




Room to Read®

Celebrating



**CHANGE
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*At Room to Read,
we believe World Change
Starts with Educated
Children®.*

Education is the most effective tool for solving the world's greatest challenges, including poverty, climate change and inequality. When children learn, they create waves of change that extend throughout their families, communities and future generations.

This year, Room to Read is celebrating the next generation of changemakers — the young readers breaking the cycle of illiteracy in their families, the girls charting their chosen life paths, helping to create a more gender equal world — and the remarkable educators, caregivers and community members who support them.

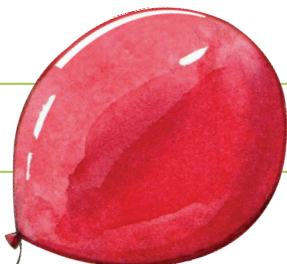
Thank you for being a changemaker for Room to Read. By supporting Room to Read, you are helping to change the future through education, transforming the lives of millions of children to create a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality.

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CHANGEMAKERS

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From ripples of knowledge to waves of change

FROM OUR CEO



DEAR ROOM TO READ FAMILY,

Profound change often starts small: It can begin with a child sounding out an unfamiliar word, a girl voicing her desire to study for another year, or a family finding a new source of income that helps them keep their children in school as economic pressures mount.

At Room to Read, we are fortunate to bear witness to the change that happens when young people everywhere learn to read and write, and to the transformation that results as girls build the confidence to choose

their own futures. This year, we are highlighting our Girls' Education Program through the launch of *She Creates Change*, a first-of-its-kind multimedia storytelling initiative that shows the change that is ignited when girls tap into their own power. Through the books and films associated with this project, we see ripples of knowledge turn into waves of change, resulting in girls leading more fulfilled lives, while also making their communities increasingly safe, healthy and financially stable.

This is the change I experienced first-hand as my mother altered the course of her life through education and paved the way for her siblings and me to do the same. As CEO of Room to Read, I now have the immense good fortune of turning the ripples of change started by my mother into waves of opportunity for children around the world.

I am proud to share that Room to Read benefited more than 6.5 million new children last year, bringing the total number of children Room to Read has supported in their learning journey to more than 39 million. I'm particularly pleased to share that we trained more than 277,000 teachers and librarians in 2022 – more than any previous year to date. We also received two prominent international awards and moved into two new geographies. In addition, for the 16th year, we earned Charity Navigator's highest "exceptional" rating.

None of this would be possible without our global network of supporters, who are changemakers in their own right – generously donating their time, talent and financial resources to ensure that children in historically low-income communities receive the education they deserve. Together, we are creating strong currents of learning so millions of children can reach their potential and shape their own futures.

Warmly,

Geetha

Geetha

FROM OUR *Creating the next generation of global changemakers* GLOBAL BOARD CHAIR

DEAR FRIENDS,

Room to Read has always acted with urgency to help educate the world's children. Now, in the wake of learning loss resulting from COVID-19, that urgency is amplified as the number of children who lack basic literacy skills surges: The percentage of 10-year-olds in low to middle-income countries who cannot read and comprehend a simple story has escalated from 57 percent pre-pandemic to 70 percent, according to recent reports.



In other words, 7 in 10 children in low to middle-income communities lack the foundational skills that enable all future learning.

That is unacceptable, and we must take collective action now to help children learn to read and write, and to support girls in acquiring the skills they need to stay in school.

There is no organization better equipped to provide this support than Room to Read. That was recently underscored when Room to Read ranked #1 for impact and scalability out of more than 3,400 education organizations evaluated by HundrED, a global organization specializing in education innovation.

I have seen Room to Read in action many times over the years and can personally attest to the effectiveness of its programs and the quality of its leadership. Room to Read focuses some of the most talented and passionate business minds on its mission to create a world free of illiteracy and gender inequality through education. Now, many governments are adopting the organization's practices, creating change at scale.

I have had many professional successes in my lifetime, but there's nothing as meaningful as helping to equip today's children with the skills they need to transcend difficult circumstances and build better futures for themselves and their families.

As global board chair of Room to Read, I urge you to join this movement by investing in Room to Read. The world is facing many challenges; educating the next generation of changemakers is the most direct route to solving these problems and creating a more safe, stable and peaceful environment for everyone. Together, we can create the positive change that is essential for the next generation and this world to thrive.

Sincerely Yours,


Yusuf

OUR Results

AWARDS AND HONORS

With your support, Room to Read received several prestigious honors in 2022.

- Our Girls' Education Program in Cambodia was the recipient of the **2022 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education**. The prize honors outstanding and innovative contributions made to improve and promote educational prospects of girls and women and, in turn, the quality of their lives.
- Out of 3,448 education-focused organizations, Room to Read was ranked #1 for impact and scalability by **HundrED**, a global organization that identifies, amplifies and facilitates the implementation of impactful and scalable education innovations from around the world.
- In November 2022, we were granted another "exceptional" rating by the largest independent evaluator of charities in the United States, **Charity Navigator**. This is the 16th year that Room to Read has been awarded a four-star rating — something very few organizations can claim.



Room to Read Cambodia's Senior Girls' Education Program Manager Nead Bunna and Country Director Vantha Chea at the UNESCO Award Ceremony.

WELCOMING NEW LEADERSHIP

In 2022, Room to Read appointed Michael Bowers as chief program implementation officer and Cynthia Orme as chief people and technology officer. In partnership with our global leadership team, they are guiding the evolution of our global programs and projects, and overseeing program operations, people operations and information technology.



We also were thrilled to welcome **Sonny Kalsi**, co-chief executive officer of BentallGreenOak, to Room to Read's global board of directors. Having served on Room to Read's North America regional board since 2018, Sonny brings valuable leadership experience and expertise to our global board as Room to Read scales solutions to the worldwide education crisis.



Our global leadership team was thrilled to meet up in South Africa in 2022 — our first in-person global gathering since the pandemic.

2022 GLOBAL RESULTS



6.5 million
new children benefited

23 countries
benefited

**more than
39 million**
children benefited globally
(cumulative)

LITERACY PROGRAM

6.3 million
new children benefited

3 million
new books distributed

2,089
original children's books published
(cumulative)

35.5 million
children benefited globally
(cumulative)

39.4 million
books distributed (cumulative)

283
adapted children's books published

277,000
teachers and librarians trained –
more than any previous year to date

93
new original children's books
published

2,328
adapted children's books published
(cumulative)

GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM

**more than
83,000**
new children benefited

3.4 million
girls supported through Room to
Read's life skills curriculum and
mentorship globally (cumulative)

74% of graduates surveyed
report that they had enrolled in
tertiary education and/or had found
employment within one year of
graduation

MEET *Literacy Highlights* ROOM TO READ CHANGEMAKERS



Tanzania impact study confirms children learning faster at Room to Read schools

A just-completed two-year impact evaluation of our Literacy Program in Tanzania, comparing outcomes between 50 Room to Read schools and 50 control schools, found that students in Room to Read schools experienced 20 to 80 percent higher gains in literacy skills versus those in control school — despite COVID-related restrictions and modifications to our delivery approach. The study confirmed that even with a transition to mostly virtual learning, Room to Read's Literacy Program provides better outcomes than non-Room to Read schools.



Inspiring a love of reading in South Africa

Our Literacy Program schools in South Africa held a district-wide read-a-thon — a far-reaching community engagement campaign that set out to nurture a love and habit of reading in students and adults alike. With read-alouds, reading activities and reading competitions hosted at schools and a variety of community gathering spaces — from shopping centers to senior care facilities — young learners in Room to Read's Literacy Program were able to build their literacy skills and deepen their reading habits as they inspired members of their communities to share in the joy and magic of reading.

Global book collection uses folklore to explore climate change

2022 marked the release of Room to Read's Folklore & Environment Book Collection, which uses ancestral narratives from across the globe to tell stories about climate change. First developed in 2021 through a virtual Room to Read writers' and illustrators' workshop composed of authors, artists and editors from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Vietnam, this robust collection of 11 books celebrates a diverse range of folk stories that have been shared across generations to help children reflect on the future of the natural world.

← "The Flower Demon" written by Alankrita Amaya and illustrated by Boski Jain



Bangladesh creates spaces to help cultivate reading habits

To address pandemic-related learning loss and encourage children to develop a habit of reading, our Bangladesh team collaborated with local partners to establish Community Reading Forums in Cox's Bazar. Young learners can access local language storybooks, read independently, borrow quality reading materials and learn alongside other students and Room to Read-trained volunteer instructors in these inviting reading spaces — even when school is not in session.



Literacy initiative supports children in crisis in Lebanon

Millions of children in Lebanon have been out of school, and many of those children are refugees. To strengthen children's literacy skills and reading habits in Lebanon and support the transition of out-of-school children into the formal school system, Room to Read launched a two-year project that includes partnering with Lebanese publishers to print and distribute 60 original Arabic storybooks to roughly 1,800 non-formal education centers across Lebanon. The initiative also entails establishing 50 children's libraries in non-formal education centers, benefiting approximately 50,000 children and supporting early-grade literacy development in coordination with local efforts.



CHANGE

Access to diverse careers gains ‘STEAM’ through new book collection

With support from longtime partner Tatcha, Room to Read introduced a new U.S.-based collection of storybooks in 2022 — our STEAM-Powered Careers Book Collection. Available in Spanish and English, the collection was created in collaboration with scientists, faculty and staff from the University of Southern California and presents 10 titles to inspire children from groups underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) fields. Through this book collection, children can learn about a variety of groundbreaking and exciting careers they can start exploring right now.



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Meet changemaker Sreykeo from Cambodia

Sreykeo’s father had to drop out of school in Grade 11 to help support his family when his father passed away. Now, he and Sreykeo’s mother must travel to find work. As a result, Sreykeo lives with her grandmother, who is determined to help Sreykeo obtain the education that her father was denied. Sreykeo’s learning journey began in Grade 1, when she attended a Room to Read school and developed a love of books and reading. Now in Grade 6, Sreykeo is an avid reader who wants to be a teacher so she can impart knowledge to others.

[VIEW HER STORY](#)



Gender Equality Highlights

Girls create safer schools in India

To make schools safer and more welcoming for girls, thousands of Girls' Education Program participants across India conducted safety assessments of local schools — more than 100 in total — documenting accessibility issues and thinking critically about what makes a space safe and welcoming for girls trying to continue their education. More than 179,000 Girls' Education Program students and a group of more than 40,000 educators, caregivers, community leaders and government officials across nine states in India used these findings to advocate for the implementation of national laws and policies to support child protection in educational settings, with an emphasis on the importance of creating spaces for girls to flourish.



Laos and Vietnam hold life skills camps

Hundreds of Room to Read Girls' Education Program students and educators from schools across Laos and Vietnam attended end-of-year life skills camps in 2022, each focused on helping girls cultivate a set of key life skills, such as collaboration and critical thinking. Lessons were incorporated into interactive games and role-play activities that offered students real-life scenarios to navigate in groups, helping to deepen the girls' understanding of particular life skills while emphasizing the importance of attributes such as teamwork, persistence and self-confidence.



Road to Equality radio series launches in Nepal

Radio remains one of the most accessible communication channels for communities across Nepal, making it an ideal platform for Room to Read's "Road to Equality" radio drama series, which premiered in December 2022. More than 60 radio stations in Nepal partnered with Room to Read to broadcast the series, allowing households across the country to access important messages about gender norms and equality, gender-specific discrimination in the classroom and the critical role of girls' education.





Innovative activities in Italy promote gender equality

Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world by Gross Domestic Product, Italy ranks fourth among the 34 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries in unemployment rates among women. According to studies, paid employment rates among women and girls in Southern Italy have been around 25 percent while only 50 percent of girls complete high school. Based on these findings, we identified a unique way to support girls in the region: life skills lessons provided through young adult graphic novels, along with school-based curriculum.

Graphic novels are particularly popular among adolescent girls across Italy, and through partnerships with local book creators, our team developed four engaging titles, each offering educational lessons — including those focused on digital and financial literacy, as well as entrepreneurship, which support girls' future education and employability. We also are collaborating with government and education leaders, as well as local partners, to create and implement a school-based curriculum for girls in Naples and Palermo, in addition to holding regular symposiums on gender equality issues in education. The first symposium was held in October and included speakers from the European Parliament and Ministry of Education.

Report highlights gender equality research and insights

In March, we published our Adolescent Life Skills Assessment (ALSA) with an accompanying in-depth technical report chronicling five years of development, testing and adaptation in seven countries. ALSA was curated and adapted by Room to Read and measures competencies in nine life skills, including relationship-building, self-confidence and decision-making. Additionally, we published a best-practices guide for other organizations to contextualize and pilot the life skills assessment in their own programs.

Meet changemaker Naduni of Sri Lanka

Amid the devastating 2022 economic crisis in Sri Lanka, Girls' Education Program participant Naduni struggled to remain engaged in her education. In response, her Room to Read mentor, Bhagya, increased the frequency of their mentoring sessions, incorporating Room to Read's life skills curriculum to reinforce skills like creative problem-solving, self-control and communication to help support Naduni with the tools she needed to cope with challenging emotions. Bhagya also found creative ways to reignite Naduni's interest in her education.

[VIEW HER STORY](#)





Room to Read Releases *She Creates Change*

In 2022, Room to Read partnered with Rebel Girls, a global girl empowerment brand, to publish “*She Creates Change: 25 Stories of Courageous Young Women and Their Heroes*,” a book featuring 12 inspiring stories of girls from Room to Read’s Girls’ Education Program who have used their life skills to create positive change in their lives and the lives of others. These remarkable changemakers have created sustainability apps for tablets and phones, challenged forced marriage, grown gardens that nourish their communities and earned money for their families as YouTube sensations. The girls’ stories are paired with 12 stories of their heroes, women from across the globe in whom they’ve found inspiration and strength. Audio versions of select stories are also available via Rebel Girls’ podcast app.

Building on the stories featured in the books and podcasts, we are now finalizing the video portion of *She Creates Change*. Each episode in the six-part video series features an adolescent girl who has used life skills to overcome obstacles and transform her life. The girl’s moment of triumph is shown via animation, followed by a short documentary that reveals the real-life hero behind the story.

The aim of this initiative is to engage millions of adolescent girls around the world with inspirational content and associated educational curriculum that encourages them to learn more about the importance of life skills and cultivate these attributes to solve challenges in their own lives and communities.

Funded by the Troper Wojcicki Foundation, the project is led by an award-winning team of women. This includes Martha Adams (“Girl Rising”), who directed the project. Women-owned Nexus Studios identified a diverse group of women directors with ties to the communities featured to create the animation and oversaw development of the final animated stories. Executive producers include Brenda Chapman, the first woman to win an Oscar for best animated film (“Brave”), veteran screenwriter and director Jill Culton (“Abominable”), recipient of Animation Magazine’s GAME CHANGER award for being the first woman to write and direct an original animated theatrical feature, and actor Freida Pinto, best known for her starring role in “Slumdog Millionaire.” The videos will be released in October for International Day of the Girl.

FINANCIALS

Highlights

\$57,546,410

Donations

\$6,496,220

In-kind donations

86%

Spent on programs

DONATIONS BY TYPE OF INVESTOR:

9% Schools,
government
and others

38%
Individuals



35%
Corporations

18%
Foundations

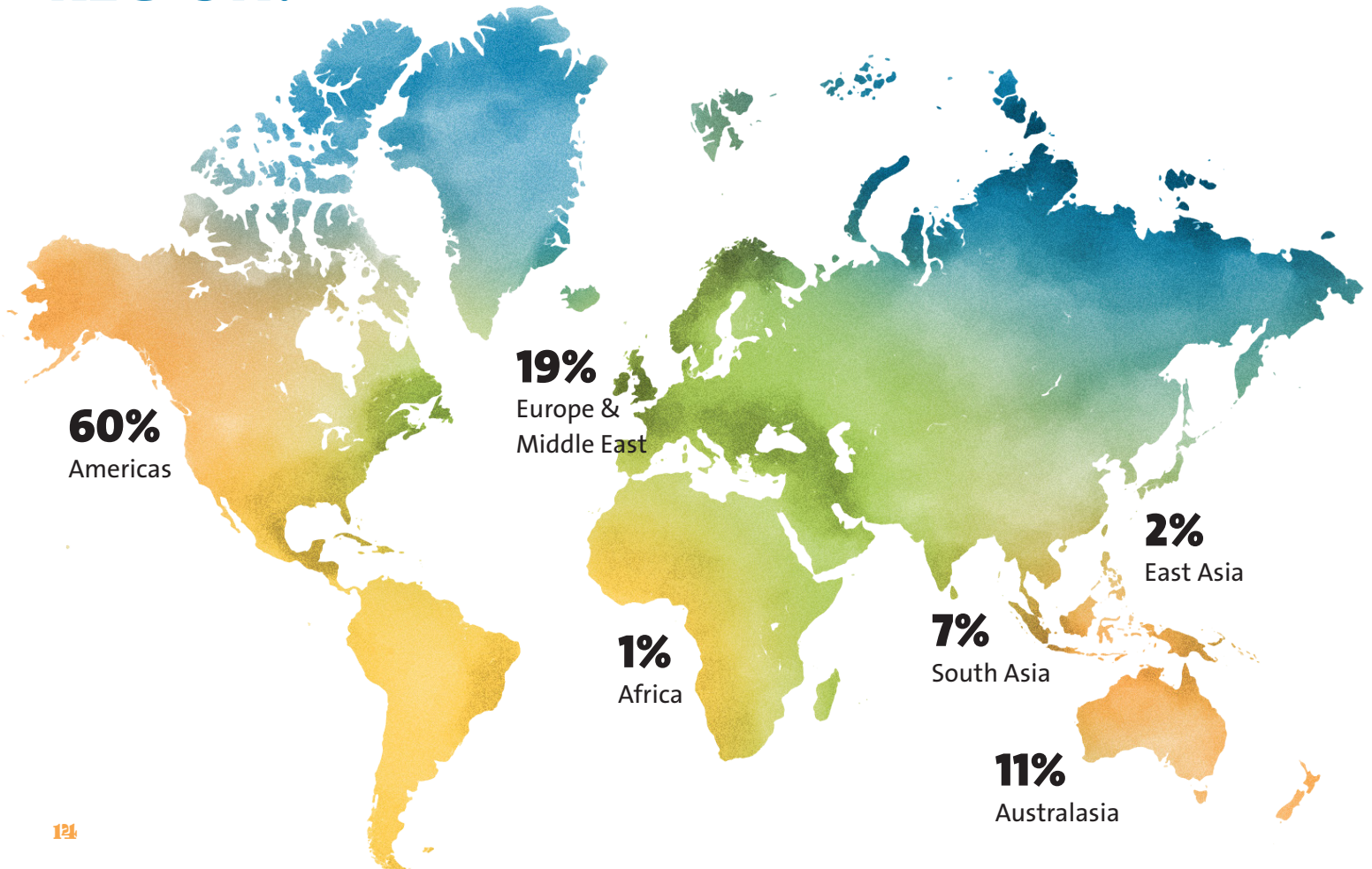
PROGRAMMATIC EXPENSE BREAKDOWN:

29%
Girls' Education



71%
Literacy

SOURCES OF REVENUE BY REGION:



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ending December 31, 2022 and December 31, 2021 (USD)

SUPPORT AND REVENUE:	2022	2021
Corporations	\$19,843,235	\$13,470,789
Foundations	\$10,127,535	\$3,376,847
Individuals	\$22,007,328	\$56,668,068
Schools, government and others	\$5,449,918	\$6,723,117
Total donations	\$57,428,016	\$80,238,821*
Contract revenue	\$118,394	\$138,442
Donations in-kind	\$6,496,220	\$7,338,898
Investment and other income (loss), special event expenses, fees	\$(6,958,125)	\$2,128,998
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$57,084,505	\$89,845,159
OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Program services		
Literacy	\$40,830,851	\$40,866,992
Girls' Education	\$16,880,815	\$11,831,926
Total program services	\$57,711,666	\$52,698,918
Management and general	\$2,771,051	\$2,238,718
Fundraising	\$6,387,207	\$4,609,711
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$66,869,924	\$59,547,347
Translation adjustments	\$(915,290)	\$(362,247)
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	\$(14,829,261)	\$22,290,086
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	\$4,128,552	\$7,645,479
Net assets without donor restrictions at beginning of the year	\$49,122,464	\$26,832,378
Net assets with donor restrictions at beginning of the year	\$25,107,358	\$17,461,879
TOTAL ASSETS AT END OF THE YEAR	\$63,529,113	\$74,229,822

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

*\$25 million of 2021 revenue was due to a single grant that is being spent over a three-year period.

GLOBAL *Partners*

We are grateful to all of our global partners around the world and want to recognize some of our most generous investors who have given more than \$50,000 in 2022. Learn about them [here](#).



LEADERSHIP

and Community

We are also enormously grateful to have an extensive global network of talented people from across the globe who generously donate their time, talent and financial resources to help us deliver on our mission. We would not be where we are today without our board members, global leaders, advocates, ambassadors and chapter leaders. Learn more about our global community via the links below:

[Meet our Global and Emeritus Board Members](#)

[Meet our Regional Board and Committee Members](#)

[Meet our Executive Leadership](#)

[Meet our Country Directors](#)

[Check out our Book Creator Collective](#)

Global and regional board members gathered in Bali this year to strategize and observe our work in person.



A donation to Room to Read helps to transform the lives of children and create the next generation of changemakers.

JOIN OUR GLOBAL MOVEMENT

We could not be more grateful for the thousands of passionate and committed volunteers who help to fuel our work. Our network of volunteers helps us succeed through fundraising and increasing awareness of our cause in their communities. [Learn how you can volunteer for Room to Read.](#)

ESTABLISH A MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM

A matching gift program is designed to support nonprofits that a company's employees are passionate about by matching the donations made by their employees. Thanks to matching gifts programs, you can double or even triple your impact!

MAKE EDUCATION YOUR LEGACY

Including a gift in your will for Room to Read is one of the most powerful actions you can take to make illiteracy and gender inequality a thing of the past.

FOLLOW US ONLINE

Be part of Room to Read's global community:

Facebook: [/RoomtoRead](#)

Instagram: [@RoomtoRead](#)

Threads: [@RoomtoRead](#)

Twitter: [@RoomtoRead](#)

LinkedIn: [/company/Room-to-Read](#)

Room to Read global offices: Colombo, Dhaka, Delhi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Kathmandu, London, Mumbai, Nairobi, New York City, Pretoria, San Francisco, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., Zurich

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JOIN US

