



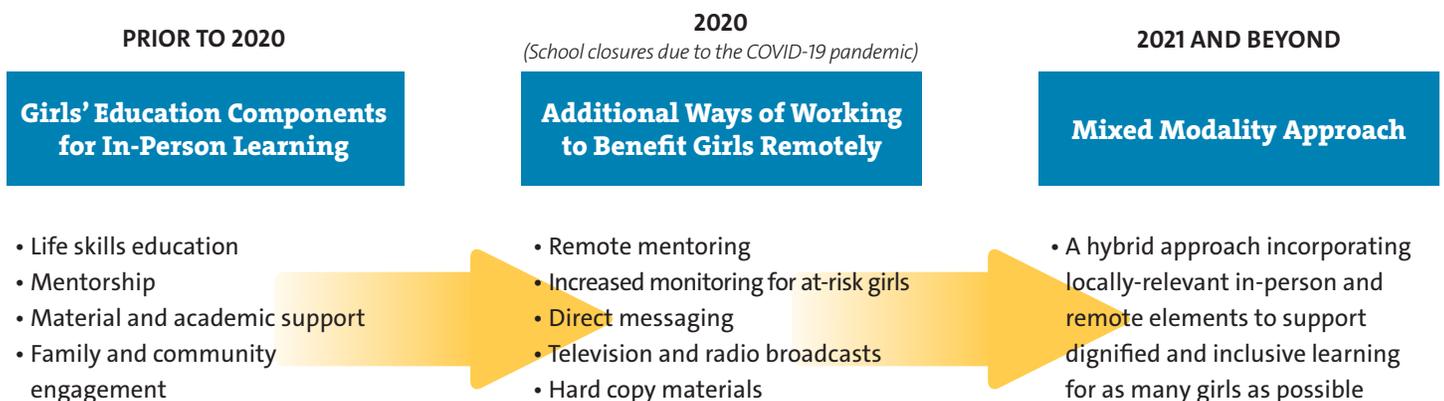
Room to Read®

Girls' Education Program Report 2021

At Room to Read, we support girls in their development of key life skills to self-advocate and navigate challenging situations so that we can work toward a gender-equal world. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented difficult times for everyone, and has especially exposed vulnerabilities and posed obstacles specific to girls. As noted by [Brookings](#), the transition from in-person to remote schooling increased pressure on girls to drop out of school due to factors ranging from household demands to economic concerns and child marriages. We have made it a priority to show young girls that they are valued, and they have the right to a quality education. To do so, we used our innovative approaches to reach more girls than ever before. Our methods have included remote individual and group mentoring, development and broadcast of TV and radio programs, direct messaging to parents and teachers, distribution of hard copy materials to students, virtual training for teachers and school leadership, social media to inform and advocate, sharing our content on government and partner platforms and monitoring girls at risk of not returning to school. These remote program activities were implemented with the hope of providing the variety of support girls might need during these unprecedented times. We are thrilled to report that our efforts have proven more successful than we ever anticipated.

Throughout 2021, we have continued to deliver our adapted programming to reach girls wherever they are and track our program delivery using a set of crisis-adapted indicators. These measurements, adapted from our longstanding global indicators, provide a clear glimpse into how effectively our programs are running in the various learning landscapes in which we are operating amid the pandemic.

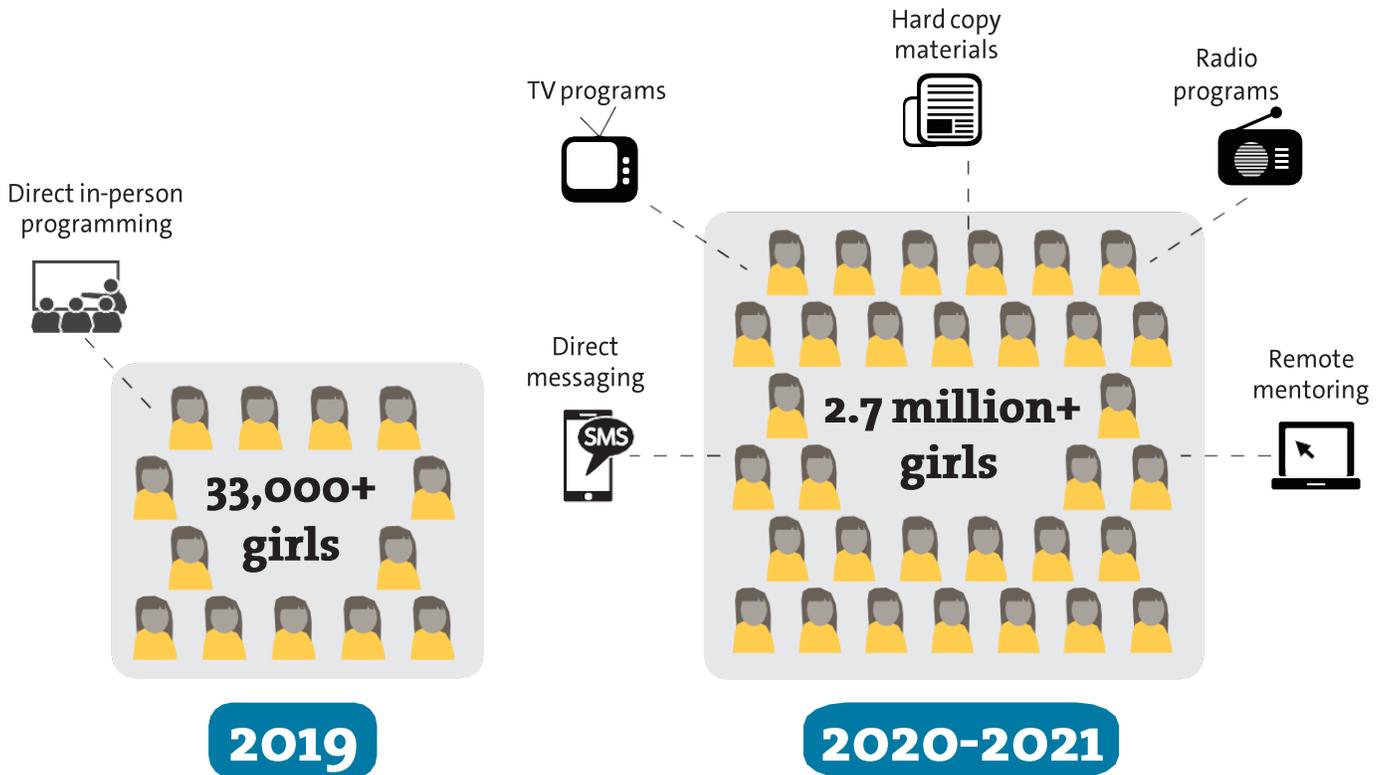
COVID-19 Program Innovations



Our Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) team continues to conduct studies and collect data that can help us further improve and build upon our methodologies while also providing us with evidence-based comparative information.

Benefiting More Girls Than Ever Before

Our cumulative number of children benefited through our Girls' Education Program increased notably in 2020. Through the end of 2019, we had benefited 114,900 girls through the program cumulatively, reaching more than 33,000 girls in 2019 alone. In 2020, however, we reached more than 2.7 million girls. This large increase is due to our new methods of supporting girls during the pandemic, including radio and TV programming, through which we were able to reach a much larger audience quickly.



Our RM&E team developed new count methodologies that have been vetted by experts to help us estimate the reach of these activities. Notably, with our TV and radio broadcasting, we needed to consider a range of variables to estimate not just how many girls had access to our programming, but how many of those girls were regularly viewing or listening to our broadcasts beyond those already reached through our ordinary in-person programming. We utilized available census data, demographic statistics and other publicly available national data, and then subtracted the number of current program participants to avoid counting children twice. Due to the worldwide shift to more virtual activities during COVID-19, a number of new studies were available for review — both internal and external — that helped to benchmark our participation rate estimates. Based on the available data, we conservatively estimated participation rates between 10-20 percent for non-Girls' Education Program participants in broadcast geographies.



High Return Rates Among Program Participants

At the end of 2020, we assessed the percentage of participants who had returned to school in Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Vietnam, where schools had reopened and saw impressive results. More specifically, we calculated the return rate by assessing the number of girls who were enrolled in school or had graduated from school as of December 31st as compared to our total enrollment as of February 28th, 2020.

Girls' Education Program Participant Return to School Rates, as of the End of 2020

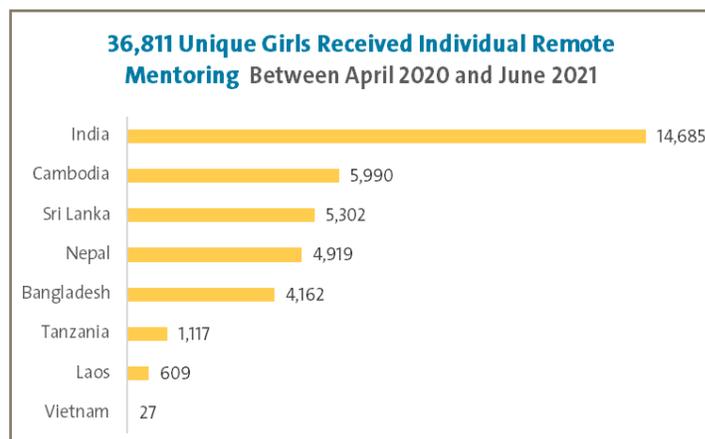
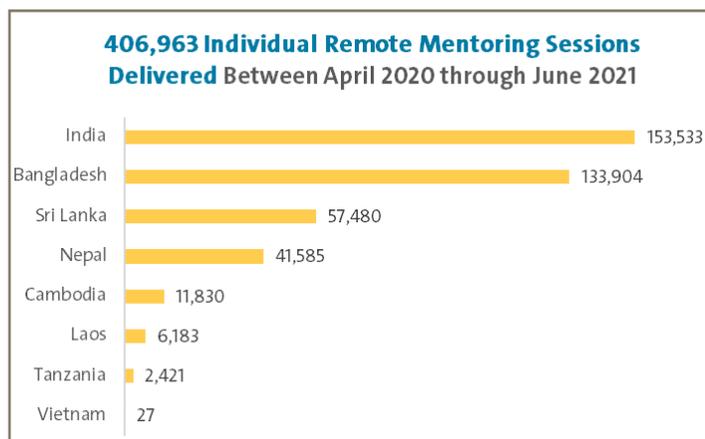


Mixed Modality Activities as of Mid-2021

Indicator	Jan-June 2021	Cumulative Total
Number of unique Room to Read programs/episodes broadcast via TV	161	187
Number of unique Room to Read programs/episodes broadcast via radio	85	218
Number of direct messages to email IDs or mobile phones via email/SMS/WhatsApp/Telegram/WeChat/other means that furthers programmatic objectives of the Girls' Education Program	1,281,475	3,371,540
Number of unique posts/files on social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) that further Girls' Education Programs objectives	905	1,435
Number of unique materials uploaded onto government or other partner websites	20	58
Number of unique girls receiving non-digital materials (hard copy books, worksheets, etc.)	8,685	19,289
Number of individual remote mentoring sessions delivered	141,475	406,963
Number of unique girls receiving individual mentoring sessions	24,148	36,811

Social Mobilizers Continue to Provide Extensive Remote Mentoring for Girls

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic requires our programs to continue to be nimble and adaptable for remote learning as well as some in-person settings. What was initially challenging has developed into an opportunity for Room to Read to find new ways to reach girls beyond our traditional programming. These adaptations have largely helped facilitate distance learning and engagement, and our social mobilizers are providing in-depth support to girls, carrying out individual and group mentoring sessions, traveling to girls' homes, making phone calls and sending messages — all in an effort to ensure that girls don't lose the critical life skills lessons during this challenging time. With the myriad unanticipated obstacles unique to young girls that have emerged from the global health crisis, our in-country staff have demonstrated resilience and creativity in developing programs to help girls receive critical socioemotional support and overcome whatever challenges they might be facing. From April 2020 to June 2021, our social mobilizers delivered a total of 406,963 individual remote mentoring sessions, reaching a total of 36,811 girls across India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Cambodia, Laos, Tanzania and Vietnam*.



**Please note that schools were briefly closed in Vietnam, Laos and Tanzania between April 2020 and June 2021, influencing their total numbers represented in the figures above.*



Story from Nepal

Kabita, Alumna and Social Mobilizer



In Grade 4, Kabita joined Room to Read's Girls' Education Program in Kathmandu, Nepal. Following her completion of Grade 10, Kabita started to receive marriage proposals and was pressured by her family to consider marrying to help with their financial difficulties. Despite the pressures, Kabita rejected the prospect of child marriage; she was encouraged by her social mobilizer to say "no" and felt empowered by the knowledge she had cultivated in her life skills lessons. Kabita's resilience kept her in school and out of a child marriage.

Now, her mother looks to Kabita as an inspiration and example of what can happen when a girl stays in school. Once in favor of early marriages, her mother now says, "Nowadays, I advise my friends and colleagues at work to not marry their daughters off at a young age and let them study."

Kabita remains connected to Room to Read, as she is now a social mobilizer in her community of Nuwakot. She works mostly with girls in Grade 7 and sees the lack of support that the girls receive from their families with regards to pursuing an education. In her life skills sessions, she teaches the girls critical skills like how to problem solve, manage emotions and resist peer pressure. She also provides individual mentoring to the girls and shares her own story as an example of what can be achieved when a girl stays in school.

Having once been in their shoes, Kabita is able to really relate to the girls and understands the various challenges and fears that they share with her, giving her lived experience as support and guidance. Kabita's support for these girls has endured throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as she regularly calls them

to check in, answer questions, encourage them to continue their schooling and review the life skills that they have practiced.

Kabita is a testament to the enduring effects of our Girls' Education Program. While she was once a young girl unsure of how she could fulfill her own dreams and complete her education, she is now a confident, compassionate and adaptive woman who is actively working to ensure that the next generation of young girls have the same opportunities that she did.

You can view a video about Kabita's story [here](#).



Story from India

Roshni, Program Participant

In India, child marriage is a particularly prevalent issue for young girls, and a notable barrier to completing their educations. One student in Room to Read's Girls' Education program, Roshni, saw the realities of this practice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While in lockdown in Chhattisgarh, Roshni's mother told her that another girl from their town was scheduled to be married. Unsettled by this news, Roshni looked for more information about this marriage arrangement. In doing so, she learned that the prospective bride was a minor and wanted to do something. Roshni reached out to the young girl's sister, asking for her thoughts and reiterating to her that child marriage is illegal. Unfortunately, the sister confided that she felt helpless as she was not able to do anything to stop the marriage.

Roshni decided to take action. She says, "My life skills education has equipped me to help my classmates during difficult times. I would like to become a change-maker in my village." Roshni asked her father to accompany her to meet the Sarpanch, their village's elected representative. She tried to convince the Sarpanch to intervene and stop the child marriage. But the Sarpanch said, "Child marriage is common in migrant communities living in the village. The joblessness and poverty inflicted by the pandemic are forcing many parents to give away their minor daughters in marriage. The families are exploiting lockdown restrictions to conduct low-cost ceremonies secretly."

Roshni then called her social mobilizer, who encouraged Roshni to call Childline, a toll-free child helpline number, and the police with a request to keep her identity confidential. The police acted swiftly and informed the

Child Welfare Committee. The police, Childline and CWC members went to the house of the girl who was to be married and told the parents to stop the marriage or face legal consequences. Fearing legal repercussions, the girl's parents decided to call off the marriage of their minor daughter. The police appreciated Roshni's efforts and kept her identity secret.

Roshni took the knowledge and life skills that she developed through Room to Read's Girls' Education Program to be an advocate against child marriage and become a leader in her community, promoting girls' rights and the importance of their schooling. She was thrilled she was able to apply her own education and successfully stop a child marriage.

You can view a video about Roshni's story [here](#).



As part of an upcoming project, Room to Read staff interviewed a collection of girls from our Girls' Education Program, including Roshni. These interviews provide insight into the experiences of our program participants and will be shared as a part of a collaborative project between Room to Read and Rebel Girls.