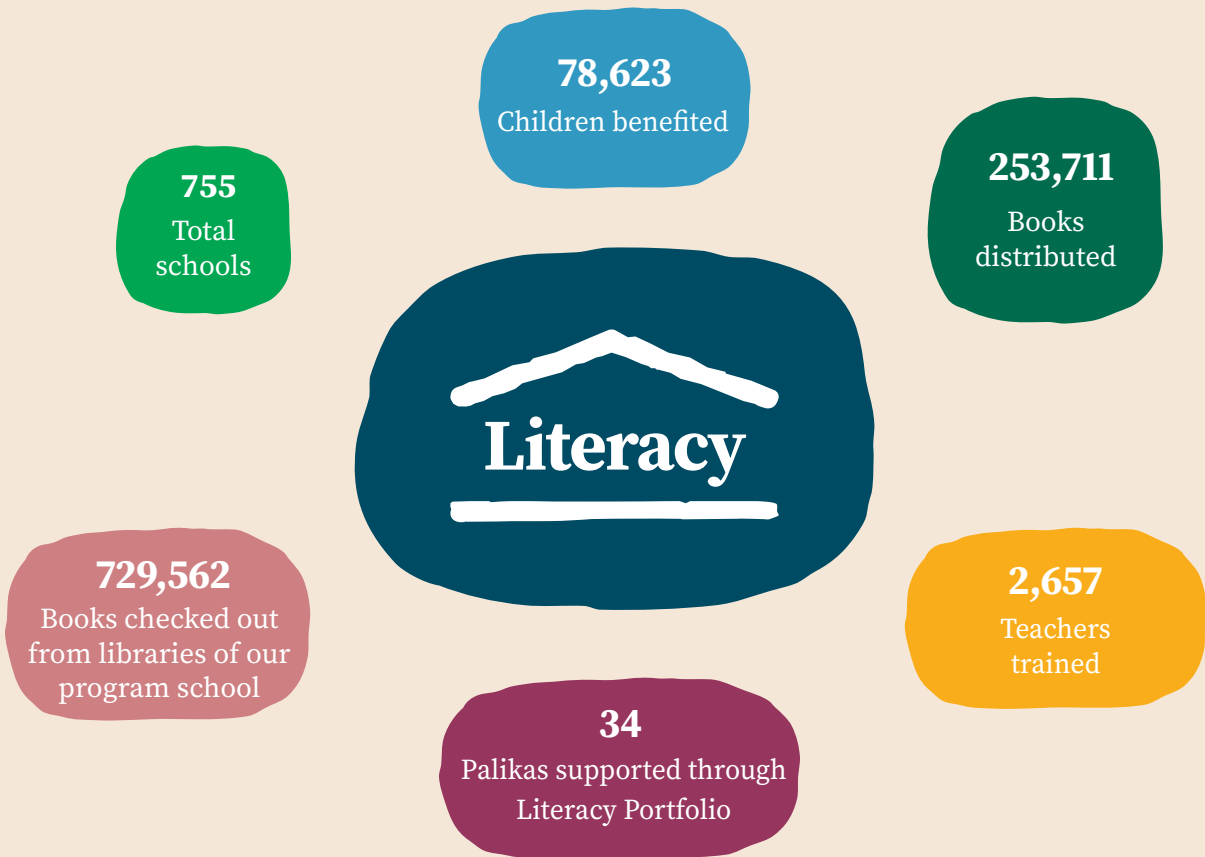
Adolescents completed secondary school after 7 years of life skills and mentoring



31,709

Government school teachers trained

Our Reach in 2024-25



Journey of Room to Read

Room to Read has its humble origins in Nepal, where we started off by distributing donated books to rural communities. Today, we are a global organization committed to increasing literacy and bringing about gender equality in education. Our dedication towards educating the children we serve has transformed the lives of millions of children in low-income communities around the world. Our passion for a world free of illiteracy and gender inequality persists and is reflected in the work we have done through the years.

2009

Introduced the Reading Skills Program

The Reading Skills Program was developed and executed to improve basic reading and writing skills in early graders to support them to become independent readers. It comprised a systematic curriculum design, creation of level-appropriate resources, professional development for teachers, library management, and a frequent monitoring and coaching support system to improve reading skills and habits.

2002

Expanding with Education for Girls

A scholarship program for children that supported them with tuition fees, stationary costs and provided mentorship. This initiative developed into the Girls' Education Program, which assists girl to stay in school longer and realize their full potential.

2007

Storybook Writer's Workshop

Room to Read conducted its first ever writers' workshop in partnership with local talent across Nepal. We provided them with professional development workshops on creating quality children's books.

2010

10 Year Anniversary

We celebrated our 'Year of Tens', marking our ten-year anniversary with the opening of our 10,000th library globally.

2000

Start of Room to Read from Bahundanda in Lamjung District

Room to Read's Founder John Wood (then Director of Business Development for Microsoft) visited a school on his trek through Nepal, where he discovered a school that had only a couple of books. Room to Read's journey began when John, in collaboration with Dinesh Shrestha (Co-Founder), returned to Nepal with 3000 books. Then in 2000, we began the School Construction Program with the goal of creating a child friendly learning environment.

2020-21

Responding to COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 related school closures, we adapted, innovated, and created distance learning resources, supporting children to continue learning at home.

2017

School Construction

Immediately after the 2015 earthquakes, we partnered with the Nepal government to lead recovery efforts in education. We contributed to the construction of sixty school buildings in Nuwakot and Dhading so that children could return to a safe school environment.

2015

Responding to the Earthquake Crisis

After Nepal's devastating earthquakes, we started planning to rebuild schools and launched the 'Nepal Earthquake Fund'. 100,000 copies of children's storybooks and learning packages were distributed, aiming to help children relieve stress caused by the disaster and its aftermath.

2023

Life Skills Manual accredited by Curriculum Development Center

The Life Skills Manual under the Gender Equality Portfolio Program was officially accredited by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) as a national supplementary resource for life skills education from grades 6 to 12. It will serve as a foundation for shaping the life skills education promotion strategy aimed at advancing quality education in the country.

2014

Life Skills for girl

Life skills education was integrated into our Girls' Education Program to equip adolescent girls with the skills and confidence to navigate challenges and to negotiate key life decisions.

2025

Reaching more children, more quickly

To scale our innovative materials and approaches and reach more children more quickly, we expand our impact by partnering with government at all levels and our partner NGOs. In 18 palikas, we provided technical assistance to strengthen teachers' professional development.



Literacy Portfolio

Our Literacy Portfolio supports children as they develop literacy skills with a love of reading – enabling them to pursue lifelong learning and make informed decisions.

Room to Read's Literacy Program is a core part of our portfolio, through which we train and coach cohorts of teachers, create quality books and curricular materials and establish child-friendly libraries filled with quality children's books in local languages that can be enjoyed at school or home.

We draw from our experience to then collaborate with governments and other partners to scale our innovative materials and approaches and help children of all backgrounds develop foundational literacy skills.



Highlights

1. Literacy at scale through training the trainers in 18 palikas

We collaborated with palikas to enhance literacy skills through classroom-based pedagogical support and capacity development of government schoolteachers. To scale and sustain proven techniques in teacher training, we provided technical assistance to the local government in Gandaki Province, Karnali Province, and Bagmati Province.

The local government selected trainers responsible for building the capacity of teachers in all schools within these Palika.

Master Training of Trainers (M-ToT) session for all trainers in Grade 1 and Grade 2 Nepali Language

We developed a detailed training manual and materials, including five days of in-person training and a school-based practice teaching session.

In 2024, 99 schoolteachers were trained and provided with teaching manuals and materials while in 2025, 97 trainers from 13 new palika's were trained. The roster trainers thus developed and effectively delivered training sessions at the subsequent Palika-level teacher training events. Overall, 320 teachers from 18 palika's of 4 districts have been trained in Grade 1 instruction.



2. Children's Book Development and Selection Guideline in collaboration with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), a draft of the children's book development and selection guideline was developed to ensure quality, relevance, and inclusivity in children's literature. The Library Section of MoEST will lead the finalization of Children's Book Standard and development of nationwide implementation plan aimed at reaching all government schools and promoting a strong reading culture across Nepal.

3. Community engagement for sustainable library system

Ensuring the sustainability of libraries in schools and communities is crucial. We work closely with schools, school management committee, and parent-teacher associations to incorporate components such as library management, monitoring and assessment of classroom

activities, creation of a child-friendly environment, professional development of teachers, and engagement of family and community members in school improvement plans. Literacy committee meetings were held in 339 schools, where Room to Read supported the creation of an annual Literacy Development Plan to help develop students' reading habits and skills.

4. Capacity strengthening of librarians

Capacity building for teachers and librarians is an essential component of the Literacy Portfolio. Teachers received training and refreshers throughout the program implementation period. This aims to ensure teachers support children in fostering reading habits and engaging actively in the library.

During the training specific aspects of library management are addressed, including receiving book inventory, the book check-out and return processes, organizing reading activities, and managing library session.



5. Organizing Reading Mela together with Sarada Palika in Salyan Districts

Sarada Municipality in Salyan District hosted its Third Reading Mela with technical support from Room to Read. The primary goal of the Reading Mela was to promote a culture of reading and to share creative reading materials among schools.

The event promoted reading culture through various engaging activities and attracted 3000 attendees. All participants joined a 10-minute *Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)* campaign. Students visited a Children's Library stall for reading, pair reading, and independent reading. Grade 4 students from 43 schools took part in a reading fluency assessment. Additionally, a creative writing activity led to the creation of 21 handmade storybooks, encouraging storytelling and creativity.

6. Global Dialogue on Children's Literature

Nepal Academy and Nepalese Society for Children's Literature (NESCHIL) in collaboration with Room to Read successfully organized the International Children's Literature Conference (ICLC). The event convened 30 experts from 10 countries and more than 150 participants from Nepal to explore the development of children's literature on a global scale.

The two-day conference featured more than 25 research papers presented by both Nepali and international scholars, delving into diverse dimensions of children's literature. In addition to academic presentations, the conference offered engaging panel discussions, storytelling sessions, and exhibitions showcasing children's books and artwork.

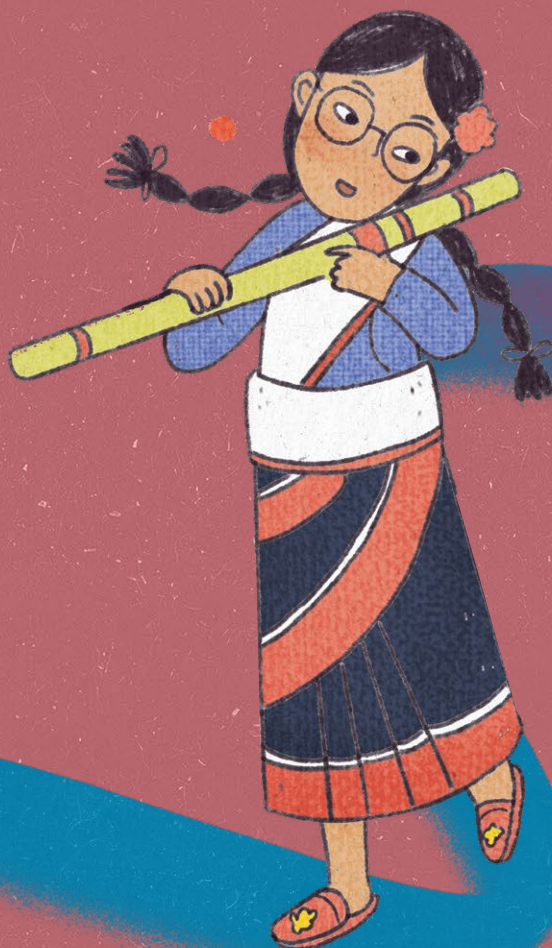
7. Room to Read children's books now available beyond school

Towards our strategic goal of reaching more children with high-quality literature, we are partnering with publication houses to expand into the broader commercial market, making it possible for children across Nepal to experience the joy of reading.

Historically, our books were available only within the schools we support. We have taken a significant step by collaborating with two private publishers—Sangrila Media Group and Bhudipur Publication—and has already launched five beautifully illustrated children's storybooks in partnership with Sangri-la Media Group.

8. Starting our work in Kapilvastu

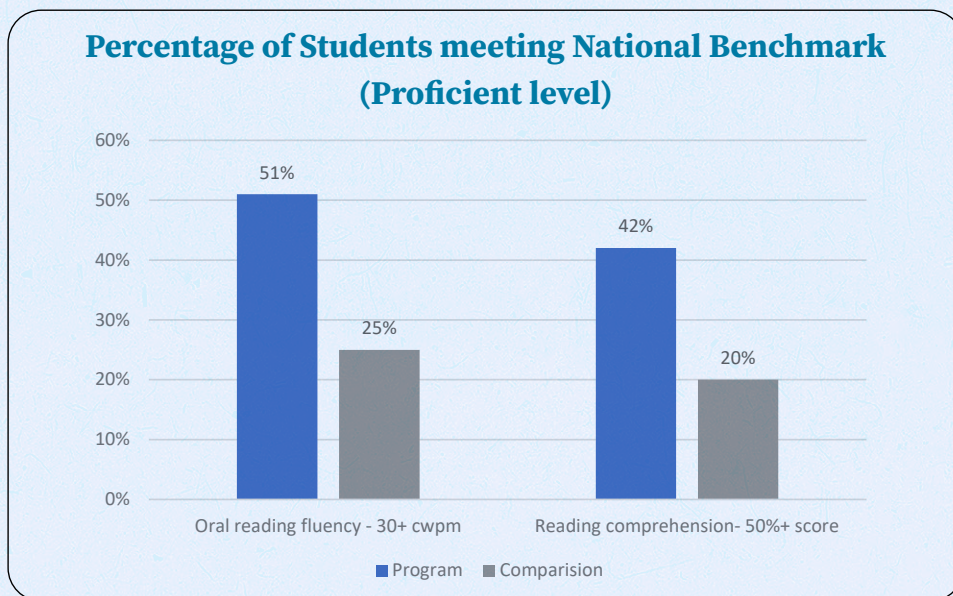
In 2025, we have officially begun our work in Kapilvastu, expanding our reach to three palikas and 48 schools. As we enter this new district, our focus is on strengthening learning environment, supporting teachers, and ensuring that children—especially girls—have access to resources and opportunities they need to thrive.



Strengthening Outcomes through Proven approach

Impact Evaluation 2023-2025

We launched the Literacy Portfolio in 2022 with eight Palikas in Gorkha, supporting 100 primary schools through teacher training, coaching, libraries, reading materials, and community engagement. A 2023–25 quasi-experimental evaluation follows 500 children from Grade 1 to 2 across 55 schools to measure impacts on reading and writing skills.



At endline, program school children outperformed those in comparison schools in meeting Government of Nepal recommended reading benchmarks. 51% met the Government’s ORF benchmark and 42% met its comprehension benchmark.

National Reading Benchmark

Grade 2 - Reading subskill	Pre-basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
ORF (cwpm)	Less than 15	15 to less than 30	30 to less than 40	40 and more
Comprehension (% correct response)	Less than 30	30 to less than 50	50 to less than 70	70 and above

(Education Review Office, 2022)

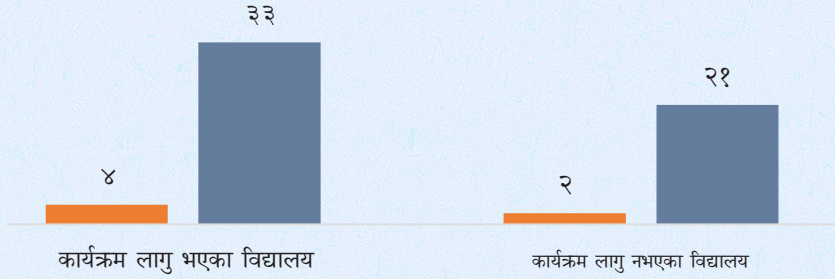
Program schools established vibrant libraries where a single student, on average, borrows **30-38 books per year**, ensuring constant access to reading materials.

82% student read non-curricular books at least 3 times a week, compared to only **41%** in comparison schools, building a foundation for lifelong learning.

मौखिक पठन प्रवाह

प्रतिमिनेट औसत सही शब्द - ६० शब्द मध्ये

■ आधार मूल्याङ्कन ■ अन्तिम मूल्याङ्कन



Children in program schools, after the completion of grade 2, on average read 33 correct words per minute compared to 21 correct words per minute in comparison schools.

Likewise, children in program schools answered two comprehension questions correctly out of five. While children in comparison schools could answer only one comprehension questions correctly.



Srijana Adhikari

Literacy Facilitator,
Gorkha District

“

Training teachers is important, but I also believe in being with them in the classroom – giving feedback, encouraging them, and making sure the materials are really useful for their teaching. Literacy has opened many doors for me, and today it allows me to support teachers, collaborate with palika and schools in my own community.



Govinda Prasad Thapaliya

Chairperson of Shivapuri Palika
in Bagmati Province

“

“I know that foundational learning cannot happen without skilled teachers. Our 12 trainers will train all the early-grade teachers in Palika. They will inspire, monitor, and build government school teachers’ capacity. To build the trainers’ capacity, I am reassured, as it is Room to Read’s literacy development experts.”



Gender Equality Portfolio

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. Within our portfolio, Room to Read implements a Girls' Education Program through which girls build the skills they need to succeed in school and negotiate key life decisions.

Our programming goes further as we partner with governments and other organizations. We adapt our programming to respond to adolescents' needs across multiple culture and regions.

1. Equipping educators to elevate equality

To ensure sustainability and scalability, we added a teacher-led module in the Gender Equality Portfolio Program where we trained government school teachers with a comprehensive life skills curriculum. Equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills ensures capacity strength within schools and the wider community.

2. Scaling Climate Justice Club in Khajura palika

Following two successful years of implementing Climate Justice Clubs, we are excited to share that Khajura palika has scaled up the initiative to 16 schools. Till date 17 focal teachers and government officials from the Education Department of the palika has been orientated on the curriculum of Climate Justice Club. This step ensures the sustainability of climate education, enabling local communities to carry forward these learnings even after our program concludes.

Room to Read will continue to offer technical support to Palika representatives and school teachers ensuring smooth implementation.



3. She Creates Change

World of Women Festival 2024

Room to Read, in collaboration with the British Council curated the *Young Feminist Corner: Making room for young changemakers* at the WOW Festival 2024, which attracted 12,700 visitors. This initiative created a vibrant library space and curated engaging activities specifically designed for visitors under the age of 18. The aim was to introduce children to a variety of storybooks across different grades and genres, fostering a love for reading and storytelling.

She Creates Change Screening and Monologue Performance

Room to Read's She Creates Change animation and live-action film project promotes gender equality through the inspiring stories of young women from around the world. A two-day screening of She Creates Change was curated to engage young changemakers on critical topics such as climate justice, financial literacy, discrimination, menstruation, and sexual harassment. Similarly,

four young changemakers, alumnae and participants of our Gender Equality Portfolio, joined us from Tanahun, Nuwakot, and Banke districts for a monologue performance. They shared their stories of perseverance, offering profound and introspective perspectives that deeply resonated with the girls attending the festival.

Best Documentary Nominee in Kathmandu Mountain Film Festival

Our She Creates Change film was selected for screening during the 12th edition of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF) and was nominated in the *Best Documentary* category. As part of the festival, a special screening and panel discussion titled *Stories of Girls, By Girls, and For Girls* was organized in collaboration with KIMFF and UNICEF, highlighting the voices and experiences of young girls leading change.





Radio Program

We strengthened our advocacy for Gender Equality Portfolio through the Life Skills education, using radio as a powerful medium to reach diverse communities. In collaboration with the Ujyalo Network, we aired mini-series episodes across 80 local radio stations reached 2.5 million listeners. This strategic use of radio helped education to reach beyond classrooms-sparking dialogue, raising awareness, and reinforcing life skills education in homes and communities across Nepal.



Story of Alumnae

How Chandani Rai Transformed Her Life and Uplifts Others Through Grassroot Initiatives

Alumnae is administrative officer for the cooperative section of Biratnagar Metropolitan City, a department dedicated to promoting cooperative initiatives and channeling resources to combat poverty. Her work focuses on creating an enabling environment for cooperatives to thrive, thereby supporting the economic well-being of individuals and communities.

Chandani's story begins in a humble household. Her father worked as a seasonal laborer, and her family lived in a cramped one-room apartment. Violence at home was constant, and financial struggles made survival a daily challenge. When the family couldn't afford school fees, Chandani and her sister were forced to drop out in grade four.

Determined to change her family's situation, Chandani began learning skills in handmade crafts to earn a modest living. Her sharp mind and eagerness to learn caught the attention of a mentor who introduced her to Room to Read's program. The opportunity was changing life. Chandani received educational support and life skills training that helped her persevere through the hardest times.

Armed with this foundation, Chandani eventually returned to school, completed her education in public administration, and began her career as a government official. Today, she dedicates herself to improving the economic conditions of rural communities in Nepal through cooperative models that empower individuals to work collectively for mutual benefit.

"I still use the life skills I learned during my school days," Chandani shares. These skills have not only helped her build a successful career but also allowed her to support her family and ensure her younger sister receives the education they once dreamed of.

Now, Chandani stands as a role model for countless girls in the communities she serves. Her journey from a young girl forced to drop out of school to a government official driving economic transformation is a powerful testament to resilience, education, and the unwavering belief in a better future.



Reaching more children, more quickly

Celebrating Collaboration for Quality Education

In 2024 and 2025, the Literacy Portfolio was scaled in partnership with 18 palikas across Gorkha, Nuwakot, Syangja, and Salyan districts. This expansion brings our support to 429 schools. Our role in this phase focuses on technical assistance, particularly training-of-trainers for effective classroom instruction and support in developing quality educational content.

We successfully signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with all partner Palikas, signaling a strong foundation for collaboration. Crucially, these palikas are not just participating—they are leading. From nominating trainers and empowering focal teachers to enhancing classrooms, libraries, and locally printing engaging learning materials, their ownership is central to ensuring long-term, sustainable change.





Bagchaur Municipality
Salyan



Sarada Municipality
Salyan



Chhatreshwori Rural Municipality
Salyan



Tribeni Rural Municipality
Salyan



Bangad Kupinde Municipality
Salyan



Arjunchaupari Rural Municipality
Syangja



Kaligandaki Rural Municipality
Syangja



Biruwa Rural Municipality
Syangja



Galyang Municipality
Syangja



Waling Municipality
Syangja



Bheerkot Municipality
Syangja



Dupcheshwor Rural Municipality
Nuwakot



Shivapuri Rural Municipality
Nuwakot



Kishpang Rural Municipality
Nuwakot



Ajirkot Rural Municipality
Gorkha



Barpak Sulikot Rural Municipality
Gorkha



Shahid Lakhnan Rural Municipality
Gorkha

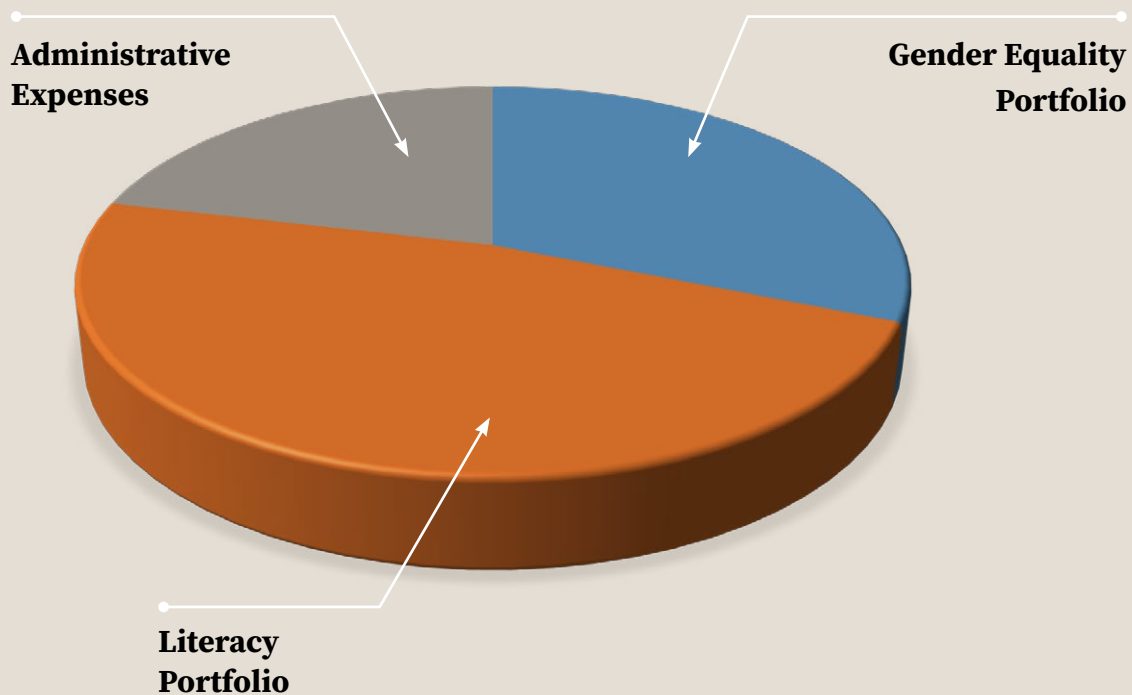


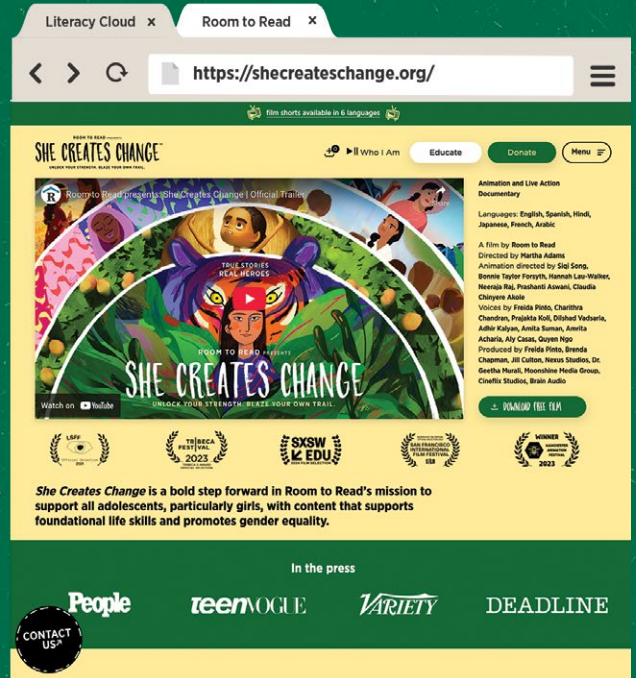
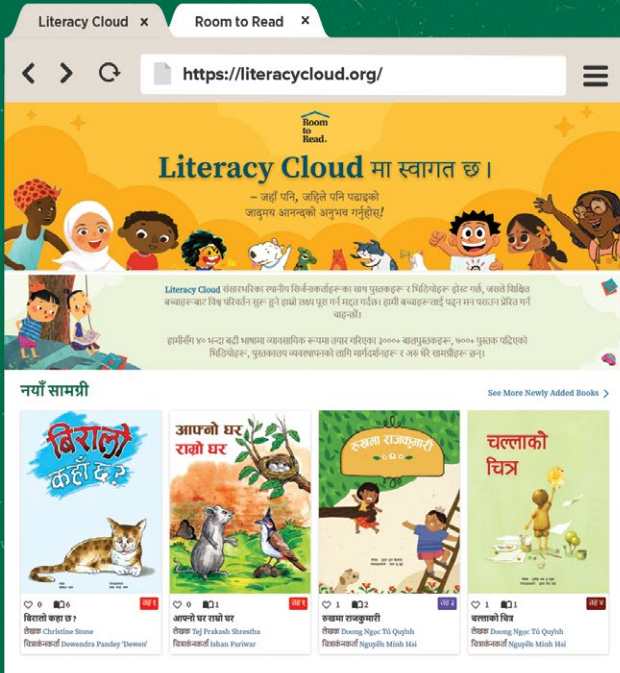
Aarughat Rural Municipality
Gorkha

Financials

July 2024 - July 2025

Program Expenses	Amount
Gender Equality Portfolio	90,463,142
i. Educator Training & Coaching	22,853,228
ii. Curriculum & Content	4,459,352
iii. Delivery Structures	61,884,615
iv. Research and Insights	1,265,947
Literacy Portfolio	137,661,253
i. Educator Training and Coaching	91,424,718
ii. Curriculum & Content	27,281,312
iii. Delivery Structures	14,011,459
iv. Research and Insights	4,943,764
TOTAL	228,124,395
Administrative Expenses	61,650,654
GRAND TOTAL	289,775,049





Literacy Cloud hosts books and videos with local creators from around the world, to help fulfill our mission of world changes starts with educated children. We aim to encourage children to love to read.

We won a Webby! You voted *She Creates Change* best of the internet in the category of Video & Film, Public Service & Activism. See how we are making this award-winning content, along with associated lesson plans and learning activities, available to children, families, educators and supporters across the globe (for free!) at shecreateschange.org.



More information



Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Contact: 01-4102127 / 4102128
 E-mail: nepal.office@roomtoread.org
 Website: www.roomtoread.org

Gorkha Office

VIP Tole, Gorkha Municipality, 9864475061

Kapilvastu Office

Gorusinge, Buddhabhumi Municipality, 9846912346

Nuwakot Office

Bus Park Road, Bidur Municipality, 9864475061

Tanahun Office

Damauli Bazar, Vyas Municipality, 9801362581