



**Room to Read®**

World Change Starts  
with Educated Children®



## Our Mission

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, we develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children, and support girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.

## Our Vision

Room to Read believes that World Change Starts with Educated Children. We envision a world in which all children can pursue a quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to their community and the world.

## Our Programs

Room to Read focuses on two objectives: Literacy and Gender Equality in Education.

Our Literacy program enables primary school children to become independent readers:

- Room to Read focuses its efforts on developing reading skills and the habit of reading in primary school aged children because literacy is the foundation for all future learning. We do this primarily by establishing multi-lingual libraries, increasing access to age-appropriate and culturally relevant reading materials (including publishing our own original local language children's books), and improving the child friendliness of the school environment. We've recently increased our support for reading instruction including creating materials and providing training for teachers.

Our Girls' Education program supports girls to complete secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions:

- Room to Read focuses on girls transitioning to or in secondary school because that is where the biggest – and most permanent – gaps in gender equality in education take place. We do this primarily through supporting girls to attend school, providing female mentoring and creating more girl-friendly school environments. We've recently added more emphasis on teaching life skills to girls so they will finish school and maximize their opportunities.

## Our Reach

In 2010, Room to Read is celebrating its 10th year and the opening of its 10,000th library. Since 2000, Room to Read has been changing children's lives in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Zambia. We aim to reach 10 million children by 2015.

## Fast Facts

- Since 2000 Room to Read has supported over four million children by providing better access to education.
- Room to Read has built 1,129 schools and established 9,196 bilingual libraries.
- Room to Read has published 433 original local language children's books, in 22 languages, representing more than 4.1 million books.
- To date, Room to Read has distributed over 7.4 million children's books that include original Room to Read titles, donated English-language books and local language books.
- Room to Read supports 8,725 girls through its Girls' Education program.
- In 2008, Room to Read trained more than 6,800 teachers, principals and librarians to work in Room to Read program sites.
- In 2008, Room to Read established a library every 4 hours.
- In 2008, Room to Read on average, distributed 3 books a minute.
- In 2008, Room to Read constructed one school every 1.5 days.
- In 2008, Room to Read provided access to a library for US \$11/day.
- In 2008, Room to Read provided over one million school days to girls who would never have had the opportunity to receive an education.



## Recognition and Awards

- Recognized as a “high-impact giving” organization in Barron’s 2009 “25 Best Philanthropist” issue (ranking 11th).
- Awarded Charity Navigator’s coveted four-star rating for sound fiscal management for 4 years in a row – a recognition that only 8 % of their rated charities can claim.
- Awarded the Skoll Foundation’s Award for Social Entrepreneurship in 2004, 2006, and 2010. Awarded the Academy for Educational Development’s “Breakthrough Ideas in Education” Award in 2007 for our Local Language Publishing program.
- Awarded the Presidential Citation from the American Library Association in 2008.
- Chosen by Twitter as their first Corporate Social Innovation partner.
- Received significant local and international media coverage over the past several years, including: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Australian Financial Review*, *Vogue Australia*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *ABC Radio* and *Channel Nine*.

## Our Innovative Model

- Room to Read invests locally by only hiring and empowering local teams to run our incountry operations. Our country teams partner with local communities and challenge them to co-invest in each project. This ensures their active participation and sense of ownership while building their capacity.
- Room to Read offers capacity building in all the areas where we work. For example, in our Local Language Publishing program, we hold workshops with local authors and illustrators to empower a growing pool of local talent and to preserve local ownership.
- We seek to constantly improve the quality of our programs through ongoing monitoring and evaluation. For example, during the first three years after a Reading Room (library) is established, site visits are conducted every three months to assess progress, offer needed training and provide additional books and educational materials.
- We manage efficiently and effectively to enable maximum investment in our programs. For every \$1 Room to Read receives, 83 cents goes directly to programs. We also maintain a diversified donor base with 44% of our funding coming from outside North America.
- We have created a global chapter movement with over 45 chapters in 16 countries with over 5,500 volunteers that network, plan events, and raise awareness for Room to Read. Collectively, the chapters raise approximately 1/3 of our annual operating budget.



## Relevant Statistics

- 759 million adults are illiterate; 2/3 of which are female
- Over 300 million children are not enrolled in school
- Of the world’s 72 million primary school-aged children out of school, 96 percent live in developing countries