

Room to Read Annual Report 2016

# GETTING ACTIVE FOR EDUCATION



# WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

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**While we may be separated around the world by immense distances, languages and cultures, we are connected in our desire to create a better future for the next generation.**

**Whether they live in rural mountain ranges, marshy river deltas or urban metropolises, all parents want to see their children succeed. By acting together and investing in education, we can make sure every child, everywhere, receives the opportunities they deserve.**

Tackling global illiteracy and gender inequality in education is a huge undertaking, but I know that every single child we reach is significant. Every student who learns to read and every girl who graduates from secondary school can access a lifetime of new possibilities and open doors for those around them as well. Every investment you make reaches across the world and forever alters the trajectory of a child's life by putting a book in their hands or providing them with a caring mentor.

Then, when you harness the collective power of Room to Read's® global network — the thousands of investors, volunteers and staff who give their time, energy and money to improve education for children around the world — the outcome is staggering. Our shared decision to take action and make a difference has allowed us to reach more than 11.6 million children with quality education programs.

I am extremely proud of the millions of future entrepreneurs, teachers, doctors and parents we've supported, but a global learning crisis still exists. One in four young people in low-income countries are unable to read a single sentence, and 263 million children around the world are still out of school. Despite these realities, the level of global education aid is 8% lower today than it was in 2010. UNESCO estimates that in order to provide quality education for all by 2030, educational aid levels would need to increase sevenfold. We need to resist recent trends to diminish this critical support and invest more in education worldwide, before millions more children are condemned to a life of poverty.

With your support, Room to Read is scaling our programs to respond to this need. The success you've helped us achieve — the learnings we've garnered from each child reached, each book published and each educator trained — has allowed us to create effective, adaptable solutions for addressing gaps in literacy and girls' education. We're now focused on delivering these interventions more widely and with greater efficiency through improvements in our programs and business operations, and the expansion of our capacity-building work with governments and other nonprofits. The investments you've made are paying dividends through each child supported and the reputation you've helped us build. Our programs work, and our track record is enabling us to multiply your impact across entire districts, states and countries to bring education to more children, more rapidly.

We all have a part to play to improve education around the world. From the class in Switzerland holding a read-a-thon to send books to South Africa, to the social mobilizer in India traveling for hours to visit a struggling girl at home, to the fifth grader in Laos checking out library books to read to his younger brother, we all have some action we can take. Working together, we can create a better future — for everyone. All of us at Room to Read can't wait to reach millions more children with you!

*Erin*

**Erin Ganju**  
Co-Founder and CEO





Dear Friends,

**I have been fortunate in my career to work with world-class organizations and benefit from great investment opportunities, but not a single business success has compared to the return I see when investing in children's education.**

**Knowledge makes people safer, healthier and more self-sufficient, and I firmly believe that educating children is the most critical investment that we can make in our lifetime to ensure positive world change. This potential for change — the potential to lift economies, close the gender gap and create the next generation of global leaders — is why I am so excited to work with Room to Read.**

At Room to Read, we have proven solutions for addressing illiteracy and keeping girls in school longer, and we also have the ability to scale those solutions for incredible impact. In the past few years, we have seen growing momentum around our work. Through government adoption of Room to Read program strategies in countries like Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam, and through more diverse corporate partnerships and collaboration with leading international aid organizations, we are reaching new populations in remarkable ways. We have set an ambitious goal of reaching 15 million children by 2020, and I have no doubt that we will meet, if not exceed, this target as we facilitate systemic change in educational systems around the world.

My father instilled in me the belief that when you are part of a community you should give back, and I feel strongly that those of us who have been afforded the opportunity of a quality education have a responsibility to give similar opportunities to our larger global community. We have the ability to completely alter the life trajectories for millions of children.

While many families like mine are fortunate to be able to support their children's education, far too many families struggle to provide basic learning opportunities for their daughters and sons. I have seen the challenges children in resource-strapped communities face — the lack of learning materials, effective curriculum and trained teachers — and I've also seen the difference Room to Read can make in

their lives. Our efforts directly translate to immense joy on children's faces when they are able to read books in their own languages and when they can describe their hopes for the future — hopes that they can imagine and pursue because of our help. I know how profoundly my favorite English teacher, Gail Steinberg, impacted me by motivating me to read and enjoy learning, and I am blown away when I think of the impact we are having through the thousands of teachers we train every year.

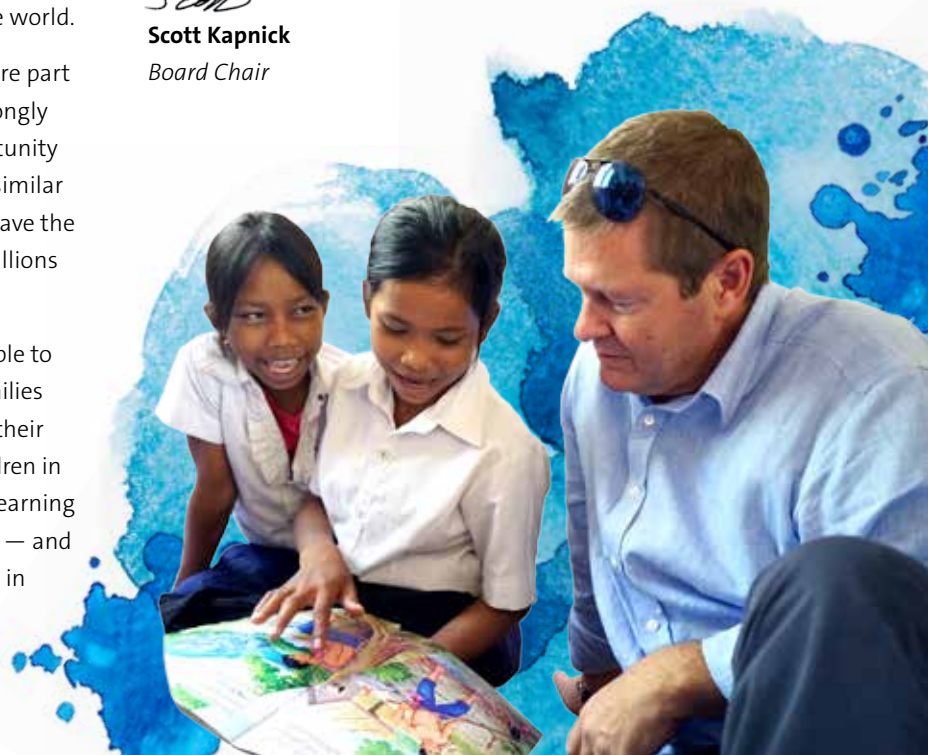
As accomplished individuals across many sectors and walks of life, we can surely expand our investments in innovative solutions, like those of Room to Read, in order to reach as many children as we can as quickly as we can. If we continue to support and promote wide-scale improvements in education, we can enable the next generation of students to lift their families, communities and countries to increased levels of success.

I thank you for all you have already done to ensure world change through education. I am incredibly optimistic about how much more we can accomplish together in the years ahead!



**Scott Kapnick**

*Board Chair*



# SPARKING CHANGE

## LITERACY AND GIRLS' EDUCATION

**Room to Read is made up of a global network of people taking action for education.**

What begins with an act of generosity from an individual or organization is transformed by our staff into programs that put quality educational resources into the hands of students and teachers worldwide. This goes far beyond the delivery of books or pencils and notebooks — it includes developing curricula and support systems. It goes even further when we share our programs with governments to support children beyond our direct reach. And the real magic happens when the students themselves, more than 11.6 million to date, become advocates for education and change.







**13,500**    **16,600**    **1,400**  
**DONORS**    **VOLUNTEERS**    **STAFF**

worked to promote literacy and girls' education through Room to Read in 2016.





# LITERACY PROGRAM

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**NEARLY 4 OUT OF 10** primary school-age children around the world are not learning basics skills like reading and writing.

**HOW WE'RE CHANGING THIS:** Our Literacy Program has provided more than 10.7 million primary school students with the resources and guidance they need to build a strong foundation in literacy and a love of reading.

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Knowledgeable  
teachers and  
librarians



Quality reading  
materials



Child-friendly learning  
environments



**Skilled, lifelong  
readers**



## CHILDREN BENEFITED:

**838K**

New in 2016

**10.7M<sup>1</sup>**

Cumulative

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## PROGRAM SCHOOLS:

**1,223**

New in 2016

**19,884**

Cumulative

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## BOOKS PUBLISHED:

**92**

New in 2016

**1,382**

Cumulative

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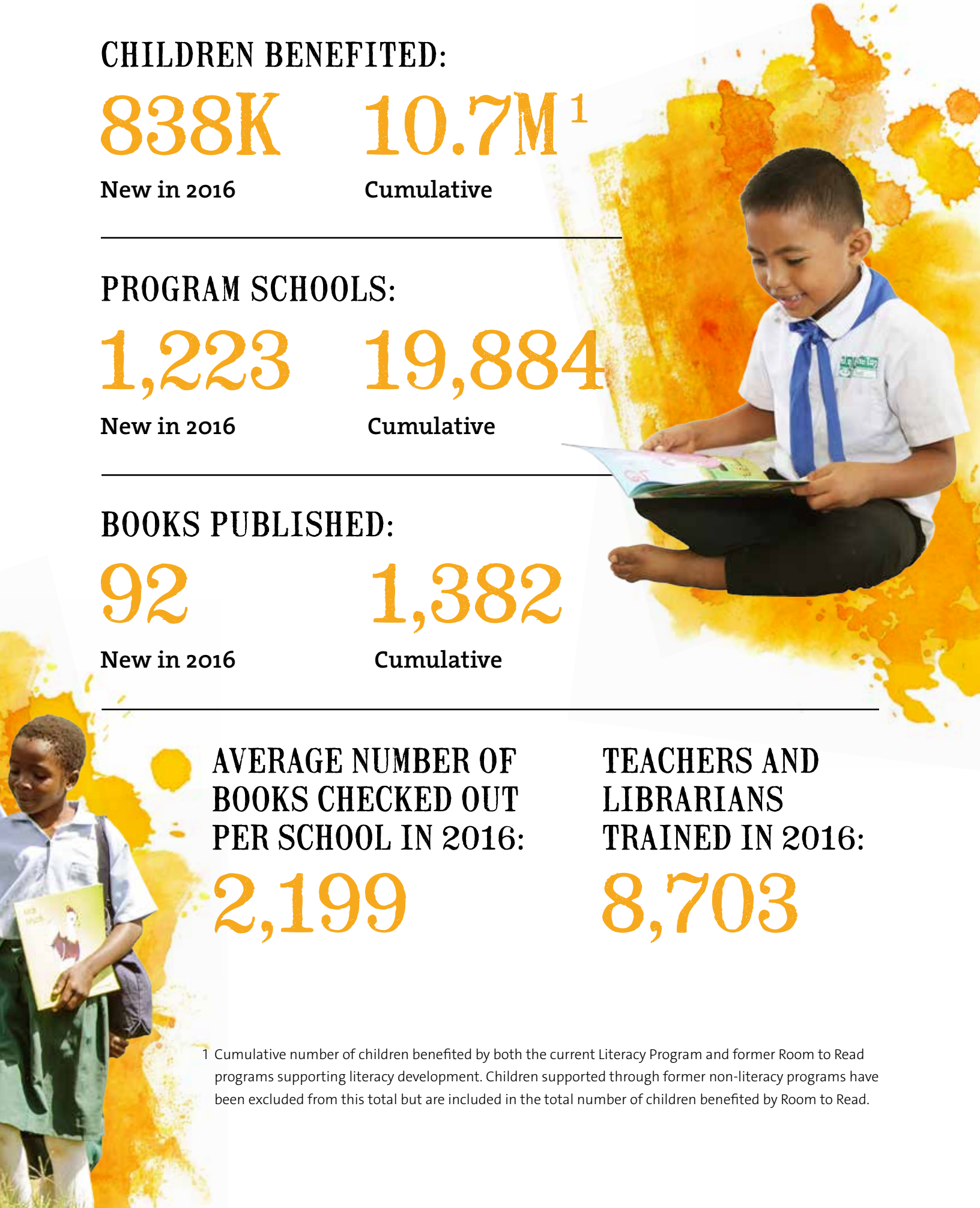
**AVERAGE NUMBER OF  
BOOKS CHECKED OUT  
PER SCHOOL IN 2016:**

**2,199**

**TEACHERS AND  
LIBRARIANS  
TRAINED IN 2016:**

**8,703**

<sup>1</sup> Cumulative number of children benefited by both the current Literacy Program and former Room to Read programs supporting literacy development. Children supported through former non-literacy programs have been excluded from this total but are included in the total number of children benefited by Room to Read.





## PROGRAM INNOVATIONS

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### Getting Started: “Level 1” Book Project

Low-income countries often face a shortage of local-language books designed for Grade 1 students who are first learning to read. These books, which we refer to as “level 1” books, couple very simple language and topics with beautiful visual storytelling so that even the newest readers can experience the magic of a storybook. To address this shortage, we began testing the creation of worldwide level 1 manuscripts in 2016 that could be adapted for students in different regions. A total of 10 manuscripts were developed and illustrated in different ways to tailor the stories for students in **Africa, South Asia** and **Southeast Asia**. These adapted manuscripts will be published in all Room to Read languages, resulting in a total of 150 new children’s books! The findings from this process will be used to improve our level 1 book development process and rapidly grow the availability of books for new readers across the world.

### Redesigning Literacy Learning: New Pupil Book Templates

One of the most important elements of literacy development is the curriculum used in early grade classrooms. Along with a proper sequence and pace for learning, students also need quality learning materials to support their budding skills. Recently, Room to Read has been working to redesign the pupil books used in our Grade 1 and 2 classes to make them more appealing and easier for students to use — and therefore more effective. We created templates with guidelines on ideal font sizes and styles, icon and illustration use, page layouts and borders, and put these new designs to use by contextualizing them for a number of our program countries. The new pupil books were introduced into classrooms in 2016 and have been well received by students and teachers alike. The designs will be contextualized for our remaining countries in 2018.



# ARIF

PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT,  
BANGLADESH

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**My son shows his thrust for education all the time. He reads different books attentively at home and he’s very positive compared to other children in my community. I think his education and reading habit motivated him in this way.**



— Hamidul, Arif’s father



## Setting the Bar: Fluency Benchmarking Study

The ability to read fluently — quickly and accurately — is crucial in becoming a competent reader. Although there is a commonly accepted fluency standard for European languages (by the end of Grade 2 children need to read roughly 45–60 words per minute to read with comprehension), similar standards do not exist for non-European languages.

To address this, we've been trying to determine language-specific fluency targets for children in the countries where we work through a series of small-scale research studies. In 2016, we received a grant to expand this research and launched a collaboration with RTI International to develop a new methodology for estimating fluency benchmarks. We are piloting the test methodology in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos** and **Nepal**, and we hope our findings will allow us to more effectively track the progress of children benefiting from our Literacy Program. If successful, we also plan to share our methodology and results with governments to aid them in their efforts to promote and measure children's progress towards literacy.



## Arif is a 12-year-old student who lives in the urban center of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Like many students in this area, Arif struggled with reading and writing until Room to Read came to his school. The school's librarians and Room to Read's literacy coach noticed Arif's burgeoning desire to learn and provided him with extra support during library periods. With their help, he learned strategic tools that improved his reading comprehension, such as how to sound out letters of the alphabet and using writing practice to master letter recognition. This helped him increase the number of words per minute he could read and understand different storybooks, giving him new ways to engage with words. For Arif, these were

more than stories, they were gateways to possibility — tales he looked forward to reading after finishing his day-to-day duties.

"Every Thursday, I borrow books from the Room to Read library and read them on the weekend. When I work at my father's tea stall, my mind stays at home reading those books. They help me imagine so many things and now I have a dream for my future," says Arif.

Pushing past barriers, Arif is determined to graduate secondary school and attend university, and he hopes to become an engineer one day.

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

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### Sharing Our Expertise: Model and Replica Libraries

We have a long track record of close government partnership in **Vietnam**, where we have worked since 2001. This partnership led to the creation of a “Friendly Primary Library Program” in 2015, through which we are working with the government to replicate our library model nationally. As a first step in this program, in 2016 we established 40 model libraries in the provinces of Dak Lak and Ha Tinh and trained government staff in library management. We will implement model libraries in five additional provinces through 2018, and the government will begin establishing their own replicas of our libraries. We also supported the provinces of Vinh Long and Tra Vinh last year to integrate our library rating system into their criteria for evaluating school libraries.



## NAMEX PEN

GRADE 1 TEACHER,  
CAMBODIA

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“ I love reading stories! ”

— Reaksa, Grade 1 student. Before Namex’s class, Reaksa had never had a story read to her. Now she checks out three library books a week to take home.



## Leading the Way: Training of Government Literacy Trainers

Room to Read has supported literacy development in the Limpopo province of **South Africa** since 2010. Last year, Limpopo's department of education invited us and other nonprofits that have literacy projects in the region to



present on our impact to date. Highly impressed with our results, the department selected our program from all of the presenters and asked us to help train the province's lead literacy trainers. These trainers provide literacy instruction training for early grade teachers, and their support is particularly important in school districts that cannot always provide regular professional development for teachers due to resource constraints. We plan to begin working with Limpopo's lead literacy trainers in the second half of 2017, and we are excited to be supporting the wider education system in the province.



**Room to Read South Africa doubled Grade 1 learners'**

**reading fluency in 2016! An evaluation of our program at 70 new schools in Limpopo found that our students could read approximately**

**TWICE AS MANY WORDS per minute as peers in comparison schools by the end of the year.**

## Names Pen is a Grade 1 teacher in Kampong Thom, Cambodia.

Every Wednesday, she takes her class to her school's bright, book-filled room for library period. Her students enjoy listening to her read from the library's colorful stories. While Names's students now love reading activities, this wasn't always the case.

Names has taught Grade 1 for 28 years, and even though she had read stories to her students for years, her method had been to read from a government-issued textbook, then ask them to summarize the story. They'd never had a library before. Reading seemed like a chore, and her students were easily distracted.

Through our Literacy Program, Names discovered new ways to engage students in reading activities, such as using fun games to spark their interest and using different voices to bring characters to life. She also realized that the habit of reading can have a fundamental impact on a child. "The techniques Room to Read taught me are so helpful," Names says.

Now when Names asks her students to participate in reading activities, tiny hands shoot in the air. Her students also love visiting the school library. "They borrow lots of books, especially after library period — so many that I barely manage to write them all down in the logbook!"



# GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM

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**JUST 1%** of the poorest girls in low-income countries and **17%** of the poorest girls in lower-middle-income countries complete upper secondary school.

**HOW WE'RE CHANGING THIS:** Our Girls' Education Program has supported more than 47,000 girls to stay in secondary school and develop the skills to make informed life decisions.

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Life skills education + Mentorship + Family and community engagement + Need-based material support = **Confident, capable girls staying in school longer**



**GIRLS BENEFITED:**

**32,396 47,870**

2016 Total

Cumulative

**GIRLS WHO GRADUATED  
SECONDARY SCHOOL:**

**1,010 3,476**

2016 Total

Cumulative

More than

**70%**

of our 2015 graduates  
enrolled in further  
education or found  
work within the first  
year after graduation.

**GIRLS WHO ATTENDED LIFE  
SKILLS TRAINING IN 2016:**

**81%**

**ADVANCEMENT RATE AMONG  
GIRLS WHO STAYED IN  
PROGRAM IN 2016:**

**95%**



## PROGRAM INNOVATIONS

### Taking Notes: Feeling Boxes as Group Mentoring Aide

A key component of our Girls' Education Program is the mentoring provided by our social mobilizers, who act as role models, advisors and advocates for our girls. While our mentoring support began primarily as individually focused attention, we have also introduced group mentoring sessions where girls can discuss challenges they're facing with a small number of their peers. In **Bangladesh** last year, we introduced feeling boxes called Amader Kotha (Our Talks) at each program school to help identify topics for these sessions. Girls can submit written notes about topics they would like to discuss, including ones they may not feel comfortable raising verbally or in public. In addition, the boxes also help identify girls who may need additional one-on-one mentoring.



We celebrated our first set of  
**110 GRADUATES**  
 in Bangladesh last year. Many of these girls are the first in their families to graduate, and some are even the first in their communities.

### Paying It Forward: Alumnae Coaching for Key Exams

Gatekeeping exams — which students must pass to advance in school or to graduate — often pose a major challenge for the girls in our program. Girls may be the first in their families (or communities) to take the exams, and exam preparation support is rarely available. In **Sri Lanka**, our program alumnae are remedying this by conducting

free exam coaching classes to help other girls follow in their footsteps to graduation. Last year, alumnae in the Nuwara Eliya district offered coaching for girls who were taking their advanced level exams, and alumnae in the Matale district offered coaching for both girls and boys at local schools.



**NIRUPA**  
 GIRLS' EDUCATION  
 PROGRAM ALUMNA &  
 SOCIAL MOBILIZER, NEPAL



I want to eradicate cultural practices like dowry and Kamalari that undermine women's worth and treat them like second-class citizens.

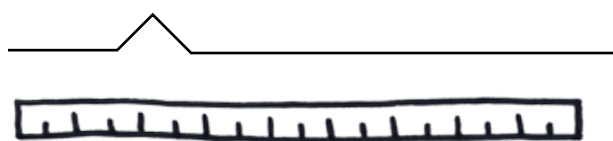




## Drawing a Link: First-of-Its-Kind Life Skills Evaluation

For girls in areas where dropout rates are high, life skills like decision-making, critical thinking and perseverance can be as important as academic skills. They help girls navigate key life decisions and empower them to stay in school, pursue fulfilling careers and say “no” to early marriage. While we know these skills are important, it can be a challenge to assess their impact on girls’ lives. To address this, we launched a first-of-its-kind evaluation in India to investigate the impact of life skills education and mentoring on girls’ academic performance. Using a randomized controlled trial design — considered the gold standard in

scientific research — the evaluation compares girls from two different groups of schools in **Rajasthan, India**. At the beginning of 2016, we collected baseline data from girls across a total of 119 schools to identify their competencies and academic standing as well as information about their lives outside of school. We launched our program in half of the schools in July 2016; the other half will serve as comparison schools. The evaluation will continue through 2018 and, once completed, will provide stakeholders worldwide with stronger evidence from which to design and scale life skills interventions in low- and middle-income countries.



**We have also adapted parts of the evaluation to create a**

### **NEW LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOL**

**for broader program use. We piloted a variety of measurement approaches last year and are now finalizing the tool for global use.**



## Nirupa was raised by a single mother in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Her mother never had a chance to get an education, and she struggled to earn an income working in the garment industry. Because she worked such long hours, she often had to leave her daughter at home. Nirupa frequently had to skip meals and struggled to attend school.

Finishing her education didn’t seem possible, but Nirupa dreamed of breaking past the struggles her mother faced. “I know how life can treat you without education,” says Nirupa. “I have seen the cost my mother paid for being illiterate.”

Nirupa’s life changed when Room to Read came to her school. Our Girls’ Education Program not only provided material support for her education but also guided her through her personal struggles and the obstacles she faced. With this extra support, Nirupa achieved her goal of finishing secondary school and recently graduated from college with a degree in business. In early May 2016, she accepted a job as a social mobilizer with Room to Read. She is passionate about battling gender inequality in Nepal and is excited to help other girls pursue the same opportunities she has been able to access through education.

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

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### Going Public: Government Adoption of Life Skills Curriculum

In addition to our direct program work with girls in secondary school, we also advocate for regional and national educational improvements that can benefit girls across our regions of operations. This ongoing advocacy resulted in a major achievement in **Cambodia** in 2016, when the national government committed to integrating our life skills education for grades 7–9 into the public school curriculum. Cambodia's Ministry of Education began a life skills training initiative in 33 secondary schools during the 2016–2017 school year, and will expand the initiative to 1,500 schools by the 2018–2019 school year.

### Joining Forces: Collaboration to Advance Girls' Rights

Over our 17 years of operation, we have built a wealth of knowledge on how to effectively support girls to stay in school and develop key life skills. We regularly seek opportunities to share this expertise and were excited to be invited by the **Laos** Ministry of Education to join the Gender, Inclusive and Disability technical working group in 2016. This group, which meets quarterly, brings together nonprofits supporting girls' education to share best practices and propose policies. Last year, we contributed to a proposal to allow pregnant girls to stay in school. Although there is already a national policy in support of this, it is not implemented at most schools. We hope that by working with the ministry through this group we can help more schools adopt the policy and better support girls who become pregnant to finish their education.



# MADAM YUSTINA

## SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER, TANZANIA

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“

While things were different for me, I'm confident the students in the program are on the right path to go to university and follow their dreams.

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## Madam Yustina is a teacher at Kiromo Secondary School in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

In addition to teaching, she organizes life skills activities for Girls' Education Program participants at her school. She also participates in training workshops on topics such as child rights and mentoring, and collaborates with our social mobilizers to support girls who may be at risk for dropping out.

Forced to leave school herself when she became pregnant at 16, Yustina is dedicated to helping girls avoid the challenges she faced. Though the road was rough, Yustina eventually graduated and became a teacher, and she believes her own struggles have made her effective at convincing girls not to give up on their education.

For instance, 17-year-old Kidawa was ready to drop out after failing her final exams. When word got to Yustina and Jamila, Kidawa's social mobilizer, they met with Kidawa, her teacher and her parents to convince her to stay in school. Bolstered by all the support, Kidawa returned to school with renewed confidence, ready to repeat her exams. She now says she has every intention of graduating.

Yustina is proud to be able to devote her life to helping girls finish their education and is dedicated to working with Room to Read to champion girls' rights.

# ROOM TO READ ACCELERATOR

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Room to Read Accelerator helps us to grow our impact around the world by supporting organizations and governments to implement high-quality literacy and girls' education programming.

This technical assistance unit complements our core programs by sharing our expertise in children's book publishing, library services, reading and writing instruction, and girls' education with partners who can scale our interventions beyond our program boundaries. In 2016, thousands of additional students benefited through Room to Read Accelerator, both in new countries and in new regions of countries where we also work directly.





# 2016 IMPACT

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## CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING

Grenada & Indonesia

**54**

**AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS TRAINED**

on how to create quality children's reading materials

**21**

**NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK TITLES PUBLISHED**

and 10 titles adapted into local languages

**104,000**

**CHILDREN'S BOOKS DISTRIBUTED**

## LIBRARY SERVICES

Grenada, India & Indonesia

**1,065**

**LIBRARIES ESTABLISHED**

**1,348**

**EDUCATORS TRAINED IN LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AND READING ACTIVITIES**

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## READING & WRITING INSTRUCTION

Grenada, India, Nepal, Rwanda & Tanzania

**2,672**

**SCHOOLS PROVIDED WITH INSTRUCTION SUPPORT**



These results are just the beginning! Over the next few years, our projects will impact millions of additional children.

In Tanzania, for example, we are developing literacy materials that will support 1.4 million students across multiple regions. We are also developing teaching and learning materials for new national early-grade reading programs in both Nepal and Rwanda.

## AWARD-WINNING CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN INDONESIA



Images from "Lautkah Ini?" ("Is This the Sea?"), grand-prize winner of the Samsung KidsTime Author's Awards.





## We're proud to share that three Room to Read Accelerator partners received six awards, including grand prize, at the Samsung KidsTime Author's Awards in 2016.

The Singapore-based ceremony took place at the Asian Festival of Children's Content as part of a joint initiative between the National Book Development Council of Singapore and Samsung Electronics.

The award winners all participated in book publishing workshops through our first-ever Room to Read Accelerator project in Indonesia. Through these workshops, we trained Indonesian authors, illustrators and publishers in our time-tested methods for developing high-quality children's books. Out of the 15 titles produced during our first two years in the country, six received awards.

The grand-prize winner, "Lautkah Ini?" ("Is This the Sea?"), tells the story of two raindrops that travel to many places and was illustrated with colorful batik designs. Other award-winning titles include "Waktunya Cepuk Terbang" ("It's Time for Cepuk to Fly"), "Mantel Emas" ("The Golden Coat"), "Kue Ulang Tahun Widi" ("Widi's Birthday Cake"), "Ketika Gilang Ingin Seperti Kak Sita" ("When Gilang Wants to Be Sita") and "Datang Lagi Ya!" ("Come Again, Will You?").

These incredible new books have already been placed in the hands of tens of thousands of students across Indonesia, and we can't wait to see the children's book industry continue to grow there!

# GETTING ACTIVE: OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU

Over the years, Room to Read's supporters and friends have regularly engaged in creative activities to raise awareness and support for our work. To build on this momentum, we are extending a challenge to individuals, families and partners around the world to get energized — body and mind — and help us bring our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs to more communities in need.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Great things happen when we decide to take action for something we believe in. At Room to Read, this commitment to activism is in our DNA. Our mission began when I met a school headmaster during a long trek through Nepal and reached out to everyone I knew to help collect books for the school's empty library.

Since that first book delivery, we've seen Room to Read grow immensely. There are now tens of thousands of people around the world working and hosting fundraisers to support literacy and girls' education in low-income communities. Ours is truly a global movement, made up of passionate people from all walks of life, and we're changing the lives of millions of children through our efforts.

We want to expand our reach to 15 million children by 2020. My personal challenge to you is to join us by getting active for education today. The next generation is eager to learn, but they need our help!

This is your chance to cross something off your bucket list — to run your first marathon, learn to play the guitar or master cooking a new cuisine — and invite others to make a donation in support of your goal. Go big. Be creative. Get #ActiveforEducation and change the world!

— **John Wood**, Room to Read Founder

**My wife, Amy, and I have gotten active in various ways to raise funds for education, including running the Jungfrau Marathon with team Yak Pack in the Swiss Alps.**

**TWENTY-SIX MILES,  
6,000 VERTICAL FEET,  
eight teammates and one spectacular day —  
and all for a great cause!**





# NEED INSPIRATION?

Here's how others have gotten involved:



## IN TOKYO, ONE OF OUR YOUNGEST ADVOCATES

has been getting active for education since the first grade. He's challenged himself to learn a new jump rope trick, hosted a poetry reading and even taught himself to juggle, all to fundraise for Room to Read.

## IN 2015, OUR SYDNEY CHAPTER IN AUSTRALIA

organized a Spring Trek — an 18 km or a massive 30 km hike through Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to raise funds for our programs. Their trek has become an annual event, and in 2017 they expect to have nearly 300 participants and hope to raise AU\$250K for literacy and girls' education.

## 14 LEADERS FROM HONG KONG'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY

competed in a 13 km "Fastest Executive" trail race to support our mission. Participants collected personal sponsorships from colleagues and friends, raising more than US\$450K for the children we serve.

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTION BNP PARIBAS

held a two-month educational and fundraising campaign in support of girls' education. Employees from across 13 countries learned about our work through emails and visits from our in-country staff to offices in the Asia Pacific region and raised US\$150K for young girls in India.

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**Choose a challenge that's meaningful to you, spread the word and do something good for yourself and great for the world!**

**Learn more and get active at [www.roomtoread.org/GetActive](http://www.roomtoread.org/GetActive).**

# MAKING CONNECTIONS: GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

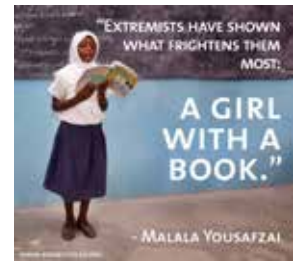
Our global community is vital to our work. Your passion and dedication to improving literacy and girls' education fuel our efforts, and your engagement with our mission extends far beyond gift-giving. From participating in online discussions and following our latest news, to getting involved in local activities and visiting our programs, we are grateful for the many ways you connected with us in 2016!

## THUMBS UP: DRIVING THE DISCUSSION ONLINE

Our most popular social media posts from the year:



Writer and activist  
**GLORIA STEINEM**  
participating in a Girls'  
Education Program  
life skills workshop in  
Zambia last year.



[f /RoomtoRead](#) | [@RoomtoRead](#) | [@RoomtoRead](#) | [/RoomtoRead](#)

## CREATING A BUZZ: TOP PRESS STORIES

### U.K. POLITICIAN TURNED TELEVISION DANCING STAR ED BALLS

got people excited to get moving and support children's education with the donation of a private dance lesson at our London gala. The lesson raised £70,000 — enough to support 2,000 children for one year through our Literacy Program.

### ON THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEVASTATING NEPAL EARTHQUAKE,

we followed up with one of our Girls' Education Program students, Pooja, to learn how she and others are rebuilding their lives and communities after the disaster.

### EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL, 9-YEAR-OLD MUSKAAN SETS UP A FREE LIBRARY

outside of her home in Bhopal, India, so other children can read. Inspired by her efforts, we donated 50 of our local language books for her to read to her friends.



## TRAVEL WITH A PURPOSE: PROGRAM SITE VISITS

One of the best ways to learn more about our work is to see it yourself. Last year, we held more than 100 site visits so our friends and investors could connect with the communities we serve. Courtney and Paul Amos were among the hundreds of supporters who visited our partner communities in 2016. They, along with their three children and two friends, spent a day at a Literacy Program school in Cambodia to learn more about the impact of their philanthropy.

**“Our visit to the school was a highlight for each one of us, and I shared with Paul afterward that of all the gifts and grants we have had the opportunity to make to organizations, the school in Cambodia ranks among the top in terms of gratifying impact. To feel such a profound connection to the work was too wonderful to put into words.”**

– Courtney Amos

Plan your in-country experience today at [www.roomtoread.org/SeeOurWork](http://www.roomtoread.org/SeeOurWork).

## INSPIRING ACTION: ROOM TO READ CHAPTERS

Our chapters and ambassadors are always organizing inspiring and creative events to raise awareness and critical funds for our programs. Here are a few of the many ways our chapters motivated people to get involved in 2016:

- **Bikes for Books** spinning classes and marathons
- **Corporate Trivia Challenge** nights
- **Destination Dining** country-themed dinner series
- **Live-in for Literacy** library sleepovers
- **Notes for Literacy** music concerts
- **Sips for Schools** wine tastings
- **Spring Trek** hiking challenge
- **Yoga in the Park** outdoor yoga events



**WE HAVE 43  
VOLUNTEER CHAPTERS**  
— you can learn more  
and get involved at [www.  
roomtoread.org/Take-Action](http://www.roomtoread.org/Take-Action).

## ROOM TO READ IN THE MEDIA

London  
**Evening  
Standard**



**FORTUNE**

**FAST COMPANY**

**Bloomberg**

**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

**BUSINESS  
INSIDER**

**Inc.** **BuzzFeed**

**VOGUE**

**Aol.**



**South China Morning Post**

**YAHOO!**

**BBC**

# PARTNERING FOR IMPACT: ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDERS

Through grants, employee engagement efforts and other initiatives, organizational funders help to scale Room to Read's impact and promote our mission within their significant networks. In 2016, these corporate, foundation and government partners provided more than 40 percent of our total support through cash donations and in-kind gifts.



**Artha Capital** enables the development and enhancement of projects critical to Room to Read's mission. Artha Capital has invested US\$4.7 million in core support, helping us work toward our goal of reaching 15 million children by 2020 and continuing to expand our geographic footprint.



**The Atlassian Foundation** has donated nearly US\$7 million toward Room to Read's programs. In 2016, Atlassian was the largest investor in our Girls' Education Program in Cambodia and the largest corporate investor from Australia. Atlassian staff also personally support Room to Read through their \$1/day workplace giving program.



**The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** is currently co-funding a two-year evaluation of the impact of our Girls' Education Program in India, with a specific focus on girls' development of life skills. The evaluation's results will be used to increase the effectiveness of the Girls' Education Program's global design and impact.



Through donations from **BURGER KING®** employees, franchisees and restaurant guests in select areas in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, as well as donations directly from the **BURGER KING McLAMORE™** Foundation, the **BURGER KING®** system is supporting more than 84,000 students through Room to Read's Literacy Program in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia.



**Centre for Micro Finance** supports Room to Read's Literacy Programs in the state of Rajasthan in India, including research into how to best support marginalized communities that speak tribal languages. They have contributed US\$1 million over a period of 4.5 years.



Through its *e for Education* initiative, **Citi** donated US\$1 to education-related nonprofits for every US\$1 million of notional volume traded through its electronic platforms over a three-month period. More than US\$570,000 was donated to Room to Read in 2016, bringing the firm's total support for Room to Read to more than US\$2.22 million since 2013.



**Credit Suisse** has partnered with Room to Read since 2008, supporting both our core programs and several key strategic projects, including the development of our 2015–2019 strategic plan and the launch of Room to Read Accelerator. Credit Suisse also donates office space for Room to Read staff in Hong Kong, Sydney and Tokyo, and provides capacity-building support to country teams through its Global Citizens Program.



In 2016, **Echidna Giving** invested in our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs and 2015–2019 strategic plan goals. Echidna Giving is a leading thought partner for Room to Read in innovation, analysis, learning and system change.



Through **Goldman Sachs** and **Goldman Sachs Gives**, the company and its senior executives have contributed more than US\$19 million to Room to Read. In 2016, Goldman Sachs supported our Literacy and Girls' Education Programs, benefiting more than 44,000 children.



**Happy Hearts Fund**, founded in 2006 by Petra Nemcova after she survived the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, rebuilds safe, resilient schools in areas impacted by natural disasters. Happy Hearts Fund has supported Room to Read in rebuilding schools in Nepal following the devastating earthquakes that hit the country in 2015.

**IKEA Foundation** In 2016,  Room to Read

launched a four-year partnership with the **IKEA Foundation** and IKEA's Let's Play for Change campaign, which supports children's rights to play and develop. This partnership is supporting Room to Read's programs in Bangladesh and Indonesia, benefiting 93,000 children.



**IMC** held a Trading for Charity event across their U.S., Dutch and Australian locations that resulted in more than US\$1.8 million in support to Room to Read to help children learn essential reading skills in Tanzania.



**Tatcha** has been a key Room to Read partner since 2014. Through their *Beautiful Faces, Beautiful Futures* initiative, each full-size skin-care purchase funds a day of school for a girl in Room to Read's Girls' Education Program. By the end of 2016, Tatcha had supported one million days of school for girls.



## **TP** TOWNSEND PRESS

**Townsend Press**, an independent publisher of acclaimed educational materials for students in grade school through college, has been a Room to Read partner since 2007. Townsend Press has funded core operating and program support for local-language book publication, library development and our Girls' Education Program.



**The UBS Optimus Foundation** supported Room to Read's post-earthquake recovery efforts in Nepal by funding reconstruction and our Literacy Program within six schools in Nuwakot, Nepal. This support is part of the UBS Optimus Emergency Response funding that includes quality children's education as a crucial post-emergency intervention.



**USAID** has invested approximately US\$5.4 million to support an innovative early-grade reading program at scale in India, benefiting around 250,000 children in government primary schools directly and millions more indirectly across four states over a period of five years.

## Top Organizational Funders

(1/1/2016 – 12/31/2016)

### \$500,000+

Atlassian Foundation  
Citi  
Credit Suisse  
Echidna Giving  
Goldman Sachs  
IKEA Foundation  
IMC  
The Kapnick Foundation  
Thank You Dad Foundation  
UBS Optimus Foundation  
United States Agency for International Development

### \$250,000 – \$499,999

Artha Capital  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
BURGER KING McLAMORE<sup>SM</sup> Foundation  
Caerus Foundation, Inc.  
Centre for Micro Finance  
Happy Hearts Fund  
Tatcha  
Townsend Press

### \$100,000 – \$249,999

Aditya Birla Group  
BNP Paribas  
Boeing  
The Byron Girls Fund of Goldman Sachs Gives  
The Carroll Obremsky Charitable Fund  
Clinique  
Crabby Beach Foundation  
The Deena Jo Heide-Diesslin Foundation  
Dining Concepts Ltd.  
EROL Foundation  
Fossil Foundation  
Four Acre Trust  
Gavekal Endowment Ltd.

GlaxoSmithKline  
Gruber Family Foundation  
Hilton  
HSBC  
InMaat Foundation  
Jane Hurt Trust  
Kendeda Fund  
The Koogole Foundation  
Myriad Asset Management Ltd.  
Open Circles Foundation – The Netherlands  
Oracle  
Pearson  
Salesforce  
The Satter Foundation  
The Sidgmore Family Foundation  
Sensato Investors  
Troper Wojcicki Foundation  
U.S. Department of Agriculture through an award to Catholic Relief Services  
United Way Worldwide on behalf of the generosity of Target

### \$50,000 – \$99,999

ABeam Consulting Ltd.  
Asia Alternatives  
Bank of America – BA Continuum India Pvt. Ltd.  
Battery Powered  
Cloud Nine Foundation  
CMS Legal Services EEIG  
Dodge & Cox  
Dr. Ausbüttel & Co. GmbH  
Eastman Chemical  
Equis Energy (Nippon Renewable Energy K.K.)  
Financial Times  
The Høglund Foundation  
Joan and Irwin Jacobs Fund  
The Karen Ray Fund  
Kyu Karuizawa Hotel

Laurie and Peter Grauer Foundation  
Matthews Asia  
The Mayer-Phillips Foundation  
Microsoft  
Monsanto Fund  
The Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation  
Noble Group  
Nuix Pty. Ltd.  
Positive Real Estate  
Reliable Source Industrial Co., Ltd.  
Renshaw Foundation  
SJS Charitable Trust  
The Spohler Foundation  
The Spurlino Foundation  
Steans Family Foundation  
STUDY FOR TWO  
Swarovski Foundation  
Thunderbird2 Foundation  
Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd.  
Whitehaven Coal

### IN-KIND DONORS

Autodesk  
Book Enterprises  
Books for Africa  
Canon  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
Credit Suisse  
Goloseo Publishers  
Hilton  
Ketchum  
Lenovo  
Moët Hennessy  
Reliance Capital  
Scholastic

# COUNTING IT UP: FINANCIALS

Financial efficiency, transparency and accountability lie at the heart of Room to Read’s values. Our work is possible because of the generosity of our worldwide network, and we are deeply committed to leveraging your support for maximum impact — and then sharing exactly how those funds are used.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



**US\$44.4M**

cash donations



**US\$3.8M**

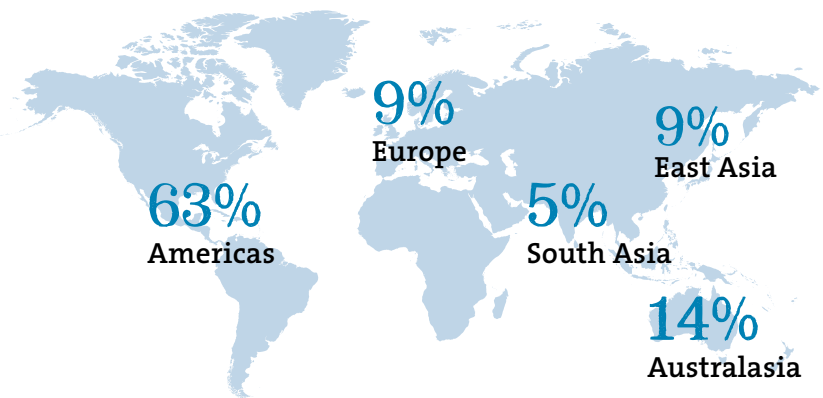
in-kind donations



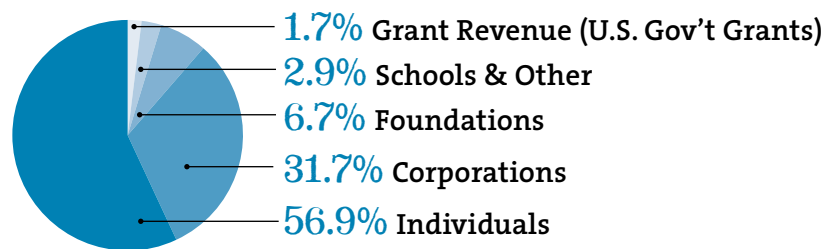
**84%**

spent on programs

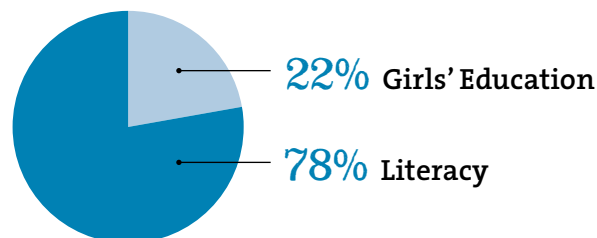
## SOURCES OF REVENUE BY REGION



## DONATIONS BY TYPE OF INVESTOR



## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE BREAKDOWN





## Statement of Activities

For the years ending December 31, 2016 and 2015 (USD)

<b>Support and Revenue:</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Corporations	\$14,094,706	\$12,536,347
Foundations	\$2,980,884	\$4,172,714
Individuals	\$25,278,834	\$27,360,176
Schools and Other	\$1,298,113	\$490,534
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$43,652,537</b>	<b>\$44,559,771</b>
Grant Revenue	\$774,828	\$708,398
Donations In-Kind	\$3,820,516	\$4,234,999
Investment and Other Income (Loss), Special Event Expenses, Fees	\$(163,711)	\$(609,980)
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$48,084,170</b>	<b>\$48,893,188</b>

<b>Operating Expenses:</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Literacy	\$9,264,996	\$8,862,628
Girls' Education	\$2,127,412	\$2,581,086
Donated Books and Supplies	\$3,341,016	\$2,671,175
Conferences, Travel and Meeting Costs	\$2,350,724	\$2,170,957
Information Technology Expenses	\$1,294,947	\$1,177,976
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$172,212	\$94,869
Professional Fees	\$2,682,356	\$3,024,024
Program Operating Expenses	\$2,869,583	\$2,499,585
Program Personnel Expenses	\$19,311,222	\$17,391,874
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$43,414,468</b>	<b>\$40,474,174</b>
<b>Management and General</b>	<b>\$2,424,055</b>	<b>\$2,375,379</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>\$5,891,111</b>	<b>\$5,486,462</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$51,729,634</b>	<b>\$48,336,015</b>

<b>Change in Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$(646,246)</b>	<b>\$1,561,771</b>
<b>Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$(2,857,298)</b>	<b>\$(1,451,374)</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>\$6,450,056</b>	<b>\$4,088,941</b>
<b>Temporarily Restricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>\$14,632,415</b>	<b>\$16,883,133</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of the Year</b>	<b>\$17,578,927</b>	<b>\$21,082,471</b>

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

# TAKING THE LEAD: BOARDS & STAFF

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## Board of Directors

**Scott Kapnick** (Board Chair), CEO,  
HPS Investment Partners, LLC

**Yusuf Alireza**, Former CEO, Noble  
Group

**Andrew Balls**, Chief Investment  
Officer Global Fixed Income, PIMCO

**Mary Byron**, Former Partner,  
Goldman Sachs

**Dr. Luis Crouch**, Vice President and  
Chief Technical Officer, International  
Development Group, RTI

**Erin Ganju**, Co-Founder and CEO,  
Room to Read

**Carl Huttenlocher**, Managing  
Partner and Chief Investment  
Officer, Myriad Asset Management

**Dr. Elizabeth M. King**, Nonresident  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

**Jerry del Missier**, Executive  
Chairman, Copper Street Capital

**Kim Anstatt Morton**, Advisory Board  
Member, Girl Rising

**John Ridding**, CEO, Financial Times  
Group

**Frank van Veenendaal**, Former  
Executive Vice President, Salesforce

**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

**Craig Bruya**, Former CFO, Microsoft  
Business Solutions

**Peter T. Grauer**, Chairman,  
Bloomberg Inc.

**Tim Koogle**, Former CEO and Chair,  
Yahoo!

**Alastair Mactaggart**, President,  
Emerald Fund

**Fernando Reimers**, Director of  
Global Education and International  
Education Policy, Harvard University

**Muneer Satter**, Chair, Satter  
Investment Management

## Regional Boards

### ASIA PACIFIC

**Rebecca and Damien Brosnan**

**Asami and Ben Ferguson**

**Neil Harvey**

**Laura Howard and Dieter Turowski**

**Dina Khreino-Alireza  
and Yusuf Alireza**

**Camilla and John Lindfors**

**Tamiko M. Lippit and Carl  
Huttenlocher**

**Tamara and Zoltan Varga**

### AUSTRALIA

**Carrie and Steve Bellotti**

**Carolyn Betts and Eddie Sheehy**

**Annie and Mike Cannon-Brookes**

**Maile and Charles Carnegie**

**Zahra and Brett Godfrey**

**Alison and Charles Gorman**

**Emma and Andrew Gray**

**Nicolle and John Keith**

**Cynthia Whelan**

**Donna Yip and David Torrible**

### NEW YORK

**Mary Byron**

**Peter T. Grauer**

**Sonny Kalsi**

**Scott Kapnick**

**Caryn Leventhal**

### SWITZERLAND

**Jürgen Bauer**

**Patricia Horgan**

**Sarah and Aydin Kurt-Elli**

**Francis Marsland**

**David Mote**

**Laura and Robert Schmoll**

**Tina Wüstemann**

### UNITED KINGDOM

**Marisa Drew**

**Doug Henderson**

**Maria and Elio Leoni-Sceti**

**Jane and Jerry del Missier**

**Benedicte and Patrick de Nonneville**

**John Ridding**

**Joanna and Stuart Riley**

**Erica Wax and Andrew Balls**

**Randy Work**



## Leadership Team

### MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Erin Ganju**, Co-Founder and CEO

**Shari Freedman**, Chief Financial Officer

**Cory Heyman**, Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director, Room to Read Accelerator

**Geetha Murali**, Chief Development and Communications Officer

**Danielle Reichner**, Acting Chief of International Operations

**Heather Simpson**, Chief Program Officer

**Pierre Towns**, Chief Talent Officer

### INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORS

**Sourav Banerjee**, India Country Director

**Shevanthi Jayasuriya**, Sri Lanka Country Director

**Peter Mwakabwale**, Tanzania Country Director

**Geoffrey Odaga**, Associate Director, Africa

**Ujjwal Raj Pokhrel**, Nepal Country Director

**Peter Ramatswana**, South Africa Country Director

**Rakhi Sarkar**, Bangladesh Country Director

**Christie Scott**, Director, Asia and Acting Vietnam Country Director

**Dinesh Shrestha**, Co-Founder and Director of Field Operations

**Norkham Souphanouvong**, Laos Country Director

**Pheng Srun**, Acting Cambodia Country Director

## Technology Advisory Committee

**James Arnett**, Partner, Capco

**Alex Belous**, Education Portfolio Manager, The Cisco Foundation

**Mary Byron**, Former Partner, Goldman Sachs

**Dustin Frazier**, Independent Consultant

**Matthew Glotzbach**, CEO, Quizlet, Inc.

**Andrea Leszek**, Senior Vice President of Technology and Products Services, Salesforce

**Ambarish Malpani**, Vice President of Engineering, Edmodo

**Vibhu Mittal**, CEO, Edmodo

**Brett Robson**, IT Workplace Engineering Manager, Atlassian

**Frank van Veenendaal**, Former Executive Vice President, Salesforce

**Tim Wood**, Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

## Room to Read's Legacy Society



**BETTY JAMIE CHUNG**  
1943–2013

**Betty Jamie Chung's legacy gift to Room to Read is a testament to the person she was: caring, thoughtful, strong and, from the lessons taught by her mother, someone who firmly believed in the power of education and in the changes it can make.**

Born in Chongqing, China, Betty Jamie began her life as bombs were being dropped in the provisional capital during

World War II. The Chung family eventually settled in Hong Kong, where she received most of her formal education.

Betty Jamie Chung wrote a book titled "Life Recipes from My Mother," a collection of lessons about basic human values and principles that her mother imparted to her and which very much influenced the person she grew up to be.

The Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have made provisions for Room to Read through their estate plans. As a Legacy Society member, you are ensuring that the next generation of children has the educational resources and support needed to create a better life for themselves and their families. We are sincerely grateful to those who remember us through a bequest or other type of legacy gift.

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



## World Change Starts with Educated Children.®

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in low-income 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.

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Room to Read Global Office: San Francisco  
Delhi • Hong Kong • London • Mumbai • New York • Singapore • Sydney • Tokyo • Zurich

[www.roomtoread.org](http://www.roomtoread.org)

We would like to thank the following organizations for sharing their office space with Room to Read in 2016:  
Credit Suisse (Hong Kong, Sydney and Tokyo), Financial Times (London) and Reliance Capital (Mumbai).



**Photos:** Cover: Raksmei Ly; 1, 2: Kimlong Meng; 3, 16: Daniel Hayduk; 4: Amirtharaj Stephen; 4, 9: Nguyen Minh Duc; 5: Jason Mulikita; 6, 8, 9, 12, 16, 21, 23: Room to Read; 7: Faruque Azam; 10: Willem de Lange; 11: Saikat Mojumder; 13, back cover: Sangam Silpakar; 14: Anupam Gupta; 15: Mitchell Tong; 17: Grenada Schools Inc.; 19: Chemonics; 20: Provisi Education; 22: Scott Treatt.

**Design:** Melanie Doherty Design