



Call for Application: Writers and Illustrators

Room to Read invites diverse writers and illustrators (published and unpublished) based in the United States to apply for the *Room to Read Peace & Equality Book Collection* to create picture books on the theme of **peace and equality**. For the purposes of this project, diverse identities include ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, gender identity, immigrant status, race, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

Background

Founded in 2000 on the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children®, Room to Read is creating a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality. We are achieving this goal by helping children in low-income communities develop literacy skills and a habit of reading, and by supporting girls to build skills to succeed in school and negotiate key life decisions. We collaborate with governments and other partner organizations to deliver positive outcomes for children at scale.

Room to Read has published nearly 1700 picture books in 32 languages around the world. Our Quality Reading Materials program brings writers and illustrators together with experienced editors and art directors to create culturally relevant books for children in local languages. This is our first United States-based book development project.

Room to Read has benefitted more than 18 million children across 16 countries and 37,000 communities and aims to reach 40 million children by 2025. Learn more at www.roomtoread.org.

Project

Applicants will have the chance to write or illustrate one of 10 digital picture books portraying themes of **peace and equality**. All 10 books will be created in a **four-week virtual book sprint**, combining the book development model of South Africa's [Book Dash](#) and Room to Read's long experience creating beautiful books in short project periods.

The goal of this book collection is to recognize the work that the United States, as a nation, must continue to do to create social, political, economic, and cultural systems grounded in peace and equality. Room to Read is dedicated to working with diverse creators to publish picture books for children ages 3-8, attending pre-K through 2nd grade. We will publish these picture books in a digital format on the Room to Read's free [Literacy Cloud](#) platform, by the end of December 2020.

Each of the stories will:

- Incorporate original writing and illustrations along the themes of peace and equality geared toward early grade school childhood development
- Be published in English with the availability to be published in other languages

Prior experience writing and illustrating children's books is helpful, but not necessary. The workshop will provide some basics of picture book creation theory, workshopping, and plenty of practice in creating engaging, impactful stories for early-grade children.

Project Details

- **Important dates:**
 - 10/21: the first kickoff meeting
 - 10/26 - 11/20: the four-week project
 - 11/20: book collection showcase
 - 12/30: final picture books will be published digitally on Literacy Cloud
 - Early Feb 2021: our book publication virtual launch event during Children's Authors and Illustrators Week
- **Workshop location:** all meetings and materials will be accessed virtually
- 10 writers and 10 illustrators will be selected to join the workshop and will be matched with one editor and one art director who will help mentor the creative process
- Creators will collaborate with book teams (writer, illustrator, art director, and editor) to create one picture book during the course of the project
- This is a work-for-hire assignment, with more details available in Appendix 1

Each creator will:

- Receive a **flat rate:** \$1000 USD per published title
- Receive group and one-on-one mentorship from an editor or art director in the publishing industry
- Participate in creative and publishing process workshops
- Join a book publication launch event attended by publishing industry professionals
- Become part of the worldwide Room to Read book creator community
- See their book digitally published on Literacy Cloud, the Room to Read virtual book platform, with the potential to have the book published in print in 2021

To Apply

Please send an email to BrocheAroe Fabian at broche.arooe.fabian@roomtoread.org by **Monday, October 12, 2020**. Include the following in your email:

- Your résumé
- Two short answers:
 - 250 words describing your background and interest in children's book publishing
 - 250 words describing your interest in these themes and/or this project

- For writers*: please include either a full manuscript and additional concept idea relating to the theme OR two detailed concept ideas relating to the theme
- For illustrators*: please submit a portfolio (website, social media, etc.) OR spot illustrations and character sketches OR a fluid concept relating to the picture book theme
- * We welcome representations of own culture and language in writing and illustrations

Applicants will be notified of their application status by **Monday, October 19, 2020**.

Please also reach out to BrocheAroe with any questions you may have. Thank you, and we look forward to your application!

Book Examples

The theme of peace and equality is purposely broad and inclusive. The titles we've selected to share here showcase ideas of how this theme might be interpreted conceptually.

Additionally, due to the nature of the Literacy Cloud platform, unlike traditionally published picture books, there is limited integration of the text and the illustrations on the same page. These books hosted on Literacy Cloud implement visual storytelling and voice in creative ways.

- [*Colored Hills*](#) by Tamara Grandoqa Qushha; illustrated by Nizar Abu Al Halaweh
- [*Rescue the Princess*](#) by Nguyễn Trần Thiên Lộc, illustrated by Phạm Thu Thùy
- [*The Hen Farida*](#) by Huda Al Shaer, illustrated by Sasha Haddad
- [*I Like Your Way*](#) by Audelia Agustine, illustrated by Haikal
- [*Sirama-rama*](#) by Alif Ilma Zakiah, illustrated by Andina Subarja

These traditionally published titles are examples of words and pictures that tell a story together, but their integration is not integral to the way the story is told.

- [*We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga*](#) by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Frané Lessac
- [*What Can a Citizen Do?*](#) by Dave Eggers, illustrated by Shawn Harris
- [*The Day You Begin*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López
- [*Island Born*](#) by Junot Diaz, illustrated by Leo Espinosa
- [*Two White Rabbits*](#) by Jairo Buitrago, illustrated by Rafael Yockteng
- [*I Am Jazz*](#) by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas
- [*The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!*](#) by Carmen Agra Deedy, illustrated by Eugene Yelchin

Appendix 1

More about Room to Read's Creator Agreement

It is important to know before submitting your application, that all participating book creators will be required to sign a creator agreement and transfer book copyright(s) to Room to Read. With this agreement in place, Room to Read will own the copyright and be able to publish, distribute, license, and sell the book and any directly related works around the world. Please know that this is one of the non-negotiable requirements for project participation, because it contributes directly to the organization's core mission to create a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality.

With the book copyright, Room to Read may:

1. Publish the books online for children to enjoy for free
2. License the book's translation, distribution, and sales rights in various territories around the world
3. Distribute free copies of the book to other organizations, local government agencies, and schools

In all the above cases, Room to Read will continually look for ways to support its book authors and illustrators. In addition to the **work-for-hire project fee and other benefits** listed in the first page, all Room to Read book creators also have the **potential to earn royalties**. If and when the books are licensed to new territories/countries and printed for sales and distribution, the local publishers will be required to pay authors and illustrators a fair royalty rate once a minimum sales threshold has been met and exceeded. This is one of the important and innovative ways Room to Read supports its authors and illustrators and contributes to their success.