

# Solving the Puzzle: Children's Literacy and Girls' Education



Room to Read

Annual Report 2014



# We're solving a puzzle.



## Letter from the CEO

### Hello!

Ever since I was a child, I have loved puzzles. There is something gratifying about trying to figure out how to match colors and shapes until eventually all the pieces come together in a final product. Challenging ourselves with puzzles was a tradition my mother and I had, and it is something I have started with my own daughter.

Why am I telling you this? Because for the past 15 years, Room to Read has been constructing its own puzzle. Through the years we have been testing and perfecting various pieces of our puzzle—figuring out whether and how the differently crafted pieces fit together—with the ultimate aim of ensuring that our Literacy Program and

Girls' Education Program are achieving the outcomes we desire: children in primary school reading with fluency and comprehension after obtaining both the skills and habit of reading; and girls in secondary school graduating with life skills enabling them to negotiate key life decisions and to make their own choices, both personally and professionally.

As we approach our major milestone of impacting 10 million children with improved educational opportunities, which will happen this year, I am excited not only about the scale Room to Read is reaching but also about how the depth and quality of our programs have come together.

From the beginning, we made long-term commitments to the countries where we work, allowing staff to be flexible in growing programs that best fit the culture and conditions. We have never been afraid to start making change happen and to encourage experimentation. But like many social entrepreneurs, we didn't always put the pieces together in the best way on the first try. As we assembled, we also measured and evaluated, until we had actual proof that a practice or a program worked. This past year, we undertook a major strategic planning process (see page 3) and began to standardize what we now recognize are best practices. Through the consolidation of best practices from each of our country offices, we are excited to be providing standard activity sets and instructions worldwide for our two core programs.

This year's annual report shows you how each piece of the puzzle of our Literacy Program and our Girls' Education Program gives us the outcome we desire and how we will accomplish world change through each of the 1 million children we now reach each year—as well as their teachers, principals, librarians, parents, grandparents, and siblings, just to name a few.

I am so proud of the work we have done toward perfecting our programmatic puzzle—a puzzle that, when assembled, gets us the results we intend to achieve. And I am even more excited about what lies ahead for Room to Read as we use this formula to impact at least 15 million children by 2020. Thank you for being an important piece of the Room to Read puzzle. Your support is allowing us to find our perfect fit.

Warmly,

Erin Ganju, Co-Founder and CEO

**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.**



## Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Friends,

The theme of puzzles in this year's annual report is particularly appropriate. It demonstrates how Room to Read has worked for over 15 years to figure out the right combination and solution that aligns our work to achieve quality programs with our intention to operate with efficiency and excellence.

Always a learning organization, in 2014 our strategic plan went a step further in this alignment and looked not only at improved ways of scaling our work to reach more children, but also at figuring out solutions to two big challenges where we wanted to place more focused attention.

The first was maintaining sustainable revenue growth so that we can continue to meet the demands of Room to Read's Literacy and Girls' Education Programs as they grow. We are fortunate to have a solid, diverse, and growing investor base across multiple regions. Keeping our investors connected with our work and sharing in our successes is crucial to us. But we know we must find even more systematic ways to allocate resources in both current and future locations, and to automate processes wherever it makes sense, thus maximizing our revenue.

We also are focusing on targeted and strategic investments in our people and processes. Updating many of our internal systems to make work more efficient for staff has long been a challenge for us, impacting our ability to retain top talent and build staff capacity (anyone wish to fund this?). We are working to ensure that our people can operate with the key skills and tools they need to be most productive in supporting our mission.

I am continually amazed at what Room to Read has built in only 15 years. Later this year (2015) we will reach the amazing milestone of impacting 10 million children—a number we are reaching five years ahead of schedule! I am also just as amazed that through the generosity of our dedicated and diverse network of supporters, in 2014 we exceeded US\$50 million in annual revenue, including gifts-in-kind. This is a financial scale that few nonprofits ever reach. In addition, we were honored in 2014 by the U.S. Library of Congress with its highest literacy award—the Rubenstein Literacy Prize—awarded to an organization that meets the highest standards of excellence in its operations and systems, and has made a commitment and demonstrated outstanding and measurable contributions to increasing and advancing literacy. And we were also thrilled to welcome Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube, to our board of directors in 2014.

As we focus our next chapter on scaling our impact to create long-term systemic change in the countries where we work, as well as within our organization, I want to thank you for being part of our solution. We look forward to your support solving our future “puzzles” in the years to come.

Craig Bruya, *Board Chair*

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# Scaling Our Impact

Finding a solution to the challenge of reaching 250 million children who are not learning is critical to our mission. Our strategic plan aligns our efforts to scale our impact and addresses investments toward a healthy and sustainable organization.



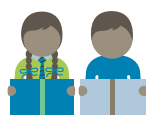




## We've accomplished so much in 15 years.



**PROVIDING  
31,000+ GIRLS  
WITH EDUCATION  
AND LIFE SKILLS**



**ESTABLISHING  
17,000+  
LIBRARIES**



**SUPPORTING READING & WRITING IN  
2,300 CLASSROOMS**



**CONSTRUCTING  
1,900+  
SCHOOLS**



**PUBLISHING  
1,100+ BOOKS  
IN LOCAL LANGUAGES**

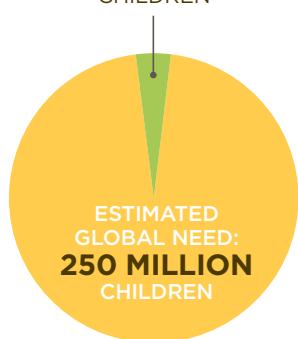


**IMPACTING THE LIVES  
OF 9.7M+  
CHILDREN**

Nearly 10 million children have been impacted through our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs in 15 years. In that time, Room to Read has also scaled program operations to 10 countries across Africa and Asia, grown our staff to over 1,000 (87 percent in our program countries), and developed a dedicated network of investors who support our annual budget of US\$50 million.

## But Room to Read has many more children to reach.

ROOM TO READ'S  
CUMULATIVE IMPACT:  
**10 MILLION**  
CHILDREN



Quality of life, health and economic opportunity all depend on education, and right now an education crisis remains in low-income countries. Literacy is the foundation for all future learning, yet nearly 800 million people are illiterate, and 2/3 are women and girls. Even with increased access to school, millions of children aren't learning the basics while in primary school due to inadequate teachers, funds, and school infrastructure challenges. The situation gets worse for girls in secondary school when female student enrollment sharply drops due to societal and economic challenges. We recognize that reaching more children who need our services will require a collaborative effort among many organizations and governments.

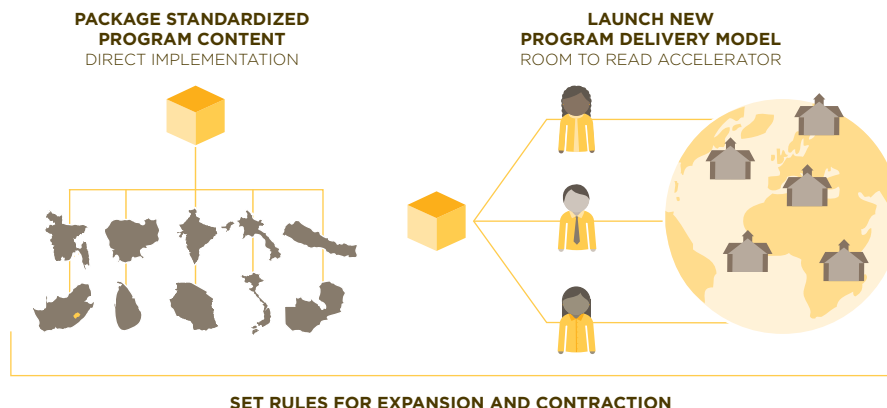
## Our plan to strategically scale our impact.

**Challenge:** How do we scale our programs to meet the global need for our work?

**Solution:** Deepen and broaden our impact.

Many more children could benefit from our programs. Attempting to have a larger effect on the global demand through our direct implementation approach would require substantial resources and time. Thus, addressing this challenge will require identifying ways to become more efficient in current program delivery and consider alternate methods.

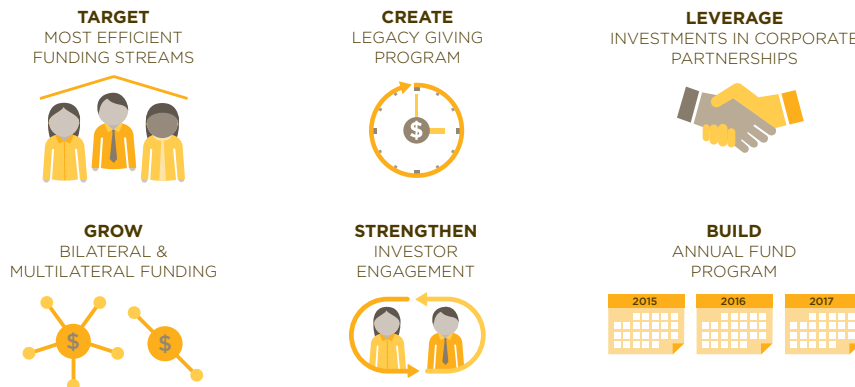
**Our plan is to streamline and standardize our approach within our core programming, take a more disciplined approach to country expansion and contraction, and launch an external assistance arm called Room to Read Accelerator.**



**Challenge:** How do we maintain revenue growth to sustain program demand?

**Solution:** Focus our resource mobilization efforts.

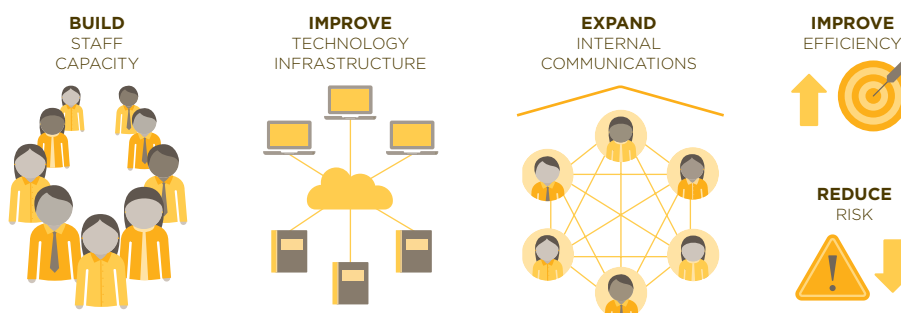
While we have a solid and diverse base of support in many regions, we still have limited resources. We need to find more systematic ways to allocate resources in existing and new markets and automate processes in order to maximize revenue. **Our plan is to place fundraising efficiency at the center of our strategy, increase our number and diversity of investors, but ensure strong connections between each of our investors and our work.**



**Challenge:** How do we ensure organizational sustainability?

**Solution:** Invest in people, processes and systems.

Our internal systems have not developed at the same pace of growth as our programmatic impact. This has led to challenges of improving efficiency for our staff, and has created redundant or misaligned processes that have affected our ability to operate as efficiently as possible. **Our plan is to make focused investments in our people, internal systems and processes to help build a more robust platform for sustainable growth.**









# Literacy Program

It takes putting many pieces in the right place to create an independent reader. Our Literacy Program knows how each piece should fit together so that a child gains both the skill and the habit of reading in primary school that allows for a lifetime of future learning.



# Learning Environments

Learning to read and write is challenging enough without also being distracted by hot, dark, or overcrowded classrooms. Room to Read partners with communities to build or repair learning spaces so children have safe, child-friendly environments where they can focus on learning. Our projects include building all-new classroom blocks to alleviate overcrowding; renovating existing school spaces to improve lighting, safety, and ventilation; and establishing dedicated library spaces where students can have fun, positive interactions with books.



## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Cross-national evaluation examines our libraries' impact on children's reading habits in six countries

Room to Read, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, commissioned an external evaluation of our school libraries in India, Laos, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Zambia from 2009 through 2012.

**Q.** HOW WELL ARE WE SUCCEEDING AT ACHIEVING OUR DESIRED OUTCOME: LIBRARIES IMPROVING CHILDREN'S READING HABITS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD READING?

**A.** IN FOUR OF THE FIVE COUNTRIES, **ROOM TO READ LIBRARIES INCREASED THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN** READING FOR ENJOYMENT AT HOME, WHILE THREE OF THE FIVE COUNTRIES SAW AN IMPACT ON READING FOR ENJOYMENT AT SCHOOL.

### BEFORE ROOM TO READ ESTABLISHED LIBRARIES

13%

OF CHILDREN READ AT SCHOOL FOR ENJOYMENT IN ROOM TO READ PROJECT SCHOOLS

11%

OF CHILDREN READ AT SCHOOL FOR ENJOYMENT IN COMPARISON SCHOOLS

EXAMPLE: LAOS



### AFTER

#### ROOM TO READ ESTABLISHED LIBRARIES

60%

OF CHILDREN READ AT SCHOOL FOR ENJOYMENT IN ROOM TO READ PROJECT SCHOOLS

37%

OF CHILDREN READ AT SCHOOL FOR ENJOYMENT IN COMPARISON SCHOOLS

SIMILAR INCREASES WERE FOUND COMPARING CHILDREN READING FOR ENJOYMENT AT HOME.

Overall, these findings provide objective evidence that our school libraries are effective at promoting children's reading habits.

### South Africa creatively transforms unused spaces into learning environments



Room to Read South Africa staff flexed their right-brain muscles as they searched for empty or unused spaces within government schools and transformed them into new libraries. A prime example is the Nkulungwana Primary

School in Mpumalanga province—a school that both lacked a library and had no unused classroom space where one could be established. Room to Read South Africa, working with the school principal, decided to repurpose an old storage room. With a fresh coat of colorful paint, a delivery of new furniture and books, and volunteer library assistants trained by Room to Read, the room has become a functioning library. Since the library opened, the school has seen notable results, including an increase in community engagement with volunteers and school activities, and meetings for parents hosted at the school. In addition, the teachers are utilizing the library more in their lessons.

“Before the school library was established, the room was simply an empty and dull space with nothing in it. Today, it is a safe haven for students to make use of the library resources and comfortably sit on the child-friendly chairs or carpets,” says Jeanette Mokgotho of Room to Read South Africa.

This library is one of 20 established by Room to Read South Africa in 2014. As with all of our libraries, this one is rated twice per year as part of our Library Rating System to ensure that it is functioning in the way that we know maximizes learning results. The Nkulungwana Primary School library is ranked in the highest category and is a much greater learning environment than the empty storage closet ever was.

### Small repair and renovation work in Bangladesh schools leads to large learning improvements for teachers and students



Many rural schools in Bangladesh were built close to 100 years ago without regard to safe construction techniques. While many have undergone renovations, improving the school environment to encourage literacy development was never considered. Room to Read Bangladesh

worked with individual communities to repair 12 school buildings and establish five new school buildings in 2014. One example is the Shymnagar Government Primary School, where students learned in hot and dark classrooms with a leaky roof, peeling plaster, and potholes on the unfinished floor.

Shymnagar is located in Natore, a district that Room to Read expanded to in 2014. After introducing themselves to the community through regular meetings, our team conducted an assessment to determine how to retrofit the existing structure against earthquakes and encourage better learning through classroom updates such as book shelves and print-rich posters. Through our challenge-grant model, the local community provided 15 percent of the cost through donated cash, materials, and labor.

Now Shymnagar has an all-new classroom with a library and books that students can easily access. Teachers have been trained in teaching students to read in the Bangla language and now feel more inspired in their classrooms. Says Ms. Sakhina, head teacher, “With these shiny classrooms, shelves, and display areas, Room to Read is providing a great opportunity for all my students’ education. If Room to Read can be taken countrywide, I can see well-educated people representing a changed Bangladesh to the rest of the world.”





# Quality Reading Materials

Beginning readers need books and instructional materials designed for their skill levels. Texts that are too challenging or complex can intimidate students and discourage them from wanting to practice reading. Unfortunately, early reader texts are often extremely limited or nonexistent in the countries where we work. To remedy this, Room to Read creates local-language materials that can be enjoyed by readers at various levels and feature a diverse range of topics designed to capture children's imaginations, making reading fun.

## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Book checkout analysis in Sri Lanka investigates book preferences

In 2014, Room to Read Sri Lanka, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, conducted an internal study designed to understand children's reading preferences by examining book checkout in a sample of our school libraries.

### THE STUDY:

- 6 SINHALA-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS
- 6 TAMIL-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS



- FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



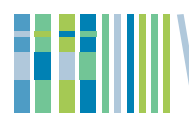
- 3 MONTHS OF BOOK CHECKOUT RECORDS



### THE FINDINGS:

CHILDREN PREFER ROOM TO READ-PUBLISHED TITLES TO THOSE NOT PUBLISHED BY ROOM TO READ

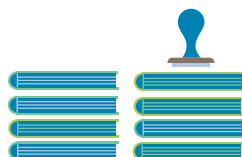
ROOM TO READ PUBLISHED TITLES



NON ROOM TO READ PUBLISHED TITLES

### THE STUDY ALSO FOUND THAT:

BOOK CHECKOUT IN GRADES 2-5 IS HIGH, WHILE BOOK CHECKOUT IN GRADE 1 IS LOW TO NONEXISTENT



GRADES 2-5



GRADE 1



ARE THE MOST POPULAR GENRES



ARE MORE POPULAR THAN ADVANCED-LEVEL

Room to Read Sri Lanka will use these findings to inform the genre of books they publish, train teachers on matching children to books at appropriate grade levels, and get teachers to encourage younger readers to take books home.

## Traditional oral stories are transformed into rich children's books in Laos



To source new children's books, Room to Read Laos visited two rural villages in the Viengkham district, which have a strong tradition of oral history and storytelling that has been passed down from generation to generation. In collaboration with the government and a partner organization,

more than 20 participants, including writers, illustrators, and government officials, worked alongside village leaders to collect the rich legends that included tales about faith, tradition, music, and culture. Interviews were conducted and recorded with writers and artists in order to gather details about characters, settings and plot elements they could use when writing and illustrating future storybooks. Following the collection process, writers and illustrators collaborated to finish the first children's story from the visit, which will be published in 2015 by Room to Read Laos.

"The first story we chose, 'Lost at a Rocket Festival,' is a traditional tale about a boy named Bounma," explains Soulath Damrongphol of Room to Read Laos. "His parents insisted that he take care of the buffalo instead of attending the traditional rocket festival. When he decided to take the buffalo to the festival instead, the loud noises frightened the buffalo and they ran away."

This oral narrative project offers not only opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and cultural expressions from community elders to the youth, but also a way to engage Lao schoolchildren to read and improve their skills through stories that teach cultural traditions and foster pride in their own identities. Additionally, the project has provided a venue for young local writers and illustrators to explore their own culture through their art form.

## Learning materials for teachers and children are published in the South African language of Tsonga



In 2012, Room to Read South Africa began working with first-grade teachers in 50 Limpopo and Mpumalanga government schools to improve their skills in teaching children how to read and write in the Sepedi and Swati languages. The challenge, however, was that many of the schools where Room to Read operated had Tsonga as the primary language of instruction, which immediately created a need for Room to Read South Africa to develop similar Tsonga learning materials.

Learning and teaching support materials were supplied to 14 of the schools in 2014. "In collaboration with the Department of Education, Room to Read developed supplementary learning and teaching support materials in Tsonga," says Catherine Ngwane of Room to Read South Africa. Materials included thematic conversation posters, student workbooks, teacher workbooks, song and rhyme books, decodable reading cards and alphabet frieze display posters and cards.

"The conversation posters help semantic and syntactic knowledge that contribute to oral language development and work in tandem with the student workbooks, which use scope and sequence to develop students' writing and reading skills," Catherine Ngwane adds.

Materials to be developed in 2015 include seven new titles in all three languages—Sepedi, Swati, and Tsonga—in order to fully meet the language needs of the children in the schools that Room to Read serves. Room to Read's work enabled these schools to better align their classroom teaching with South Africa's national curriculum and assessment policies.



# Professional Support for Teachers

One of the most important elements of literacy education is having an instructor who knows how to effectively teach and nurture reading and writing skills. Room to Read provides early grade teachers with professional development and in-class coaching to make sure they have the knowledge and tools to successfully support their students. The phonics-based instructional design that we train teachers to use helps children learn to decode sounds and words in a logical sequence and build confidence in their budding skills.



## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Study on what motivates children to read shows that our methods work

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Room to Read conducted a 2014 study in Cambodia, Nepal, and South Africa that examined what motivates children to read and what works for teachers to promote reading.

**CONFIRMED!** OUR METHODS FOR TRAINING TEACHERS TO DEVELOP A READING HABIT IN THEIR STUDENTS IS WORKING.

**LEARNINGS:** CHILDREN READ MORE FREQUENTLY AND WITH GREATER MOTIVATION WHEN:



THE SCHOOL HAS FREQUENT LIBRARY PERIODS WITH A LIBRARY THAT HOUSES BOOKS THE CHILDREN LIKE



TEACHERS CONDUCT A COMBINATION OF READING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS READING ALOUD, SHARED READING, PAIRED READING, AND INDEPENDENT READING



THE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER USES LIBRARY BOOKS IN CLASS TO REINFORCE LEARNING



TEACHERS AT THE SCHOOL HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY ROOM TO READ AND ARE SUPPORTED BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Room to Read will use this as well as other lessons from the research to inform and refine the design of our Literacy Program.

### Artist workshops in Sri Lanka contribute to building the local children's book publishing industry



The number of children's book authors and illustrators in Sri Lanka has historically been low due to a lack of understanding of the importance of children's books, which contributed to a shortage of demand. Through the publication of culturally relevant children's books in local languages and workshops for authors and illustrators that teaches how to create literature for this young audience, Room to Read Sri Lanka is trying to spur growth in the book industry. Room to Read Sri Lanka conducted author and illustrator workshops in 2014 that inspired talented artists to more actively pursue their passion. Many education officials took notice.

"I have always enjoyed writing, but children's books are not financially lucrative for publishers in Sri Lanka so I didn't bother to pursue it," says Gopalapillai Yogendran, the author of "Rat's Plan," one of the manuscripts Room to Read selected for publication in 2014. "I learned so much from the workshop in terms of how to educate children through my writing. Plus, Room to Read helps us get our work seen."

Room to Read not only publishes books for school libraries, but also purchases books from local authors and illustrators, which creates an ongoing partnership with this talent pool. The workshops are a critical part of building the skill set of these authors and illustrators, thus ensuring that sustainable works of literature and art are generated for children to enjoy, encouraging them to become active, independent readers.

### Professional training in Zambia leads to long-term library sustainability



Room to Read Zambia hosted "Library Sustainability and the Habit of Reading Beyond 2014," the final professional training to equip schools and communities in Zambia's Southern province with best practices in order to maintain and sustain their library after Room to Read's three years of support ends. This training included two community members and three teachers per school; in all, more than 90 people participated, including teachers, librarians, community members, and head teachers.

Training participants discussed definitions of library sustainability and reviewed elements of school libraries, along with numerous other topics: engaging key stakeholders in library sustainability; working with budgets; planning for the future; and troubleshooting common challenges and successes after Room to Read phases out its support.

"As a community member who has been trained on how to manage and sustain these libraries in the absence of Room to Read, I am grateful to have now acquired such a skill," says Mr. Hampunhani, a training participant. "Although I am sad that Room to Read will be phasing out of the school, I am hopeful that we shall continue to take good care of the library."

Feedback from the training was overwhelmingly positive. The community knew that the interactive training had equipped them with all the necessary skills to sustain their libraries and to pledge that their libraries would continue to succeed in the future.



# Community and Government Partnership

To ensure the long-term impact of our program, Room to Read engages communities early in project planning and co-invests in project costs to establish local ownership. We also work with governments to promote widespread policy and curriculum changes that will improve literacy learning for children far beyond our program schools.

## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Tracking key indicators to measure activity and success in literacy

The success of our Literacy Program depends on the active participation of many—including teachers and school officials, parents and community leaders. We monitor key indicators that show how each of these stakeholders are engaged with our work on an annual basis.

HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF THE DATA FROM 2014:



PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION TO  
**2,316 TEACHERS**



**MORE THAN 90%**  
OF ROOM TO READ LIBRARIES HOSTED A PUBLIC EVENT FOR FAMILIES  
AND OTHERS TO DISCUSS LITERACY AND LIBRARY ISSUES



**3 OUT OF 4**  
ROOM TO READ LIBRARIES WERE SUPPORTED BY A COMMITTEE  
OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS



FINANCIAL  
INVESTMENT



DONATED  
MATERIALS



VOLUNTEER  
LABOR

**100% OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**  
FROM ROOM TO READ WERE COMPLETED WITH  
SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

Undertaking these activities—and carefully tracking them—helps to ensure that the schools where we operate have the acceptance, support and commitment of engaged, informed local stakeholders who play a vital role in sustaining the program.

### Room to Read Cambodia partners with local NGOs to develop national guidelines for reading activities



After our success in 2013 developing a national library standard for Cambodia, Room to Read Cambodia was asked by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport to help develop national guidelines for reading activities. By collaborating with the Minister of Education and two NGOs, Sipar and Shanti Volunteer Association, the guidelines, which cover how to increase children's reading habit and the roles and responsibilities of others to support this habit, were submitted for government approval. It is expected that they will be officially launched by the government in 2015.

To be ready for guideline implementation, Room to Read Cambodia, along with its NGO partners, conducted a five-day training in Phnom Penh for 140 education officers from across the country on reading activities as well as similar workshops for additional educators across six provinces.

Borin Chap, a newly certified librarian who attended the training, says that the information is helping him encourage more reading in his school library. "The reading activities are good. Children who participate feel closer to each other. They are also helping each other by answering questions and doing activities together." Borin plans to share what he learned at the training with other teachers in his school.

### Room to Read Zambia provides recommendations for the government's national education policy



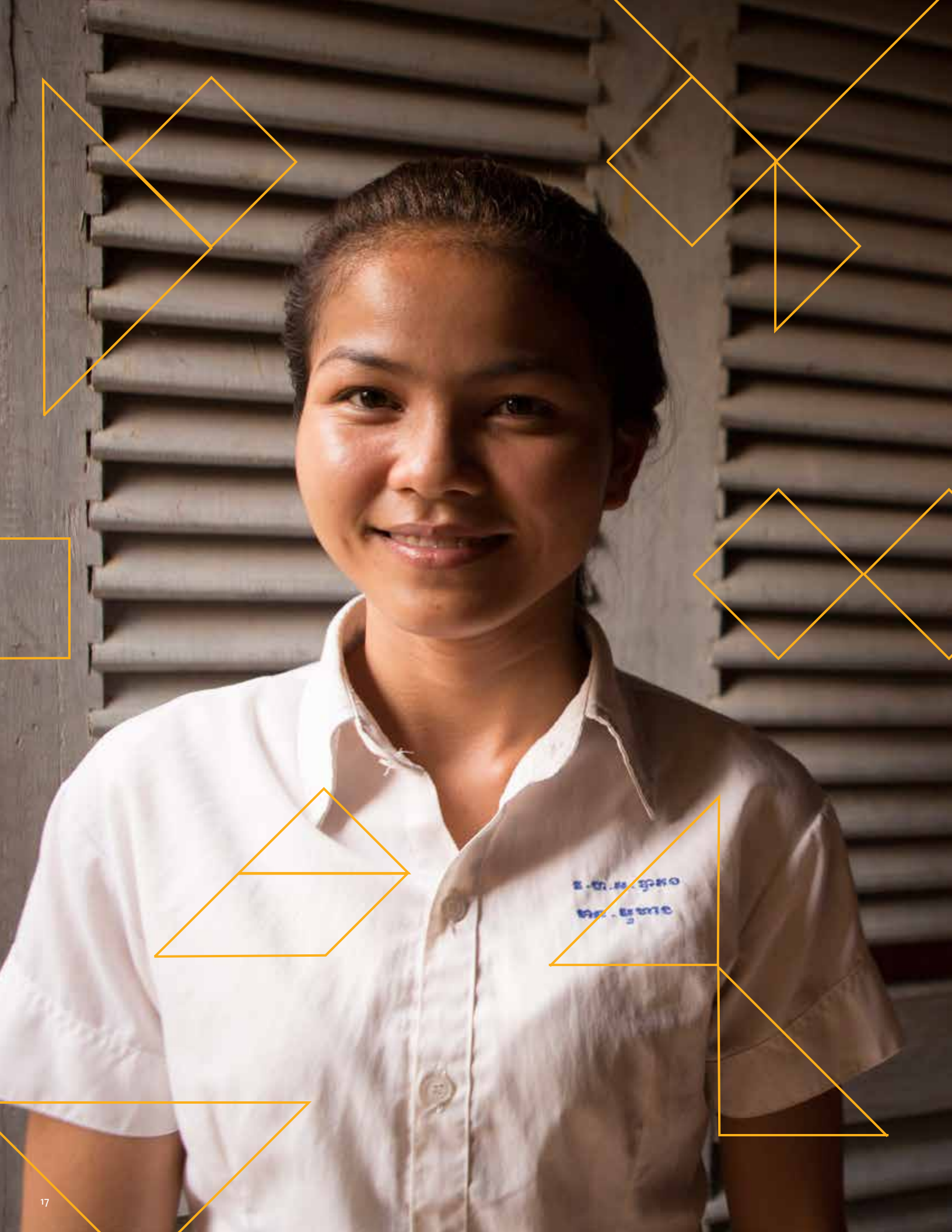
"The Role of Primary School Libraries in Improving Learner Performance in Early Grades" was the 2014 theme of the Third National Literacy Symposium funded by UNICEF and co-hosted by Room to Read Zambia and the Ministry of

Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education's Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialized Services (TESS). With Zambia's education policy currently under review, the symposium aimed to provide recommendations to TESS for improving libraries across Zambia.

These recommendations included the inclusion of a fully stocked library in the design of every new school or the consideration of classroom or mobile libraries in the absence of a separate library space. It also called for the Ministry of Education in Zambia to work with NGOs, publishers, and suppliers to ensure the development and supply of grade-appropriate children's storybooks in Zambian languages and it encouraged the ministry to protect library studies within the national teacher education curriculum.

Currently in Zambia, both public and school libraries are scarce and there are a limited number of trained librarians. Room to Read Zambia is trying to counter this situation by working closely with the government and with organizations such as the Zambia Library Service.





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นาง.สุภาวดี

# Girls' Education Program

Girls don't just need the diploma. They need the critical skills to shape their future choices. Our Girls' Education Program arranges for mentors, life skills training, material needs and community support that together allow girls to graduate from secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions.



# Mentorship

Room to Read employs social mobilizers who act as role models, advisors, and advocates for girls in our Girls' Education Program. In addition to serving as examples of educated, strong women in the community, social mobilizers provide girls with emotional support and guidance to help them along their individual journeys.



## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Two years of work with girls and social mobilizers in Nepal form the basis of an “early warning system” for dropout risk

Recognizing the critical role played by social mobilizers in our Girls' Education Program, Room to Read Nepal completed a two-year project to better understand how social mobilizers are most effective in their role.

## PHASE 1: 2013

SOCIAL MOBILIZERS COLLECTED AND ANALYZED MONTHLY DATA ON 3,045 GIRLS TO TRACK THEIR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND PARTICIPATION IN ROOM TO READ PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.

WITH ONE YEAR OF DATA, THE TEAM DISCOVERED THAT:

**4 KEY RISK FACTORS**  
WERE THE BIGGEST INDICATORS FOR GIRLS DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL:



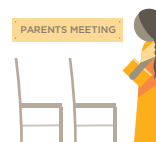
3 CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL



1+ MISSED LIFE SKILLS SESSIONS



EXAM FAILURE



PARENTS' FAILURE TO ATTEND A ROOM TO READ PARENT MEETING

## PHASE 2: 2014

ROOM TO READ NEPAL CONDUCTED AN IN-DEPTH, QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL MOBILIZERS' DAILY EXPERIENCES AND THE FACTORS THAT SUPPORT OR IMPEDE SUCCESS IN THEIR WORK.

Using these findings, Room to Read developed the Risk and Response Protocol, an early warning system intended to help social mobilizers provide additional support to girls most at risk. This system is currently being pilot-tested in Africa and will soon be rolled out worldwide.

### Mentoring both girls and their parents in Vietnam leads to open communication and shared goals



In 2014, social mobilizers from Room to Read Vietnam began mentoring parents and families in addition to program participants because they saw that so many of the problems associated with keeping girls in school stemmed from challenges at home. In many communities, parents spend much of their day working to earn a living and do not have enough time to listen and guide their children. More traditional families experience communication challenges because it is customary for parents to make many life decisions for their older children.

With the goal of influencing parents to create a stronger communication triangle between the social mobilizer, the student, and the family, social mobilizers now work toward opening the lines of communication in the home, thus providing a stronger support network for the girls. When a girl faces a problem, the social mobilizer not only meets and talks with the girl but also speaks with her parents or extended family, discussing how parents play a very important role in helping their children improve personally and continue on their education path. In addition, Room to Read holds three parent workshops or meetings each year, incorporating parents into certain life skills sessions to bring more mutual understandings between parents and their daughters. Parents were appreciative of these meetings, which encouraged them to further support the education of their daughters.

### Social mobilizers in Tanzania look for trends to target girls at risk for dropping out



One of the biggest challenges facing social mobilizers in Tanzania's Girls' Education Program are students dropping out of school. In 2014, Room to Read Tanzania strategically looked at this challenge area and decided that the best prevention would be trend spotting through daily monitoring of school attendance—so they could immediately act if they saw a student's attendance declining.

Valeria Kamaleki, one of the 19 Room to Read social mobilizers in Tanzania, is responsible for many girls in the Chalinze district, including Nasra, who Valeria noticed was regularly missing school on Fridays.

Through home visits Valeria learned that Nasra was experiencing significant challenges at home. When home visits didn't work, Valeria went further and involved the school's head teacher.

“After the head teacher's efforts failed, the last resort was to involve the police as they have been helping us address some of the more difficult issues,” Valeria adds, explaining that the police help advise girls about the laws, their rights, and even more difficult issues that girls might encounter without schooling.

Nasra eventually decided to recommit to school and Valeria's job as her social mobilizer returned to daily follow-up and psycho-social support. Nasra, at age 15, was recently given an award by Valeria for making her school return sustainable. This award was publicly presented to Nasra in front of her peers to demonstrate how committed each social mobilizer is to each girl in the Girls' Education Program.



# Life Skills

Life skills are competencies—such as empathy, critical thinking, and self-efficacy—that everyone needs in order to meet day-to-day challenges and make informed decisions. When girls learn these skills and how to apply them in their daily lives, they are better equipped to handle the challenges they may face, from gender bias to finding time to study. Our program gives girls the opportunity to learn and practice life skills through classes, workshops, and extracurricular activities.

## FOCUS ON RESULTS


## Global indicator analysis identifies trends for learning about life skills education

Our Girls' Education Program has greatly increased its emphasis on life skills education in recent years.

**TREND-SPOTTING:** IN 2014, WE ANALYZED THE PREVIOUS SIX YEARS OF PROGRAM DATA TO IDENTIFY KEY TRENDS. DATA INCLUDED:



TYPES OF SUPPORT  
PROVIDED TO MORE THAN  
**20,000 GIRLS**  
IN OUR GIRLS' EDUCATION  
PROGRAM



**KEY ACADEMIC  
OUTCOMES**  
SUCH AS DROPOUT AND  
ADVANCEMENT RATES

**DISCOVERY:** GIRLS WHO PARTICIPATED IN LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION HAD:

↑ AN ADVANCEMENT  
RATE THAT WAS **16% HIGHER**

↓ A DROPOUT RATE  
THAT WAS **14% LOWER**

THAN GIRLS WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE



This finding helps validate the expansion of the life skills component of our Girls' Education Program.

### Debate sessions dramatically boost the confidence of girls in Cambodia



Debating was officially integrated into Room to Read Cambodia's life skills training in 2014 in order to help boost the confidence of Girls' Education Program participants in grades 7-12. Beyond confidence-building, debating also

provides skills in researching, time management, public speaking, presentation creation, and team building.

Both Room to Read Cambodia's social mobilizers (mentors) and members of the debate club from the Institute of Foreign Languages trained the girls in debating and worked with them to hone this skill. At least two debates were conducted within each school where Room to Read operates its Girls' Education Program in Cambodia. The winner from each school competed against debaters from schools in the same province to declare a final champion.

The debating workshop quickly became a favorite for girls in the program. "Debate is my favorite life skills training," says Vatey, age 14. "I used to be very shy and did not speak in public. Now I am more confident. I speak up more in class when the teacher asks. In the future, I want to join the debate on the national TV station!"

Vatey is not the only student whose confidence has changed since practicing debating. Sengkhim Sok, a Room to Read social mobilizer, noticed that many other girls have had similar experiences. The girls even conduct debate sessions on their own and enjoy practicing the roles of debater, jury, and facilitator.

Now that the Girls' Education Program team in Cambodia has successfully integrated debating into life skills training, the team plans to focus on more specific skills such as researching in future years.

### Life skills camps in Nepal enable girls to explore their health, body, and rights



Room to Read Nepal held 10 overnight camps in three districts in Nepal to give girls the space and privacy to understand many sensitive women's issues that typically do

not get addressed in schools or at home. These three-day camps were held for cohorts of approximately 50 seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade girls who are enrolled in our Girls' Education Program. Each camp focused on digging deeper into the life skills education workshops that girls attend throughout the year.

As is common for many girls entering adolescence, learning about and understanding the changes happening to their bodies and how to protect themselves was a pressing concern for the girls attending the life skills camps. The girls heard from a gynecologist on topics including menstruation and sexual health, and from a female police officer on staying safe, legal rights, and what to do should trouble occur. They also were able to confidentially ask any questions they wanted.

Reema Shrestha from our Girls' Education Program in Nepal reports, "Girls rarely have a secure and confidential environment to explore so many sensitive topics that happen to them as they mature into their adolescence. But during the camps they had the opportunity to ask anything that was on their mind. This not only inspires them by showing them professional careers women can have, but also provides them with practical knowledge and information that is rarely taught in textbooks or offered by parents."





# Targeted Material Support

For some families, the cost of a school uniform or safe transportation is prohibitive to sending their daughters to school. Room to Read provides need-based material support for costs such as tuition fees, uniforms, and exam preparation services so parents do not have to choose between putting food on the table and investing in education.

## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Cambodia study finds that bicycles can help keep girls in school

Many girls must travel long distances to reach school. For several years, Room to Read Cambodia has distributed bicycles to Girls' Education Program participants to mitigate the chances that a girl's decision to drop out was due to traveling long distances.

**IS IT WORKING?** A 2014 STUDY EXAMINED WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, THE BICYCLES WERE PLAYING IN SUPPORTING GIRLS IN OUR PROGRAM IN CAMBODIA.

**THE RESULT:** YES! IT WORKS.

**CHALLENGE AREA:**



CONDUCTED  
INTERVIEWS IN  
**15 SCHOOLS**



WITH  
**GIRLS & PARENTS**



**BICYCLES**  
ARE ONE OF THE KEY  
FACTORS THAT  
KEEP GIRLS IN SCHOOL



BICYCLE  
**MAINTENANCE**

Room to Read Cambodia is exploring ways to provide higher-quality bicycles and better bike maintenance training so that this proven material support continues to contribute to the students' chances of remaining in school through graduation.

### With tutoring, girls in Bangladesh surpass the average pass rate for a national exam



Tenth grade is a critical school year in Bangladesh because that is when the government administers the Secondary School Certificate exam. Considered a life-defining exam, it is the first major standardized exam a student encounters and it determines who will advance and continue their education.

Those who do not pass this "gateway exam" must wait a full year before re-taking it, and there are few remediation processes in place to help students prepare and improve.

Room to Read Bangladesh provides targeted support at this crucial time to students in our Girls' Education Program who are particularly at risk for failure, which usually occurs when family or cultural issues compete with school attendance and exam prep.

With the support of her social mobilizer and the larger Girls' Education Program community, Nargis, age 13 and from the remote village of Dighulia, convinced her parents to dissolve her arranged marriage and allow her to remain in school—all while studying for the exam.

When the results were published, Nargis happily learned that she achieved a passing score of 4.13 out of 5 thanks to the targeted tutoring. And she wasn't alone. Of the 116 girls in our program who sat for the exam, 96 percent passed—higher than the Bangladesh national pass rate of 91 percent. With their certificates secured, all of these girls are continuing their education, including Nargis, who is determined to become a banker. Says Nargis, "Thanks to Room to Read, I had the materials and guidance as well as mental support that will allow me to continue my life journey."

### Low-income students get added support in Sri Lanka so they can pass the national exam and graduate



Recent graduates of Room to Read Sri Lanka's Girls' Education Program in Hatton excelled in their 2014 A Level Examination, which allows them to graduate from secondary school. Girls from this rural tea-picking community live in extreme poverty. In order to gain more immediate financial security, many drop out of school or marry early.

"With Room to Read's academic support classes, I paid attention to my work and studied hard with the guidance and support of my Room to Read social mobilizer," states one graduate, Prashanthi, who is one of 33 girls out of 57 who passed this critical gateway exam. She was able to start planning for her future with a secondary school diploma. "From coaching classes to revision classes for A Level preparation, Room to Read helped me to gain confidence in my work and encouraged me to study."

In addition to academic support, Room to Read social mobilizers provided material support such as transportation costs, pens, books, and at times, food, when the girls barely had anything to eat at home. By doing so, they provided these girls a safe haven in which the girls gained confidence to work harder and be the first from their respective families to graduate.





Through our work with families, schools, and communities, Room to Read aims to create environments that support girls' success in school and beyond. To engage these stakeholders, Room to Read holds community meetings where parents and guardians can discuss the importance of sending all of their children to school—not just the boys—and the challenges they are facing. We also engage program alumnae in our activities, as they are valuable role models for younger girls and can contribute to the program as mentors and guest speakers.



## FOCUS ON RESULTS

## Tracking key indicators to measure activity and success in girls' education

The success of our Girls' Education Program depends on the participation of a wide variety of local stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and school officials. We track how we interact with these key stakeholders and use the data to monitor where we are having success or, in some instances, failure. Here is a snapshot of the data from 2014:



COUNTRY TEAMS PARTNERED  
WITH OFFICIALS IN  
**178 SCHOOLS**  
TO BRING OUR GIRLS' EDUCATION  
PROGRAM TO ALL FEMALE  
STUDENTS



**82% OF GIRLS' PARENTS**  
AND/OR GUARDIANS  
ATTENDED  
ROOM TO READ MEETINGS



**80% OF GIRLS**  
RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM  
LOCAL TUTORS ENGAGED  
BY ROOM TO READ



IN A NEPAL ASSESSMENT, GIRLS  
WHOSE PARENTS ATTENDED EVERY  
MEETING WERE MORE THAN  
**90% LESS LIKELY**  
TO DROP OUT THAN THOSE WHOSE  
PARENTS MISSED MEETINGS

Through monitoring these key indicators, we are ensuring that girls have the greatest chance to remain in school and graduate from secondary school with the skills they need to succeed.

## Gender sensitivity in schools is the focus of school engagement in India



School engagement is integral to Room to Read's Girls' Education Program across India. In 2014, the program saw success working on the issue of gender sensitivity within four schools in the state of Uttarakhand, where more than 700 girls are enrolled in the Girls' Education Program.

School engagement efforts highlighted how gender sensitivity can impact learning at school. Through trainings, girls as well as their social mobilizers became more aware and understanding of gender discrimination issues, and how to prevent and respond to potential incidents. These sessions worked hand-in-hand with life skills workshops, where girls openly discussed with social mobilizers the barriers they experience from gender inequities and learned how girls could confidently use their voice to express themselves.

"Before the training, teachers would tell girls to sit inside the classroom and not move. Girls were given few tasks or responsibilities. If a girl laughed, teachers might scold her and tell her it's not good for girls to laugh aloud. Now they don't do such things," says Neelam Holkar, a social mobilizer.

Muskan, age 13, has seen a difference now that her school community is engaged and more sensitized to gender discrimination. Muskan used to be afraid of facing boys outside her home. Now she has the confidence to stand before a group of 40 students—both boys and girls—and address her classmates.

Room to Read India also established "children's clubs" in these schools to involve both boys and girls in collaborative activities. Currently 120 boys and girls are involved in the clubs, which have helped improve natural interactions between the genders inside the classroom and created a more inclusive environment within the entire school community.

## Room to Read Laos collaborates with NGOs to raise awareness about labor migration and violence against women



In the regions where Room to Read Laos operates the Girls' Education Program, human trafficking and migration for jobs are issues for young women and their families, and contribute to an increase in school dropouts.

While the government has focused on raising awareness of these issues across the country, such as using television commercials to talk about the issue, many people do not realize that the issue is very real, especially for younger girls who have less life experience. Room to Read Laos wanted to supplement the government effort by speaking directly with students and parents who have daily experience with these issues.

In partnership with CARE International, Room to Read Laos conducted workshops on labor migration and violence against women for more than 230 people across four districts. The workshops included girls from our Girls' Education Program as well as their parents and teachers. Local government partners were also in attendance.

Girls and their parents actively participated in the discussion and told real stories about their experiences, which included being tempted by offers to send their daughters to work in cities in sometimes illicit trades. With this new perspective, girls now felt better able to make decisions and ask the right questions before leaving their villages to find jobs. Working with other direct service organizations like CARE also enabled participants to understand where they could go to get help or refer others in the future. Many attendees planned to share the information with their extended community so that girls who did not participate in the workshop could learn about this issue.

# Our solution is being recognized.

## Room to Read wins 2014 Library of Congress Literacy Award

The Library of Congress selected Room to Read to be the recipient of the Rubenstein Prize, one of three categories of the 2014 Library of Congress Literacy Awards. The Rubenstein Prize is awarded to an organization that meets the highest standards of excellence in its operations and systems, has made outstanding and measurable contributions in increasing literacy levels, and has demonstrated exceptional and sustained depth and breadth in its commitment to the advancement of literacy. The prize comes with an award of US\$150,000.

"As we strive to impact 10 million children by the end of 2015, the Rubenstein Prize allows us to reach more deserving children sooner and ensure they are empowered through literacy and the opportunities it brings," said Erin Ganju, Room to Read's Co-Founder and CEO.

## Erin Ganju selected as a Schwab Foundation 2014 Social Entrepreneur of the Year

Room to Read's Co-Founder and CEO, Erin Ganju, was one of 37 social entrepreneurs recognized by the Schwab Foundation as the Social Entrepreneurs of the Year 2014. The winners were selected in recognition of their innovative approaches and potential for global impact and become part of the broader Schwab Foundation community of social entrepreneurs who are fully integrated into the events of the World Economic Forum.

"The individuals selected as Schwab Foundation's Social Entrepreneurs possess the passion and expertise across all areas of development to truly effect world change," said Erin. "Room to Read is eager to be part of this powerful solution to society's most pressing challenges through collaboration and partnership."

## Girls' Education Program students named "Graduate of the Year" and "Bravest Girl in the World" by media

Tay Thi Nguyen, a 20-year-old alumna of Room to Read's Girls' Education Program in Vietnam, was named by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nicholas Kristof as "Graduate of the Year" in The New York Times for her courageous story of staying in school through her graduation, despite her mother's constant demands for her to drop out. Tay Thi is now an English teacher in Vietnam. Said Kristof, "[Tay Thi] had the strength to persist and soon will become the first person in her village to graduate from college, and she embodies such grit and selflessness that, to me, she's the world's college graduate of the year."

In its annual Women of the Year issue, Glamour magazine in the U.S. named one of our students from India, Meera, age 16, one of the "Bravest Girls in the World" for her determination to get an education. In a personal letter congratulating Glamour's schoolgirl Women of the Year honorees, U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama said, "Your commitment to education is an inspiration to me and to people all around the world... When girls thrive, nations thrive."

## "DO NOT READ THIS" video highlighted by YouTube in "12 Powerful PSA" list and awarded In2 SABRE Best PSA

Room to Read's "DO NOT READ THIS" video, launched on International Literacy Day 2014 (September 8) was recognized by the In2 SABRE awards for digital content as Best Public Service Announcement and was featured on YouTube's Spotlight channel as one of 12 Powerful PSAs. "DO NOT READ THIS," produced in-house by Room to Read for less than US\$200, challenges audiences to consider how it is virtually impossible not to read and underscores the crucial role literacy plays in our everyday lives. Since launch, the "DO NOT READ THIS" video has garnered nearly 500,000 views.

## Room to Read Chapters recognized through our own Zakkie Awards

Since the start of Room to Read, our volunteers have played a key role in our ability to raise funds and awareness, and we have fun recognizing them each year through our own award ceremony called the Zakkies. Zakkie Awards are presented annually to chapters based on previous year activities and how each volunteer group creatively and efficiently accomplished its business goals. In 43 cities our chapters raised nearly US\$9 million for Room to Read. Room to Read congratulates the following Zakkie winners for their 2014 efforts:

- **Volunteer Management: Zurich.** Through stellar leadership and community engagement, Zurich more than doubled its active volunteer base through volunteer committees and inventing the Swissie, a quarterly volunteer reward.
- **Awareness Building: Paris.** Using local social media and supporting Room to Read's global campaigns, Paris built up momentum for Booktober through events that enabled the team to grow our base of support in the market.
- **Innovative Fundraising: London.** For three years, "TechBikers" from London have held their annual cycle ride from Paris to London to benefit Room to Read, which has raised approximately US\$265,000. The team is already planning for year four.
- **Growth in Fundraising: Austin.** Beyond raising significant funds for Room to Read, Austin's year-over-year growth was more than 300 percent from 2013 to 2014.
- **Building Pipeline: Montreal.** For three years, Montreal has built a robust network, including a Chapter Advisory Council representing many companies and industries. With this council they have been able to form a strong base of individuals and corporate supporters as well as volunteers.

Room to Read also recognizes our chapters in Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo for supporting efforts that raised US\$1 million or more for Room to Read programs.



H.R.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden, Laureate Malala Yousafzai, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Child Minister Åsa Regnér and Laureate John Wood. In front, Roshani, from Nepal.

### John Wood named as 2014 World's Children's Prize Honorary Award Laureate

Room to Read Founder John Wood was named one of three World's Children's Prize Laureates in 2014. This prize, often called the Children's Nobel Prize, was presented to John by H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden, along with the other winners, Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan and Indira Ranamagar from Nepal. Room to Read received US\$25,000 in prize money from the World's Children's Prize Foundation as part of this prestigious recognition.

"I am both honored and humbled to be accepting this award on behalf of the Room to Read team," John stated. "This award gives all Room to Read employees and volunteers additional motivation. Today, we celebrate. Tomorrow, we roll up our sleeves and get back to work – as there are millions more children who need us to continue to think big about our ability to change the future through the lifelong gift of education."

### Room to Read reaches 1.25 billion people through press exposure

**Bloomberg Business**

The New York Times

theguardian

The Sydney Morning Herald

VANITY FAIR

SABC

THE HUFFINGTON POST

CNBC

GLAMOUR

FRANCE 24

VOGUE

THE TIMES OF INDIA

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HONG KONG ECONOMIC TIMES

TECHCRUNCH



GREW TO  
**62,739**  
FOLLOWERS



ENGAGED WITH  
**628,000**  
FOLLOWERS



INCREASED VIDEO  
VIEWS BY  
**1400%**  
AND SUBSCRIBER  
COUNTS BY  
**1000%**



LAUNCHED  
**STORYTELLING**  
ON A NEW PLATFORM



# Our institutional funders are a key piece of the puzzle.

Through partnerships with institutional funders, we can further scale our global impact and be part of the solution to illiteracy and gender inequality in education. In 2014, corporations, foundations and governments provided 46 percent of our support and revenue in cash and targeted in-kind gifts. Beyond critical funding, our institutional partners help us raise awareness about Room to Read and our mission through their influential networks.

We are pleased to highlight some of our top corporate partners below.



**Artha Capital** provides funding to enable

the development and enhancement of projects critical to Room to Read's mission of transforming the lives of children through programs focused on literacy and gender equality in education.



**Atlassian** donates all proceeds to Room

to Read from the sale of US\$10 Starter Licenses that provide startups and small teams with fully supported software. Through this initiative, Atlassian has raised more than US\$3 million for Room to Read's programs in Asia, while generating new business for Atlassian. In 2014, Atlassian benefited more than 77,000 children; to date, this partnership has supported programs that will benefit more than 250,000 children.



**Bloomberg** supports pioneering approaches to closing the achievement gap for disadvantaged young people and to raising educational standards, with the long-term goal of increasing employability. Bloomberg's collaboration with Room to Read began in 2008 and has included the funding of more than 500,000 local language books and story cards for our Literacy Program across Asia. Since 2012, Bloomberg has also supported thousands of girls in the Girls' Education Program in Asia.



Through donations from generous BURGER KING® employees and restaurant guests in select areas in Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as donations directly from the **BURGER KING McLAMORE™ Foundation**, the BURGER KING® system is supporting Room to Read's Literacy Program in Cambodia, India, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.



Founded in 1952, Caterpillar's philanthropic organization, the **Caterpillar Foundation**, aims to turn the spiral of poverty into a path to prosperity. One of the methods that has been shown to yield the best results is investing in girls and women. Caterpillar has provided crucial support for our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs since 2009. Through a three-year grant, the foundation is supporting our Literacy Programs in India and South Africa including establishing over 90 libraries. In addition, this grant is supporting over 1,400 girls to graduate from secondary school in India.



**Citi** partnered with Room to Read in 2014 through its e for Education initiative, an effort to raise funds for education-related non-profits around the world. From October through December 2014, Citi donated US\$1 for every US\$1 million of notional volume traded on Citi Velocity, its award-winning

institutional foreign exchange trading platform. More than US\$750,000 was raised for Room to Read, providing critical operational support to Room to Read's Literacy and Girls' Education Programs.



**Credit Suisse** is one of Room to

Read's largest corporate funders and supports both the Literacy and Girls' Education Programs as well as several key strategic projects, including development of Room to Read's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. Credit Suisse also donates office space for Room to Read staff in Hong Kong, Sydney and Tokyo, and provides capacity-building to country teams on a broad range of topics through its Global Citizens Program.

**FOSSIL FOUNDATION** Through **Fossil**

**Foundation's** signature program, Fossil Unbound—a global effort committed to unleashing the potential of underserved young people—Fossil made a two-year, US\$1 million commitment to Room to Read's Literacy Program in Asia and Africa. By supporting specific projects in 2013 and providing general support for the Literacy Program in 2014, Fossil Foundation has been critical to Room to Read's ability to reach more than 2 million children since 2013.

## Top Institutional Funders

(1/1/2014 – 12/31/2014)



Through **Goldman Sachs** and Goldman Sachs Gives, this company and its senior executives have contributed millions of dollars to Room to Read. In 2014, Goldman Sachs supported a wide range of Literacy and Girls' Education Programs for children across Asia and Africa.

### **TP TOWNSEND PRESS** Townsend Press,

an independent publisher of acclaimed educational materials for students in grade school through college, has a dual mission: to create high-quality, reasonably priced electronic and print publications that help students learn the language and reading skills needed for success, and to promote reading by publishing a library of compelling US\$1 paperbacks, sponsoring scholarship contests, and donating books to schools and community organizations. As a Room to Read partner since 2007, Townsend Press has funded core operating and program support for language-book publication, library development, and our Girls' Education Program.



**UNICEF Zambia** has supported Room to Read since 2011. In 2014, UNICEF Zambia partnered with Room to Read to improve the literacy skills of children in 25 schools in Petauke (Eastern Province of Zambia). This partnership is benefiting approximately 4,000 children and 200 teachers and administrators.



The **U.S. Department of Agriculture**, through a grant to **Catholic Relief Services**, is supporting Room to Read's literacy efforts in Laos through establishment of 70 libraries, provision of 49,000 books to these libraries and the implementation of reading and writing activities in 26 schools.

### \$500,000 and over

Atlassian Foundation  
Citi  
Echidna Giving  
Fossil Foundation  
Goldman Sachs

### \$250,000-\$499,999

Anonymous Foundation  
Artha Capital  
BURGER KING McLAMORE<sup>SM</sup> Foundation  
Butters Foundation  
Caerus Foundation, Inc.  
Caterpillar Foundation  
Credit Suisse  
Townsend Press  
UNICEF Zambia  
U.S. Department of Agriculture through an award to Catholic Relief Services

### \$100,000-\$249,999

The Brin Wojcicki Foundation  
Coach Foundation  
Erol Foundation  
Fondation de l'Orangerie and its donors  
Four Acre Trust  
Google  
Hilton Worldwide  
InMaat Foundation  
Jones Day Foundation  
Kendeda Fund  
The Library of Congress  
lululemon athletica  
Monsanto Fund  
Myriad Asset Management  
Positive Real Estate  
Rural Electrification Corporation  
Salesforce Foundation  
Sensato Investors  
Swades Foundation  
Symantec Corporation  
Tatcha  
Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd.  
U.S. Department of State Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs  
United Way Worldwide on behalf of the generosity of Target Foundation  
Vitol Foundation

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

Asia Alternatives  
Barneys New York  
Better World Books  
Biogen International GmbH  
BlackRock  
Clifford Chance  
CLSA Asia Pacific Markets  
Dining Concepts  
Dodge & Cox  
Foundation Education Actions  
GBST Holdings Ltd.  
Microsoft  
Moët Hennessy Asia Pacific  
MoneyGram Foundation  
Navitas Education Trust  
PepsiCo Foundation  
Reliable Source Industrial (RSI)  
Restorsea  
Rovio & Playmob  
Select Equity Group Foundation  
The Sherwood Foundation  
The SJS Charitable Trust  
The Skoll Foundation  
Wells Fargo

## Top In-Kind Donors

Austrian Wine  
Berry Bros. & Rudd  
Book Enterprises  
Books for Africa  
Brother's Brother Foundation  
C12 Capital  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
Credit Suisse  
Hilton Worldwide  
Ketchum  
Moët Hennessy Asia Pacific  
Pearson Foundation  
Reliance Capital  
Scholastic  
Townsend Press

# Our values shape our financials.

Transparency and fiscal responsibility are core to our beliefs because we hold ourselves accountable to both the children and communities we serve and to our investors. We have built a culture around these values, including a commitment to measuring our results and reporting these results to our stakeholders, because we consider fidelity central to our success. This approach allows us to maximize the impact of each dollar invested for each child and school we benefit.

## Financial Highlights



**\$42.9**

MILLION IN CASH  
DONATIONS



**\$9.9**

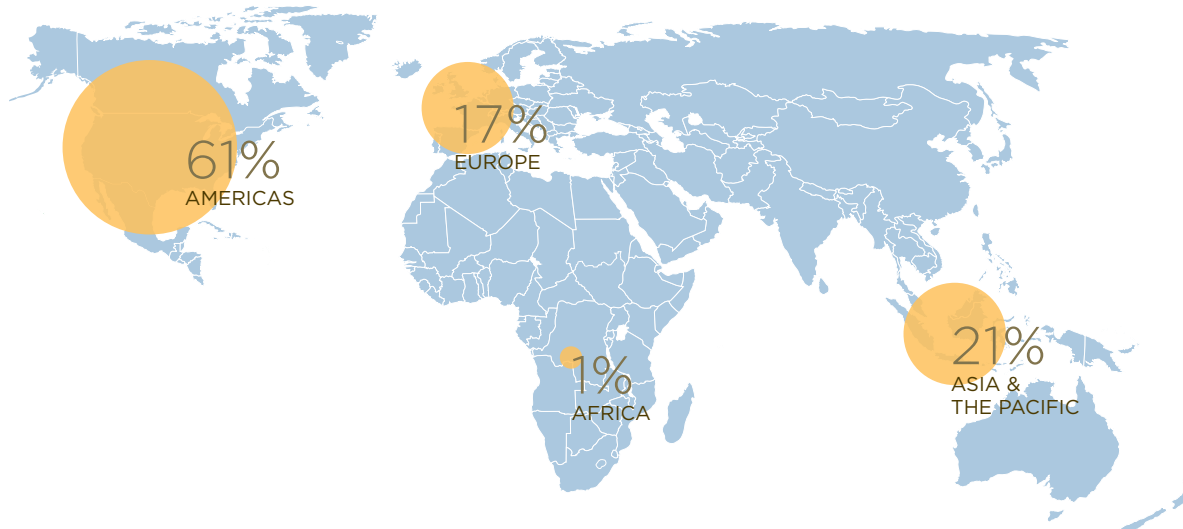
MILLION IN-KIND  
DONATIONS



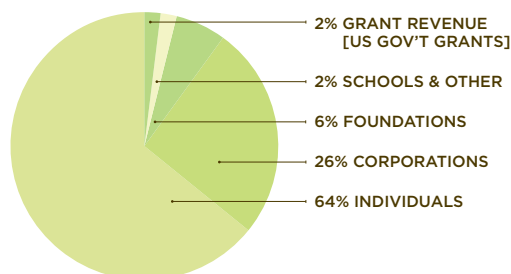
**83%**

SPENT ON  
PROGRAMS

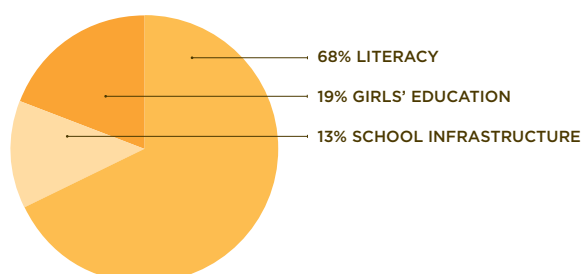
## Sources of Revenue by Region



## Donations by Type of Investor



## Program Functional Expense Breakdown





## Statement of Activities

For the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013 (USD).

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE:</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Corporations	\$11,214,658	\$9,454,565
Foundations	\$2,557,406	\$4,044,931
Individuals	\$27,301,694	\$26,766,308
Schools and Other	\$1,043,486	\$759,126
Total Donations	\$42,117,244	\$41,024,930
Grant Revenue	\$813,544	\$572,042
Donations In-Kind	\$9,922,253	\$6,336,874
Investment and Other Income (Loss), Special Event Expenses, Fees	\$(12,233)	\$44,244
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$52,840,808</b>	<b>\$47,978,090</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES:</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Program Services		
Literacy	\$6,273,670	\$7,699,347
School Infrastructure	\$3,484,529	\$3,923,182
Girls' Education	\$2,993,874	\$2,813,670
Donated Books and Supplies	\$8,587,695	\$5,324,446
Conferences, Travel and Meeting Costs	\$1,852,692	\$1,775,331
Information Technology Expenses	\$891,446	\$883,255
Monitoring & Evaluation	\$322,566	\$171,477
Professional Fees	\$1,192,894	\$421,376
Program Operating Expenses	\$2,114,252	\$1,985,871
Program Personnel Expenses	\$15,223,265	\$12,587,985
Total Program Services	\$42,936,883	\$37,585,940
Management and General	\$2,703,003	\$2,526,066
Fundraising	\$6,040,120	\$5,206,370
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$51,680,006</b>	<b>\$45,318,376</b>
Translation Adjustments	\$(33,913)	\$(304,252)
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$3,400,452	\$3,029,088
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$(2,273,563)	\$(673,626)
Unrestricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$688,489	\$(2,340,599)
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$19,156,696	\$19,830,322
<b>Net Assets at End of the Year</b>	<b>\$20,972,074</b>	<b>\$19,845,185</b>

Room to Read's financial statements have been audited by independent certified public accountants and are available on our website.

# Board and Staff

## Board of Directors

**Craig Bruya** (Board Chair), Former CFO, Microsoft Business Solutions  
**Yusuf Alireza**, CEO, Noble Group  
**Jerry del Missier**, Former COO, Barclays Bank  
**Erin Ganju**, Co-Founder and CEO, Room to Read  
**Peter T. Grauer**, Chairman, Bloomberg Inc.  
**Scott Kapnick**, CEO, Highbridge Capital Management  
**Tim Koogle**, Former CEO and Chair, Yahoo!  
**Kim Anstatt Morton**, Advisory Board member, Girl Rising  
**Fernando Reimers**, Director of Global Education and International Education Policy, Harvard University  
**John Ridding**, CEO, Financial Times  
**Susan Wojcicki**, CEO, YouTube  
**John Wood**, Founder, Room to Read

## Emeritus Board

**Hilary Valentine** (Board Chair) Partner, Black & White Design  
**Chris Beer**, Founding Member, Ironmark Law Group  
**Alastair Mactaggart**, President, Emerald Fund  
**Muneer Satter**, Chair, Satter Investment Management  
**Jenny Shilling Stein**, Co-Founder and Senior Advisor, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation

## Regional Boards

### Asia Pacific

**Yusuf Alireza and Dina Khreino-Alireza**  
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**Daniel and Daun Dees**  
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**Neil Harvey**  
**Carl Huttenlocher and Tamiko M. Lippit**  
**John and Camilla Lindfors**  
**Alan and Christine Miyasaki**  
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### New York

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**Peter T. Grauer**  
**Scott Kapnick**  
**Jaideep Khanna**  
**Stephen King and Jane Power**  
**John and Dudley Macfarlane**  
**David and Jacqueline Martin**  
**Aaron Nieman**  
**Eric and Shauna Varvel**

### United Kingdom

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**Marisa Drew**  
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**Doug Henderson**  
**Sindhu Horder**  
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**Annalisa Burello Morris**  
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**Randy Work**

## Leadership Team

### Management Team

**Erin Ganju**, Co-Founder and CEO  
**Lynn Foden**, Chief of International Operations  
**Shari Freedman**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Cory Heyman**, Chief Program Officer  
**Geetha Murali**, Chief Development Officer  
**Pierre Towns**, Chief Talent Officer

### International Directors

**Unmesh Brahme**, India Country Director  
**Samantha Chuula**, Zambia Country Director  
**Phil Christensen**, South Africa Country Director  
**Shevanthi Jayasuriya**, Sri Lanka Country Director  
**Kall Kann**, Cambodia Country Director  
**Vishnu Karki**, Nepal Country Director  
**Tien Phong Le**, Vietnam Country Director  
**Zubeida Masabo**, Tanzania Country Director  
**Geoffrey Odaga**, Associate Director, Africa  
**Rakhi Sarkar**, Bangladesh Country Director  
**Christie Scott**, Director, Asia  
**Dinesh Shrestha**, Co-Founder, Director of Field Operations  
**Norkham Souphanouvong**, Laos Country Director

*List current as of 5/31/2015*

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## Room to Read's Legacy Society

The Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have made provisions for Room to Read through their estate plans. As a Legacy Society member, you can tell your story and become a role model to others who are thinking about leaving a legacy gift to Room to Read. We are sincerely grateful to those who remember us through a bequest or other type of legacy gift.

In 2014, we were honored to fulfill Linda Susan Mathison's firm wish that her legacy would continue to give the gift of education. We are very grateful to her estate.

Additionally, Room to Read wishes to thank several generous supporters who have chosen to remain anonymous and who have let us know that they have made a gift to our work in their legacy plans. Such support is hugely helpful to us and we thank them for providing for our future work.

For information, please contact [legacy@roomtoread.org](mailto:legacy@roomtoread.org).



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