

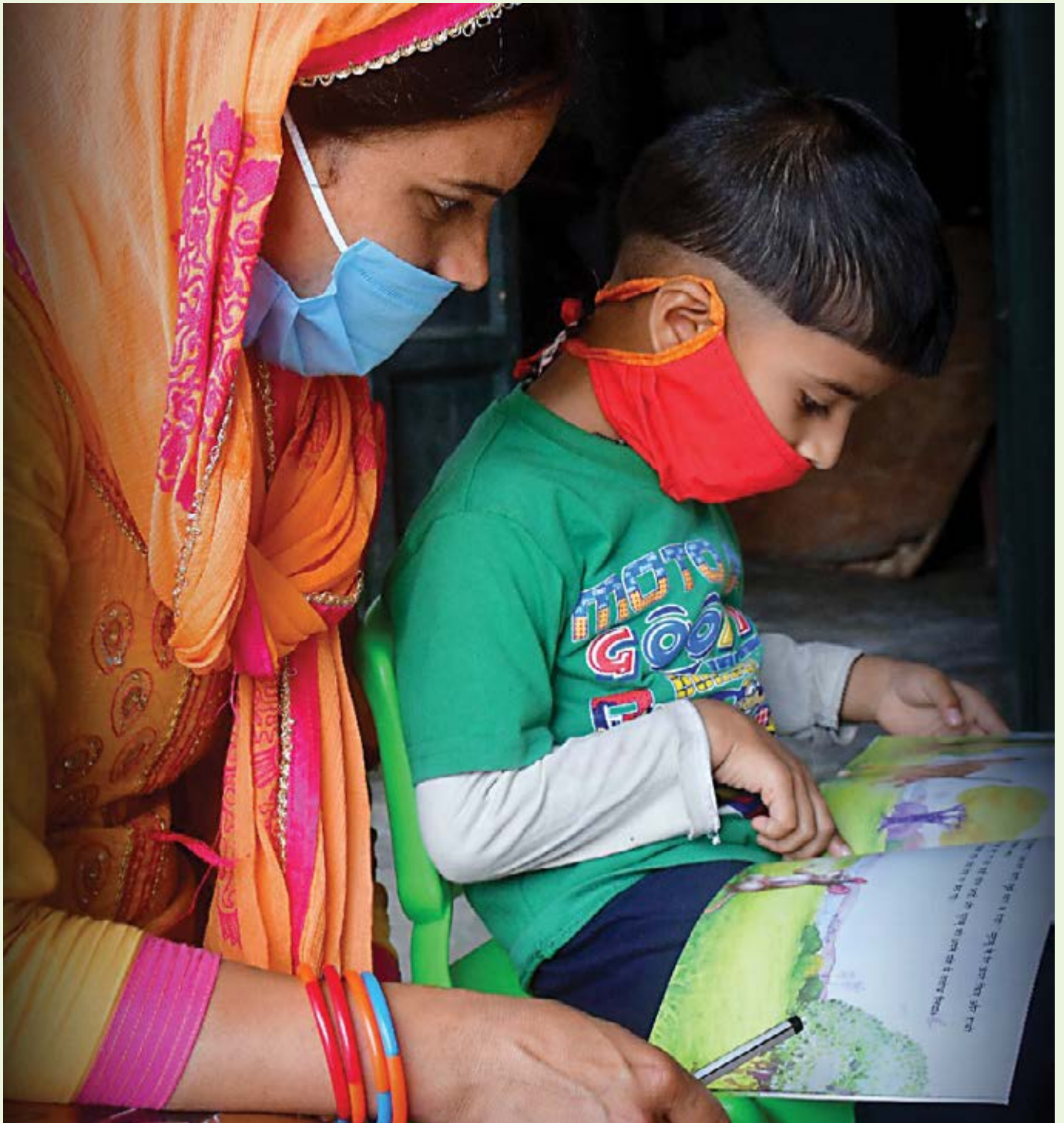


Annual Report
Special Edition

CELEBRATING CHANGE

Room to Read India





CELEBRATING CHANGE

Room to Read completed its 20th anniversary in 2020, the celebration was muted as the shadow of Coronavirus loomed large across the globe. As we reflect on these past 20 years, we want to recognize and thank the amazing network of staff, donors, and volunteers who make our work possible. Since our founding in 2000, Room to Read has benefited nearly 20 million children spread in 20 countries across the globe.

The journey of Room to Read started from a school - Shree Janakalyan Secondary school located in the lap of snow clad Machapucha, a Himalayan peak near Pokhara town in Nepal in the year 2000.

While today's world looks very different than 20 years ago, one thing has never wavered: our belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children®. As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission to bring quality education to children in the low income communities. We do believe that only through education can children build the skills and resources they need to best respond to crises like the one we're facing now, as a global community. It is time to build back better through the power of education.

FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to present this special edition of our annual report for 2020. The report is a celebration of Room to Read's 20 years' journey with a spotlight on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Room to Read (RtR) completed its 20th year of existence globally. In these twenty years, the organization has spread its operations to 20 countries and benefitted over 23 million children worldwide. It has been a constantly evolving journey for the organization during this period. The Literacy Program evolved from mere provision of books to a comprehensive program that includes both skills and habit of reading; children exposed to this program demonstrated significantly higher reading abilities compared to children in non-intervention schools. The Girl's Education Program also evolved from a girl-centered scholarship-based program to a school-based program with a definitive focus on life skills inputs, resulting in girls acquiring skills to negotiate their key life decisions, including that of completing their education.

Post-2015, Room to Read India started scaling up its programs to benefit more children through a scaffolded (I do, We do, You do) approach. This involved demonstrating the program model in select government schools (I Do); then, working in close

collaboration with the respective governments to institutionalize key components of the model (We Do); and finally, helping government to scale up across the state through their own resources (You Do). We developed this model to reflect our belief that sustainable impact at scale can only be achieved through partnership with government systems. This approach to scale up has now been implemented across several states, for both our literacy and girl's education programs, with great success. Room to Read India has now benefitted over 4.7 million children through its programs.

The year 2020 is a significant year in Room to Read's journey in more ways than one. While we were gearing up for celebrating the organization's 20th anniversary, we were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic! Education screeched to a halt, schools were shut down and the risk of girls dropping out of school loomed large. The need of the hour was to reach out to our beneficiaries and ensure their education continuity. The Room to Read team swiftly got into action and prepared a wide variety of innovative e-contents. These included read aloud videos, audio instructions for parents, digital books and worksheets, self-instructional life skill materials, audio lessons on life skills, podcasts for parents and training content for teachers and facilitators. To make quality reading material available to children and teachers remotely, Room to Read launched the Literacy Cloud, a repository of children's books and resources from around the world.

Innovative approaches were adopted to disseminate the online content. This included uploading the content on government portals, sharing with teachers and parents through WhatsApp groups, utilizing interactive voice recording (IVR) systems, airing over radio/ community radio and telecasting over Television. Scholars of our Girls' Education Program were reached out directly through telephone for mentoring sessions. Towards the later part of the year, it was evident that the digital content was not reaching the children who had no access to smart phones or the internet: girls were particularly disadvantaged. Once again, we quickly shifted gears and came up with self-learning worksheets, reading cards, life skill handbooks and parent handbooks that were physically provided to the beneficiaries.

A major highlight of the year was a variety of initiatives to enhance visibility of our programs. This included the #IndiaGetsReading (Literacy) campaign and the #HarKadamBetiKeSang (Girls' Education) campaign. The campaigns, with thoughtfully designed on-ground

and social media initiatives, were highly successful. These were followed by the extensive television coverages on NDTV and ET-Now (both leading national level channels) that helped strengthen our brand image and reach households across India. Our efforts in these difficult times were further boosted when Room to Read was recognized as one of the top 10 NGOs in India to work for, for the year 2020 by the internationally renowned and recognized "Great Place to Work Institute." Room to Read has now been certified as a "Great Place to Work" for 6 consecutive years.

While we are still unsure of what the post-COVID world looks like, especially with respect to education, I am confident that Room to Read will continue to reach out to our core beneficiaries of young children and girls and ensure their access to quality education, realizing our organizational vision of **"World Change Starts with Educated Children"**.

With regards

Sourav Banerjee
Country Director, Room to Read India





*"I love reading and carry
a storybook wherever I go"*

- Sunil

Pati Block, Barwani, Madhya Pradesh

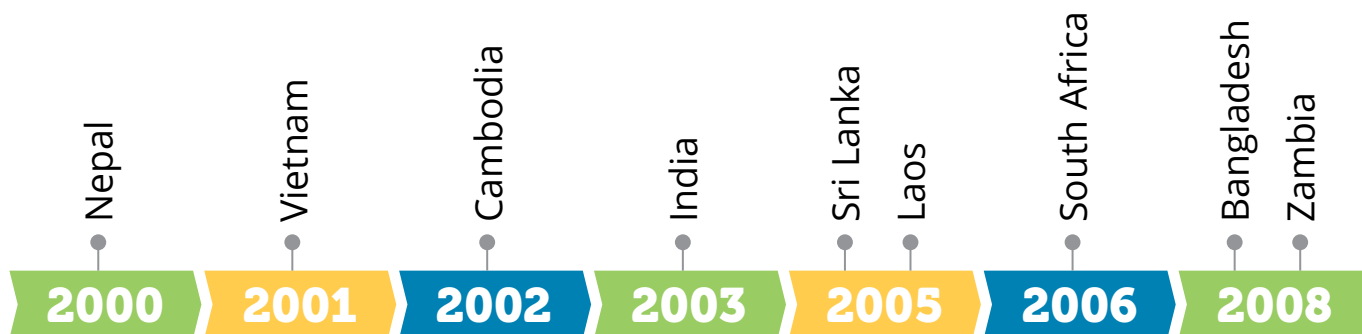


THE ROOM TO READ JOURNEY

Country	Cumulative Children Benefited*
Bangladesh	539,470
Cambodia	1,784,241
Grenada	6,634
Honduras	2,751
India	4,697,000
Indonesia	132,128
Jordan	120,000
Laos	809,857
Myanmar	15,245
Nepal	3,951,202
Pakistan	0
Philippines	4,000
Rwanda	1,455,448
South Africa	586,786
Sri Lanka	1,255,773
Tanzania	1,625,054
Uganda	0
United States	94
Vietnam	1,314,705
Zambia	525,005

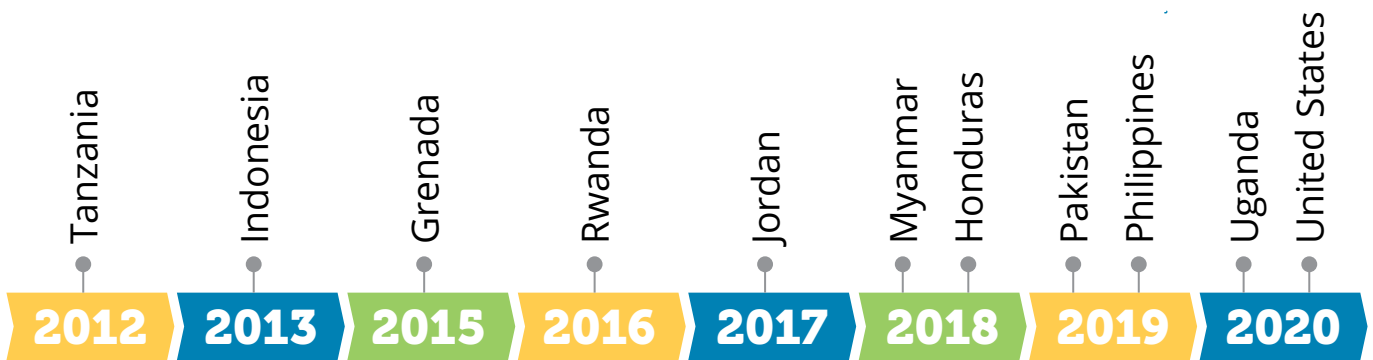


*Please note, cumulative children benefited figures are through December 2019. Based on our data collection and analysis cycle, results are not yet finalized for direct implementation work through 2020, and for some custom projects that began in 2018 or 2019. This is due to the collaborative nature of our programs and the many stakeholders that we collect information from, including government departments and implementation partners. However, we will provide this data as soon as it is available in mid-2021.

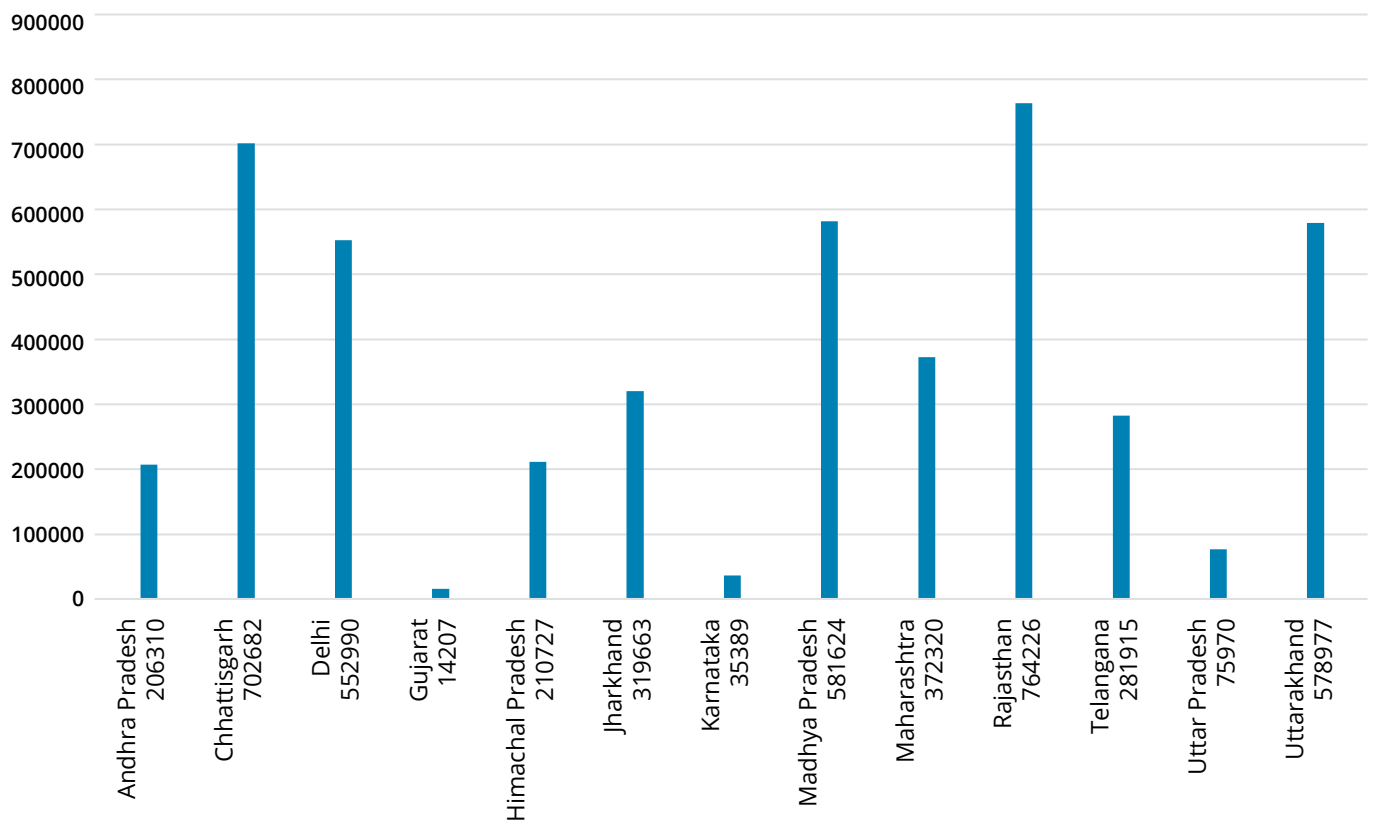
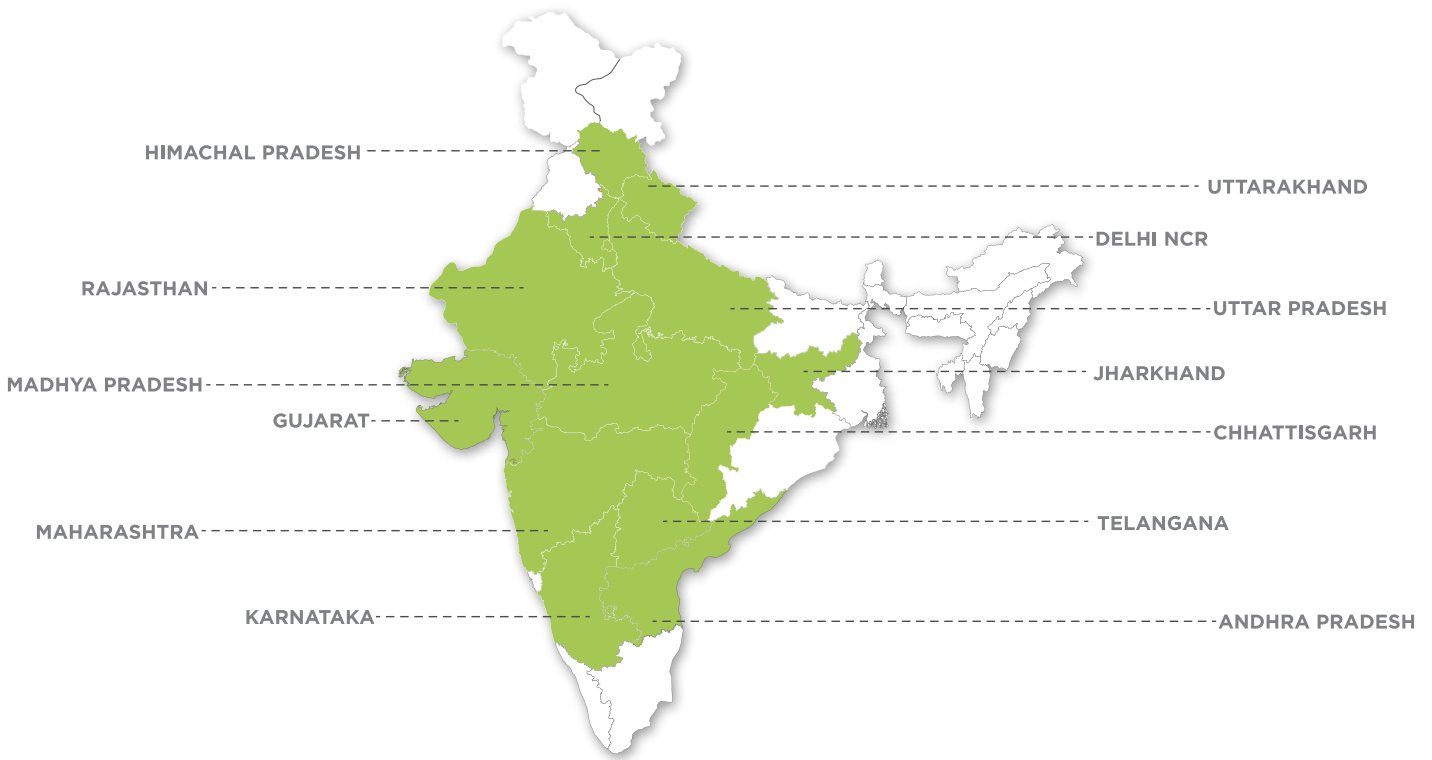


LAUNCH OF OPERATIONS





ROOM TO READ: THE INDIA STORY



State Name Reach till 2019 **Grand Total** 46,97,000

TESTIMONIALS FOR ROOM TO READ

SUNISHA

It was in April 2003 when my journey at Room to Read began. During the early days, a corner of my house was converted into an office and my working hours usually extended into the evenings as people around me were winding up their day.

The decision to join Room to Read after a 15 years stint with large nonprofit organizations, was like sipping a cocktail with flavors of apprehension and excitement. Apprehension from all the questions and doubts as to how I will do everything, what to do first, finding the right team and so on.

However, the excitement far outweighed all the doubts. The challenge of reading and the learning crisis among young children across government schools in India was real. A structured library programme in schools was exciting for children, appreciated by government and other partners. I remember a young boy in grade 3 from a remote school located in the sand dunes of Rajasthan. Room to Read had set up a library there and during my school visit, he shared the titles of many books he had already read. He sought a promise from me that his school would continue to receive books year after year. I had tears of joy hearing this- we were making a change one child at a time developing a reading culture in communities. Here was an example that we were on the right path even if only step by step. Opportunities started to open up as we had conversations with senior government officials, sharing with them our vision to make classrooms into vibrant learning spaces.

Room to Read India within the first two years had set up more than 150 libraries with a footprint in three states in the country. The office was beaming with energy of a team of seven people, passionate and determined to make a difference.

The ten- year journey at Room to Read, was thrilling and joyful – having sown the seeds for a lasting change in the lives of children in India. For me, the time at Room to Read has been special both professionally and personally. The experiences gained have given me that one focus that I am most passionate about today- ensuring both girls and boys achieve foundational learning skills for life-long learning.

I would like to thank my colleagues, at Room to Read India office, in other Room to Read country offices, at San Francisco office and last but not the least the investors who continue to believe in the vision of the organization. Together we have changed the world one child at a time and will continue to do so.

Sunisha Ahuja

Former Country Director, Room to Read India

Currently working as Education Specialist UNICEF India Country Office



DHEERAJ

As I complete 17 years with Room to Read, this is very emotional as well as happy moment for me. I have lived the mission of Room to Read every single day that world change starts with educated children.

My journey with Room to Read started in 2004 under the leadership of Sunisha Ahuja and since then I have had the privilege of working with so many visionary leaders and inspiring colleagues, each and every one of them contributing in their own way.

I have seen this organization grow from 2 employees to almost 700. It is really a great feeling to know that I have been contributing to this great cause in 9 states of this great country.

I am thankful to every one of the Room to Read family and wish them more growth in coming years.

Thank you.

Dheeraj Kumar

Sr. Admin Associate,

Room to Read, India Country Office



BINDIYA

Room to Read made an early investment in building systems and a strong team, documenting evidence, forging strong partnerships; which went a long way in establishing it as a thought leader nationally and globally. I am so glad to have contributed to its growth and hope it attains new heights in coming years!

Bindiya Nagpal

Former Senior Program Manager,
Girls' Education Program;

Independent Consultant, Education and Equity



STORIES FROM THE PAST...

VIDYA

Vidya, the youngest child in her family was doted upon by one and all. But much to the dismay of her family, Vidya seemed uninterested in her studies and performed badly at school. Things changed when Vidya came across the storybooks in the new library at her school. Vidya immersed herself in books and became a regular reader. Her academic performance too seemed to improve and slowly but steadily, Vidya became one of the brightest students in her class.



KALPANA

In the month leading to Kalpana's Grade 12 exams, her brother had an accident and passed away. Kalpana was still grieving her brother when her mother - a cancer patient, succumbed to the disease. But Kalpana refused to give in to grief and instead focused all her energy on the upcoming exams. She defied all the odds and passed the exams with a score of 74%. Kalpana is the embodiment of the spirit of perseverance. She is preparing for the UPSC exams and hopes to fulfill her dream of becoming an IPS officer.





KAMLA

Kamla knew she had to take a stand when her family asked her to drop out of school and get married. When they refused to budge, Kamla appealed to her social mobiliser, Chandrakala Bisht. Chandrakala advised her to use life skills to resolve the problem. Furthermore, Chandrakala decided to intervene and talk to Kamla's parents. Kamla and Chandrakala were successful in making her parents understand the importance of education and convinced them to allow her to complete her studies. Her parents also agreed to put off the marriage.

Today Kamla works as a graphic designer. She is an inspiration for young girls in her village and a guide to the members of her community.

KRISHNA

Krishna hated going to school. The Room to Read library at her school changed how Krishna perceived schooling and education. Books became Krishna's best friends and she can always be found with a book in her hand. Wherever she goes – school, home or even the family's farmlands- there's always a storybook for whenever she may want to read.







"I had asked my daughter to drop out of school to look after our household, thanks to Room to Read I realised my mistake. I am glad that my daughter will be able to study again."

- Sanwarlal
Ajmer, Rajasthan





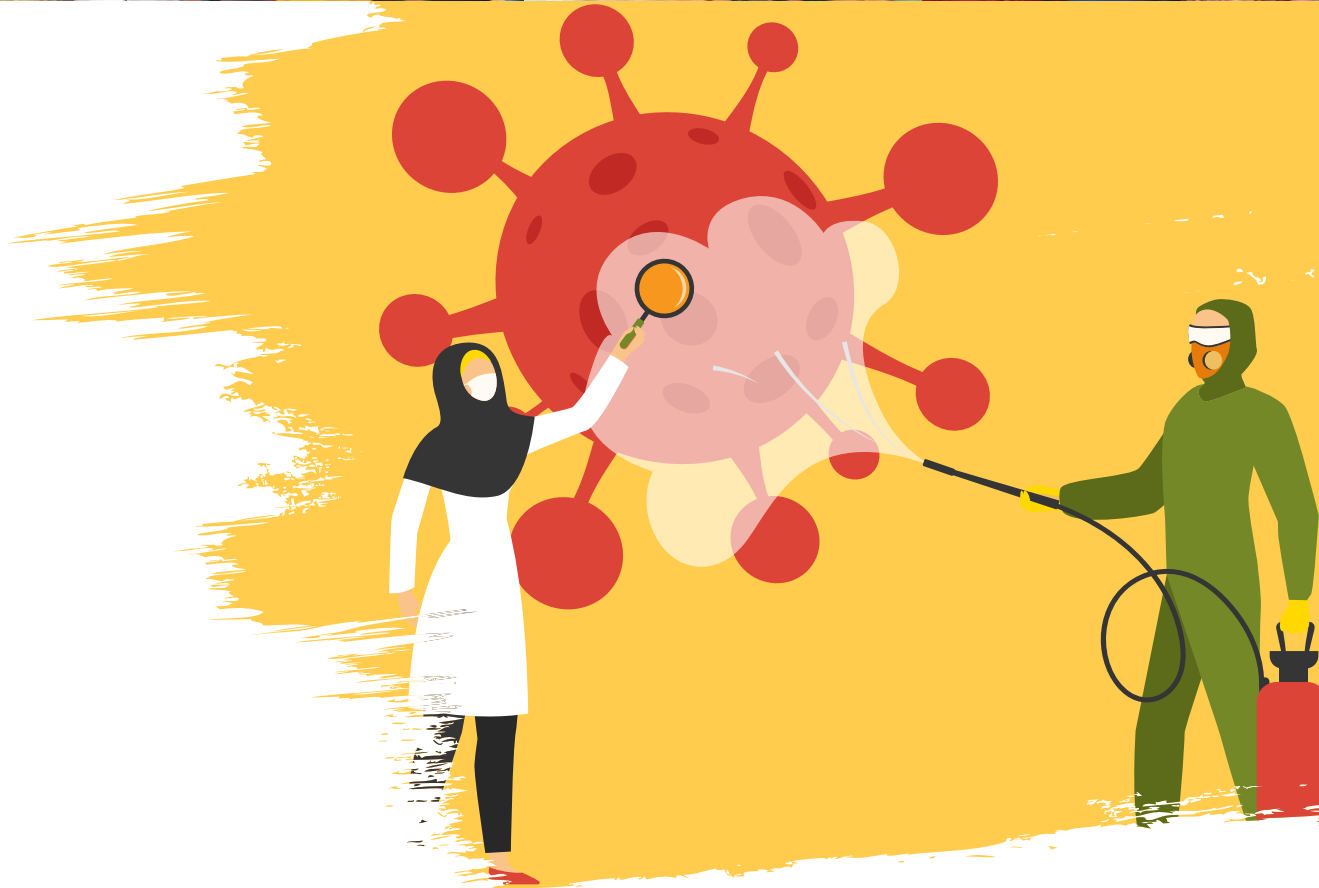
SHIFTING GEARS

A RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Schooling screeched to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which took the world by surprise with little time to think about the changes required in the school curriculum. Educationists saw pedagogy compromised due to the absence of face-to-face classrooms, but indirect tutoring also posed a new set of challenges due to the inequality of access to the Internet in India. The inequity in what one can deliver to students becomes glaring through the digital divide in teaching resources that students in rural India can access.

The pandemic has opened new vistas and we need to add new dimension to schooling, as a part of learning will need to happen aided by parents, or technology, or both. Parents, therefore, will become important stakeholders in our education efforts. And we were required to quickly pivot our activities to address this 'new normal'. Keeping the changed scenario in mind, Room to Read has developed blended educational material for children, teachers, and parents.





GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM: COVID RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit education hard specially girls' education. In one of the largest surveys on girls' education during the COVID-19 pandemic, Room to Read's new Girls' Education Risk Indicators found over half of girls surveyed (60%) in India at risk of losing their education. For the 10,132 girls surveyed in India between April and June, 2020. The key findings are as follows:

- **54%** of girls reported their household had lost a job or income during the pandemic – a factor that evidence consistently tells us leads to girls dropping out of school.
- **More than 1 in 10 (12%)** girls said they had stopped learning since school closures, introducing the risk that girls will hesitate to return to school or will have difficulty catching up and passing important gate-keeping exams when they do return.
- **Six percent** of girls state they are already concerned that they will not return to school. The reasons include the need to work or provide care-taking at home, lack of parental support, and limited financial resources.

Keeping all factors in mind, Room to Read developed a series of strategies to reach out all the stakeholders including scholars, parents, government officials and teachers. The main concern was to keep more than 50,000 scholars from the Girls' Education Program spread across 7 states of India gainfully engaged. A series of activities were designed, and material specifically developed starting from March 2020 (lockdown period) and continued post lockdown. The activities included remote mentoring, engagement of wardens and teachers of residential schools' including outreach materials like distribution of E-Gupshup (magazine developed specifically for Girls' scholars) and broadcast material for Life Skills training programs. The highlight was a two-month long campaign "Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang". The campaign reached out to around 1,93,243 parents, caregivers, communities, girls, government officials, and other supporters through field based announcements, virtual engagement, reflection exercises and to around 65,969,500 community members through radio networks in the states.

Armed with our deep understanding of the complex community needs and being able to leverage our strong relationships with decision makers, teachers and community leaders, our team strove to find new ways to facilitate learning using every conceivable tool and medium available. We devised solutions that harnessed not just technology but our unique understanding of India's education ecosystem which included providing instructional materials like books, worksheets through radio, TV,



GEP scholars after a life skill session in Tilda Block, Chhattisgarh.



podcasts, text messages, telephone calls and WhatsApp messaging.

Remote-mentoring helped provide psycho-social support to adolescent girls, who experienced a myriad of emotions and stress due to the ongoing pandemic and the subsequent lockdown of schools.

Social mobilisers helped girls continue with studies as well as devise strategies to stay emotionally and mentally well. Social mobilizers also provided information related to the pandemic, provisioning and safety to the girls and their families.

Regular phone calls to teachers and wardens in residential institutions not only inspired and supported their own well-being but also enabled them with strategies and resources for them to support adolescent girls further. Room to Read also conducted task based online training and orientation thus assisting the government teachers and wardens to make themselves more adept in using technology.

A special edition of e-Gupshups was developed to ensure that we were able to disseminate them at scale. The special edition included messages from important leaders like the Minister for Education, Rajasthan (on request from the Govt. of Rajasthan). This was uploaded onto the education portals of the governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand and was circulated to girls as well as teachers, wardens and officials.

Life Skills based activity worksheets in multiple languages (Hindi, Telugu and Marathi) were created to ensure that learning remained continuous. These worksheets employed various methodologies and activities for adolescent girls to engage with, during the school closure period to help them reflect on how they can utilize life skills in a variety of situations.

Room to Read designed and produced a podcast comprised of motivational stories of parents and guardians who have been champions of girls' education and have led by action by supporting a girl's right to education. The podcast was produced in three languages - Hindi, Telugu and Marathi.

A month-long initiative was designed and implemented in Chhattisgarh to equip schools, teachers and wardens of all the KGBVs, Porta Cabin Residential Schools and Ashram Shalas to face the demands of remote learning in the times of COVID-19.

A series of audio-visual and print material was developed and disseminated to augment teachers' capabilities and enable them to better support our girls.



Room to Read and the Nirbhaya Squad – Rajasthan Police take out an awareness rally during the #harkadambetikesang campaign in Nov 2020.

A repository of simple engagement activities based on the Family, School & Community Engagement (FSCE) modules was designed and developed to support parents to motivate and inspire them to continue their daughter's education and to engage with them during the lockdown to continue the momentum of their ward's education at home. These worksheets were geared towards creating an enabling environment at home and maintaining a focus on girls' education in the wake of the pandemic.

Keeping in mind the wide reach that radio networks have, Room to Read developed 32 interactive radio episodes based on critical life skills components to help adolescent girls and their caregivers. These radio episodes presented girls in a leadership role and demonstrated for the listeners how life skills can be applied to myriad challenges of life, including some of those which have arisen due to COVID-19 – for instance job loss of parents as well as some of the perennial issues like child protection.

Room to Read designed and developed 100 audio-visual life skills sessions. This library will ensure that life skills educators continue program implementation despite the lockdown that may still persist in various forms. Each session leaves the learner with a task helping the input graduate till an output level.

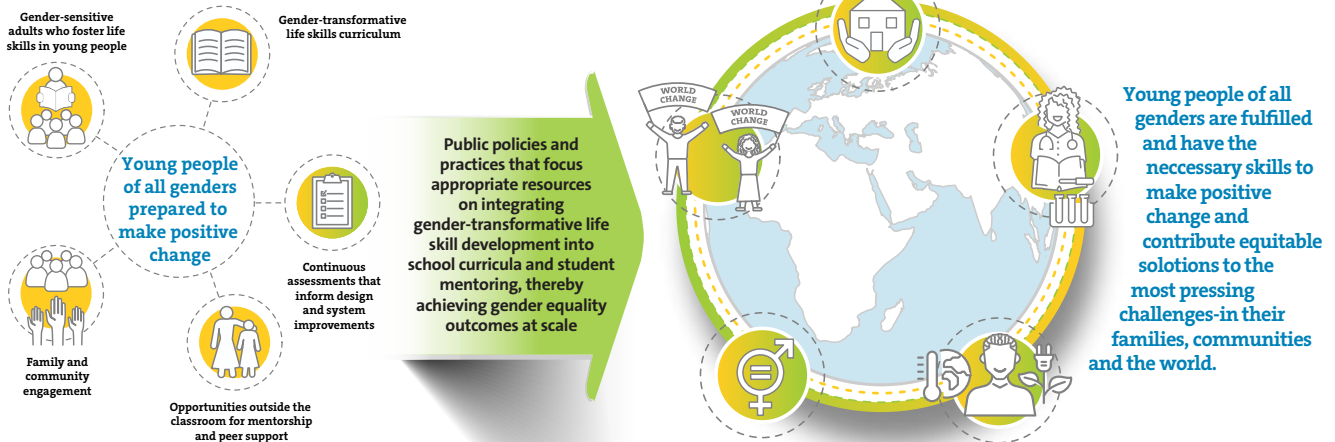
The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that self-learning is a critical component to ensure that learning and education does not stop. In line with this, Room to Read has designed and developed grade appropriate self-learning handbooks for adolescent girls. These handbooks are focused on supporting adolescent girls to engage in self-study and consists of diverse activities and methodologies based on life skills.

As part of our strategy to ensure that various mediums and interactive tools be employed to engage adolescent girls, Room to Read had designed and developed a comic series focusing on critical life skills issues. The comic series will be disseminated digitally as well as in print in 3 languages - Hindi, Marathi and Telugu in the long term. The series has 36 comic books for early as well as late adolescents.

Room to Read changed its response strategy during the pandemic. Instead of a sample targeted approach, we chose to reach out to our beneficiaries through a census approach. Material support was rolled out as solidarity support to all the girls comprising of stationery supplies, reference books and other state related contextual needs.



Girls' Education and Gender Equality



Innovation and Demonstration Approach

Room to Read partners with governments and other stakeholders to test and implement innovative models that support young people to develop gender-transformative life skills that help them succeed in school and life.

Collaboration and Expansion Approach

Through targeted technical assistance and increased cost-share, Room to Read leverages our practical experience and operational excellence to partner with governments and other stakeholders, integrating best practices into the education system in order to maximize positive outcomes for children at scale.

Room to Read's Girls' Education Program ensures that school going adolescent girls from grades 6 to 12 in low-income communities, complete secondary school and have the skills to negotiate key life decisions. The program provides participants with life skills education, family-school-community engagement, mentoring support and targeted material support through direct implementation and partnership programs with state governments. The program is being implemented in 7 states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttarakhand benefitting 47,885 girls.

Room to Read's Girls' Education Program: Strengthening girls' agency and gender equality in society

Life Skills Education (LSE) is central to Room to Read's Girls' Education Program goals. Room to Read believes that when girls have life skills they can more effectively negotiate life decisions, including the decision to stay in school, and standing up for a gender equal world. The program is designed to provide girls with life skills training, mentoring, and need-based material support, along with advocacy for girls' education among parents, school staff and communities. It is a long-term, holistic approach that goes beyond academics to build the key skills that girls need to make informed life decisions like critical thinking, negotiation and self-confidence.





A STORY OF COURAGE

Mohini's heart sank as the policemen arrested her father and brother. She could never have thought that one day she would have them arrested. As the police jeep rumbled away into the night, the young girl could not help but feel sad.

Mohini is a student in Grade IX at Govt. Higher Sr. Secondary School, Tilda Block, Raipur in the state of Chhattisgarh. She was good at her studies, inquisitive and vocal in her classes and an enthusiastic participant of the Girls' Education Program. At home, she had a loving father Tekram who worked as a carpenter and took care of her homemaker mother Raahibai and five siblings. Though not especially wealthy by any account, the family had just enough to get by. And then came COVID-19 and the consequent lockdowns.

At first, the family faced this new danger with fortitude, but as days went by things seemed to get out of hand. The family's meager savings dried up. There was hardly any income now as Tekram could no longer ply his trade, so he turned to taking loans to meet the household expenses. Soon the debts piled up too and with no relief in sight, each day seemed to become even more insufferable, Tekram turned to alcohol.





He wasn't alone. Komal, his eldest son, too gave in to alcohol being unable to cope with the stress of life in lockdown. Every evening now found Tekram and Komal inebriated. They would no longer be themselves, instead Mohini saw them use crude and hurtful language and violence became routine in the household.

Mohini recalled the sessions on legal awareness where she and her friends had interacted with law enforcement officials from the neighbourhood police station, she knew she could approach them but then she was also concerned of the implications of such a drastic step, what would people think of their family? More importantly, Mohini was worried of her mother's reaction. Mohini therefore approached the mentor she knew she could trust – her social mobiliser (SM), Yamini, appointed by Room to Read.

For Mohini the situation seemed surreal, it was as if she was watching all this happen to someone else. She saw her father and brother stand abashed in front of the policemen. She saw her mother wailing and her siblings crying as the police took her father and brother to the police station.

The policemen understood the peculiarity of the problem they faced. These were no hardened criminals and perhaps what they truly needed was some firm counselling with a night in the lockup to instill in them a healthy fear of the law. The next day, Tekram and Komal sober and abashed were released with a warning never to repeat their behaviour. Thinking of the incident, Tekram still blushes but praises Mohini for her courage, "Mohini has learnt to stand up for what is right," he remarks with a smile. Mohini has always wanted to become a police officer and the events of the past few months have only strengthened her determination.



GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM

Impact (up to Dec 31, 2020)



CUMULATIVE GIRLS
BENEFITED

71,626

Demonstration Project
22,587

Partnership Project
49,039



TOTAL ACTIVE GIRLS

47,885

Demonstration Project
13,487

Partnership Project
Chhattisgarh - 15,881
Rajasthan - 18,517



GIRLS WHO ATTENDED
LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

90%

ADVANCEMENT
RATE AMONG GIRLS
WHO STAYED IN
THE PROGRAM

97.69%



PERCENTAGE OF
SCHOLARS ENROLLED IN
TERTIARY EDUCATION

64.29%



LITERACY PROGRAM: COVID RESPONSE

The pandemic has forced schools across the world to change the overall teaching methodology, transitioning from face to face tutoring to remote learning through various radio wave technologies. Online instruction is becoming increasingly popular, but can it measure up to face-to-face teaching in terms of quality for early grade children?

Room to Read works closely with government schools in nine Indian states: Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Room to Read has come up with a short to medium term plan that involves biliterate approach of online and offline means of dissemination of learning material. Learning content is being delivered through online and offline means viz. through local cable TV network, community radio, IVR, and apps. All online material is followed by physical work sheets. The plan is working well and the response of the children as well as parents is very encouraging in our project areas.

During the pandemic, where physical access to libraries was not possible, Room to Read published its books online. To minimize the learning loss, these books were made available to children through various digital platforms. The Room to Read team converted stories from their existing titles into 236 read aloud videos that could be used by children and their parents. Developed in a variety of languages including Hindi, Kannada, Marathi and Telugu, the videos also had discussion questions for parents and children at the end, to allow children to engage with the story and understand it in depth. These videos feature some of Room to Read's best titles and were shared with parents, teachers and government officials through WhatsApp for easy accessibility.

The flip-books, developed by Room to Read in a variety of languages, were designed in a digital format for children to continue to have access to books even while at home during the pandemic. 404 flip-books were adapted to a digital format in Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada languages. The online flip-books also disseminated through the DigiLEP portal of MP Government. Apart from flip-books, 48 flip reading cards were developed in Urdu and Marathi.

The Interactive Voice Response service, available through a toll-free number, enables young children to listen to new stories every day free of cost. It can be accessed with the cheapest non-smart phone on the market and does not require Internet connectivity. This ensured that while children enjoyed the stories, it



Children learning through e-learning materials disseminated by Room to Read during the lockdown period.



also kept them engaged with learning resources. Through November 30, 2020, 482,193 calls were received from children across the country.

Room to Read developed 40 audio games in Hindi, Marathi, Kannada and Telugu based on the literacy components of phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, oral language development and writing. Reaching out to over 45,000 children across the country, these audio games were shared with parents, teachers and other government officials through WhatsApp messages for easy delivery and dissemination.

To cater to the children in far flung areas in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh where mobile and Internet connectivity is an issue, a van with books constituting a mobile library travelled across the districts of Bageshwar and Rudraprayag during the reading campaign. The van attracted children and adults alike. In Bageshwar district, the books were eagerly consumed by all. The mobile library was conceptualized as one of the means to reach out to remote areas and to encourage children to read by exposing them to good quality reading material.

The Literacy Programme developed radio and television programmes for children and parents to help provide them a comprehensive experience of language and literacy development. 24 radio episodes and 16 television episodes have been developed in Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada consisting of interesting stories, poems, tongue twisters, Phonological - Phonics and orality games, fun fact information and activities including exploration of thought and observations. While the radio episodes were aired through All India Radio Aakashvani, the television episodes were broadcast on Doordarshan Prasar Bharti and other regional television channels.

Weekly worksheets were developed for children in Grades 1 - 5. The idea was to provide resources for parents to help children in their learning at home.

The Parent Handbooks were developed with the objective of motivating parents to make their homes learning spaces for children. The handbooks demonstrated ways in which parents could use resources and surrounding areas around the home as learning tools to help develop cognitive abilities of children, while they were stuck at home during the pandemic. The parent handbooks were developed mostly in pictorial forms with conversational language in five different languages including Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Urdu and Kannada were made available to approximately 255,000 parents.

Room to Read decided to distribute the Literacy Kits physically. The Literacy Kits, combining multiple products like booklets, activity cards, handbooks and necessary stationery items were developed for children from Grade 1 - 5. Distributed to approximately 255,000 children, the kit aimed to keep children in touch with their learning resources, so that they could continue to have access to resource material at home during the pandemic. The kits were designed in five languages.





Room to Read’s Literacy Program works with teachers, schools, government officials and communities to develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children. We have not only contributed significantly to improving children’s reading abilities but have also maintained a continued inquiry in the field of literacy education.

Based on extensive field experience and scientific research, Room to Read has designed a Comprehensive Literacy Approach that ensures that children become independent and fluent readers. This is done through combining the “science” of learning with the “magic” of love of reading in an enabling environment.

World Change Starts with Educated Children®

Skilled and supported teachers

Quality and inclusive curriculum, books and learning materials

Family and community engagement

Opportunities outside the classroom to learn and grow

Continuous assessments that inform design and system improvements

Lifelong learners prepared to make positive change

Public policies and practices that focus appropriate resources toward delivering, at scale, literacy outcomes and life skills that promote gender equality*

All children are fulfilled and have the necessary skills to make positive change and contribute equitable solutions to the most pressing challenges—in their families, communities and the world.

Innovation and Demonstration Approach

Room to Read partners with governments and other stakeholders to test and implement innovative models that help children succeed in school by achieving positive literacy outcomes and life skills that promote gender equality.*

*Life skills that promote gender equality are also known as gender-transformative life skills.

Collaboration and Expansion Approach

Through targeted technical assistance and increased investment from governments, Room to Read leverages our practical experience and operational excellence to partner with governments and other stakeholders, integrating best practices into the education system in order to maximize positive outcomes for children at scale.



Room to Read' literacy program has two types of programs in the field:

- a) The library only program
- b) The comprehensive literacy program

In the states of Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana, Room to Read implements a Library Only Program, where the focus is on inculcating reading habits in children, particularly in early grades.

The comprehensive literacy model is a scientific and magical blend of systematized reading instruction and enriched library engagement. Implemented in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand, this model has explicit instruction in Grades 1 and 2 and provision of school libraries for children of Grades 1 to 5; the objective here is to ensure that children read with fluency and comprehension by the end of Grade 2.

Room to Read has circulated more than 100 million library books so far. Room to Read has a separate book publication division to develop quality reading materials.

Book Publication



In 2020, Room to Read published seven new titles, taking the tally of original publications to 212. These titles have been translated and published in five Indian languages — Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu and Kannada.

These titles were created as a part of the Authors' & Illustrators' Workshop where we invited local authors and illustrators to collaborate with us. The purpose of this workshop was to create new, engaging storybooks while building the local capacity as well.

One of our books from 2019, "Mera Tareeka" has been awarded 2nd prize in the Children's Books category at Awards for Excellence in Book Production 2020, held by the Federation of Indian Publishers.



THE LITERACY CLOUD



आपके लिए प्रस्तावित पुस्तकें

और अधिक पुस्तकें देखें >



Room to Read stepped into the digital space with the launch of our platform, Literacy Cloud. This platform enables a new generation of teachers and young learners to access original, high-quality children's book titles in their local language to help create a culture of reading.

Nearly 1,600 book titles in 24 different languages are currently available on the platform and more continue to be added all the time. These books have been produced by authors and illustrators from around the world and can be sorted and searched by the reading skill level of the child, among other criterion.

Additionally, there is also access to a library of read-aloud videos by celebrities along with friendly, accessible, professional development resources for teachers, children's book creators, members of the international publishing community and governments. Literacy Cloud aims to serve as an online knowledge hub, for all stakeholders, to promote effective foundational literacy skills among primary school children.



Children reading Flip-books during the lockdown period.



TEACHER PREVENTS LEARNING CURVE FROM BEING FLATTENED

The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge the world is facing today. With schools remaining closed and social distancing norms prevailing, the education department is trying to reach children through E-Learning material. The education department of the Madhya Pradesh (MP) government has come up with a new app E-Leap for children.

However, reaching out to children in the Sendhwa block of MP poses another challenge as the habitat is scattered and cellular network access is dismal. The village Mahariya Falya Umri, located about 30 km from the block headquarters of Sendhwa, is no different. Comprising mainly of farmers and daily wage workers with an income too meager to indulge in a phone, let alone a smart phone, it is difficult for the children and teachers of the village to access the E-learning materials.

Nemichand, a trained teacher by Room to Read comes as a ray of hope.

He starts his day at the crack of dawn to overcome the challenges posed by school lockdowns for children. He picks up age-appropriate books from the library set up by Room to Read, as per the learning levels of children and travels around the village, distributing books to children in each house. Moreover, he reads out stories to children and discusses the stories as per his training. Every second day, he takes the books back and gives a new set of books to the children. Nemichand ensures that the books are sanitized before and after the distribution.

Nemichand says, "If my efforts enhance the children's ability to read, then I will be able to justify my existence. I will not allow this pandemic to have a deleterious impact on the children of my village".

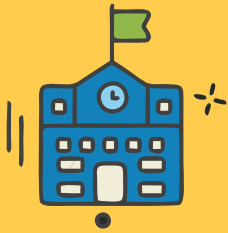
Nemichand has not allowed the education curve to be flattened for 41 children in his village. Children wake up at the rooster's crowing at the break of dawn "cock-a-doodle-doo" and eagerly await their favourite teacher every second day. He is a true teacher who has opened the windows to the world for children of this tribal village at a time when the doors have been closed to stay safe at home from the global COVID-19 pandemic.



Nemichand handing over a storybook to a young child during his visits to the village.

LITERACY PROGRAM

Impact (up to December 31, 2020)



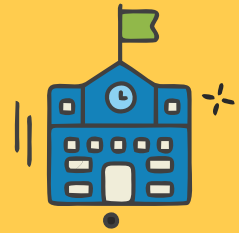
TOTAL ACTIVE SCHOOLS IN 2020

Demonstration Project
1,004
Partnership Project
3,375



CUMULATIVE LIBRARIES ESTABLISHED

9,345*



CUMULATIVE SCHOOLS

15,230

Demonstration Project
9,583
Partnership Project
5,647



TITLES PUBLISHED

212



NEW BOOK TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2020

7



NEW BOOK ADAPTATIONS IN 2020

83

Check In-Check Out of books per-student-per-year from libraries.



* This doesn't include the projects of 2020 PY as the projects are still "In progress mode."



RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Listening to Data that Matters

Tracking our progress and monitoring each individual project has been an essential part of our DNA since the very beginning of Room to Read. We are committed to putting data at the heart of an evidenced-based program design and holding ourselves accountable not just to our investors but to the children we serve across Asia and Africa who deserve the chance to become literate adults.

We focus on the data that matters. Measuring life skills or reading habits is not as straightforward as counting books and libraries. We assess progress in a large number of project schools and compare it to progress in comparable government schools. Room to Read is committed to tackling comparative assessments in order to receive honest and objective feedback about how we are doing and ways we can improve the quality and effectiveness of our programs.



GEP Reach Through 2020

Shared 14,58,239 direct messages

Reached 13,829 stakeholder
(Teachers, Girls & Parents and Govt. Officials)

Reached 969 Teachers

Reached 12,666 Girls and Parents

Reached 194 Government Officials



184 RtR staffs were engaged in content dissemination



Reached 134 Schools



Conducted Remote Mentoring with 13,385 girls



Conducted 1,01,954 Remote Mentoring sessions



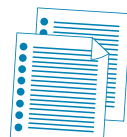
Uploaded 20 Gupshups on Government Portals



HOUSEHOLD REACH

1.7 Lakh

The number of Households / Individuals directly reached with the Literacy Content by RtR team.



NON-DIGITAL MATERIAL SHARED

6.2 Lakh non-digital materials were shared with **1.9 Lakh** children which includes hard copy books, worksheets etc

DIRECT MESSAGE SHARED

14 Million

The number of direct Messages / Emails send with the Literacy Content.



VIRTUAL TRAINING

18k hours of virtual training/support delivered to the teachers and the parents on the usages of literacy content for the primary grade children.



INDIRECT HOUSEHOLD REACH

6.5 Lakh

RTR content reached to parents by teachers and Govt officials.



T.V. PROGRAM REACH

236 Episodes were broadcast via T.V. which covers around **117 Million**.

IVR CALL

7 Lakh incoming IVR calls received and **9.4 Lakh** Outgoing IVR calls done in the year 2020.



RADIO PROGRAM REACH

325 Episodes were broadcast via radio which covers around **22.5 Million**.



Direct reach: Room to Read content reached to parents, teachers and Govt Officials directly by Room to Read (RTR) team.
Indirect Reach: Room to Read content reached to parents, teachers by Govt website & Govt officials etc .



QUOTES FROM THE FIELD



Room to Read's training helped me transform myself and only then was I able to change the lives of our girls.

- **Poonam Jilova,**
Warden KGBV Tijara, Alwar, Rajasthan



My daughter reads to me every day. It is my greatest pleasure to see her learn and grow.

- **Vikrambhai Rabari**
Nana Jhalundra Village, Gandhinagar, Gujarat



I love to go to school, I love reading books.

- **Divya,**
Grade 3, Kalyu, Bageshwar, Uttarakhand.



Life skills education helped me develop many qualities like assertive communication, critical thinking and leadership. These have helped me survive many challenging situations and made me strong enough to support my family.

- **Rambati,**
Grade 8, Gumba, Chhattisgarh



"I created a library at my home out of my fondness for books. Today, children from all over my neighbourhood come to read here and have fallen in love with reading."

- Poonam
Pahadbamudwani Village, Gandhinagar, Gujarat



PARTNERSHIPS: BUILDING BACK BETTER

Room to Read works on a scaffolded “I Do, We Do, You Do” approach, whereby we first demonstrate the model in selected government schools (Demonstration schools – I Do), then work in close collaboration with the government to scale up this model, where we support the program’s implementation (Partnership Schools – We Do), and finally, we plan a larger spread along with increased government ownership for sustainability of the approach (You Do). This intervention model has proved that if there is effective technical support and ownership from the government, then quality on a scale is not a farfetched idea.



MISSION ANKUR

Mission Ankur was launched in May 2020 with an aim to strengthen Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) delivery and outcomes by building systemic capacity to design, implement, iterate, and evaluate FLN solutions across the state of Madhya Pradesh. Mission Ankur is a joint effort by a coalition of four organisations - Room to Read, Central Square Foundation, Sol's Arc and The Education Alliance that bring distinct expertise to strengthen cross functional collaboration efforts for FLN reforms.



Mission Ankur will take a two-pronged approach towards design and delivery of FLN initiatives across the state -

1. Formation of FLN CELL for institutional FLN reform across 51 districts - FLN Cell acts as the steering body to identify the academic & systemic hurdles, self-correct & build institutional capacity at the state level. The FLN CELL will support in strategic planning for achieving FLN mission across the state as per the guidelines of MoE.
2. Innovation Districts – Apart from the state reforms, the coalition will also demonstrate FLN reforms and various innovations in three districts (Bhopal, Sehore, Shajapur) through partners. The goal of having Innovation districts is to demonstrate a set of innovations in order to leapfrog foundational learning outcomes. IDs will also provide the state government with critical research and insights for further replication across the state. The project will impact 52,862 children of Grade 1 & Grade 2 in three districts.

Room to Read will be playing the twin role of being the literacy technical partner and also will anchor the implementation of program in three innovation districts.

PROJECT VIJAYI – FUNDED BY IKEA FOUNDATION

Under Project Vijayi, Room to Read and the IKEA Foundation aim to empower girls in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh through a life-skills based intervention aiding them to complete their education, acquire critical employability skills and negotiate key life decisions that lay the foundation for successful lives for themselves, their families and ultimately for future generations.



The intervention is operational in 186 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) of Rajasthan, with life skill inputs provided to girls in grades 9-12 of these schools during this year (June 2019). In Chhattisgarh, Project Vijayi is focusing on girls from grades 6-8 in all KGBVs, Porta-Cabons, Ashramshalas and RGSM hostels. Over the course of the past few years, the project has benefited a total of 49,039 girl scholars, across the two states as part of both direct and scale-up models.

PROMOTING LITERACY AND THE HABIT OF READING AMONG CHILDREN THROUGH A SCALE UP APPROACH IN NASHIK

In October 2019, Room to Read started the district-wide scale-up library project covering all 3,277 primary schools of Nashik district. The project aims to ‘Develop Reading Habit’ and ‘Love for Reading’ for all primary grade children through establishing cluster libraries and will reach around 190,000 children in four years (October 2019 – March 2023) with a staggered approach. This project started in collaboration with DIET (District Education and Training Institute), Nashik and Education Department of Nashik and with the fund support of R.G. Manudhane Foundation for Excellence.

The key deliverables of this project are to establish 247 cluster libraries and capacity building of Kendra Pramukhs (cluster cadre) who in turn will train teachers on reading activity, library management, and support teachers during the school visits. These cluster libraries will provide access to good quality books to children through cluster library set-up and a monthly rotation of books. The project also helps in creating more quality reading materials through a series of material development workshops.



A donor visit to a library (Image taking during pre-COVID times).



SCALING UP EARLY READING INTERVENTIONS (SERI); FUNDED BY USAID



Room to Read, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development India, is implementing the Scaling Early Reading Intervention (SERI) project. Since 2015, the project has demonstrated its effectiveness in 2,662 schools in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, helping more than 350,000 children read better and trained more than 18,387 teachers with appropriate skills on how children learn to read and comprehend. In its sixth year of implementation, the project is witnessing a steady transition towards the You Do phase. This phase would involve building upon our successes and moving towards the realization of early grade literacy agenda across the states by providing necessary technical assistance. Systemic change and scale-up were always the logical culmination of SERI project which will now be accomplished with the proposed technical support. This will help to further strengthen the scalability agenda of the SERI project, thereby improving the reach and benefits of the project multi-fold.

STRENGTHENING ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP FOR EARLY READING (SALER); FUNDED BY UNICEF-MADHYA PRADESH, BARWANI



United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with Room to Read (RtR) initiated the Strengthening Academic Leadership for Early Reading (SALER) initiative in August



2018 across the Barwani district in Madhya Pradesh. The objective of SALER was to strengthen and capacitate government functionaries (including Cluster Academic Coordinators, Master Trainers and Teachers) in Early Grade Reading (EGR) so that students are able to become independent readers by end of Grade 3.

While the efforts were on track to achieve the desired outcomes, due to the pandemic related school closures in 2020, Room to Read quickly changed the programmatic inputs according to the situation on the ground. In the changed context, Room to Read was able to support the Government of Madhya Pradesh and the District administration of Barwani in the following initiatives -

- Room to Read was able to share a series of various kinds of e-content to parents using the parents WhatsApp groups created by Government under the DigiLEP initiative.
- Teachers were using the library books extensively during the Mohalla classes.
- Continuous engagement with CACs and teachers using the virtual medium.
- Interaction with parents via telephone to ensure motivation and parental engagement for learning at home.

Based on the feedback received regarding the limited reach of WhatsApp, Room to Read felt the need to provide printed worksheets to students to ensure that all students had access to such practice material. Literacy worksheets for 12 weeks were prepared with the approval of the State Government, and in partnership with District Government. Approximately 28,000 worksheets were distributed in two phases across Barwani. Additionally, in response to the long-standing requirement, Room to Read collaborated with Dr Sonali Nag, University of Oxford towards the development of a multi-lingual self-learning package for teachers. This package has been in the development process. Room to Read in partnership with state and district administration will be ensuring that this package is delivered to teachers across District Barwani in the academic year 2021-22.

WARBURG PINCUS



A Kalajatha performance concludes in Telangana.

2020 saw Room to Read starting a state-wide scale up initiative on the Girls' Education Program across the state of Telangana. Launched with support from Warburg Pincus, the state-wide program aims to use a mix of strategies to reach out to girls and key stakeholders in ensuring that girls continue to get all the required support for continuing their education. In response to the COVID-19, the initiative worked with 72 KGBVs across five districts of Gadwal, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Narayanpet and Wanaparthy through a series of other program initiatives like – the Back to School campaign, community events, district collaboration meeting, broadcasting of life-skill radio episodes, and reached out to more than 15 lakh people across the state of Telangana.

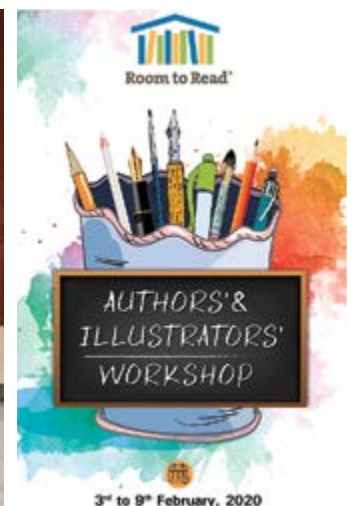


STATE EDUCATION SUMMIT- JAIPUR



The 24th of January 2020, the National Girl Child Day marked another step in the quest to provide access to quality education to children everywhere in India. On this auspicious occasion, the Minister of State for Education, Govind Singh Dotsara unveiled two simple but consequential documents - the Teacher's Handbook (THB) and Students' Handbook (SHB) at the State Education Summit in Jaipur. The event was attended by a diverse array of stakeholders - top officials from the Department of Education, District Education Officers (DEO)/Assistant Project Coordinators (APC) from all 33 districts of the state as well as representatives from over 14 partner NGOs gathered on one platform to discuss the issue afflicting education in India.

AUTHORS' AND ILLUSTRATORS' WORKSHOP 2020



High quality children's literature is a prerequisite for early grade literacy. Unfortunately, this is a scarcity in India's basic education sector. Therefore, every year, Room to Read India Trust's Quality Reading Materials department organises a seven-day Authors' & Illustrators' workshop. Every year Room to Read India Trust invites selected authors and illustrators and guides them as they create books with young readers in mind. This year, we are pleased to say, the workshop produced seven new titles taking the total number of titles produced so far to 212!

FLOTUS MELANIA TRUMP VISITS ROOM TO READ LIBRARY IN GOVERNMENT OF DELHI'S HAPPINESS SCHOOL



Room to Read's approach to learning is distinguished by its emphasis on the joy and magic that is central to the act of learning. Not surprisingly, more and more governments across the country have come forward to partner with Room to Read to train teachers and to establish Room to Read libraries in government run schools. One of these is the State Government of Delhi which invited the then FLOTUS Melania Trump to visit a Room to Read library and a Happiness class at Sarvodaya Co-Ed Senior Secondary School, Nanakpura in Delhi on the 24th of February 2020.

CELEBRATING OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY WITH OUR FIRST EVER VIRTUAL GALA IN INDIA: "IMAGINE!"

In 2020, Room to Read's virtual gala series, IMAGINE, united our supporters around the world with one shared goal: making education for every child a reality. The galas swept the globe from North America, to Australia, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore, onwards to the Middle East, India, and then the UK and Switzerland.

We were thrilled to host the IMAGINE virtual gala for India on 30th October 2020. It was an exceptionally uplifting, inspirational and heart-warming evening with audiences witnessing a spectacular glimpse into our work in India. The live-streamed event, which was sponsored by Bloomberg, included inspirational performances and messages by business leaders, entertainers, authors, influencers and Room to Read beneficiaries who shared how they continue to pursue their education – and their dreams – despite the global pandemic.



We were pleased to have more than 140 attendees join the celebration with a great mix of audiences including Room to Read's Board Members, long standing corporate and individual partners, new contacts being introduced to the Room to Read family, our friends from the diaspora community and our key media partners in the region. We were so grateful to have raised over INR 3.7 crore (over US \$500,000), to support the education of bright young learners in low-income communities across India. We thank the India Regional Board for making our 2020 India Gala a tremendous success and for their incredible commitment to the mission.



THE READING CAMPAIGN



Room to Read India Trust organized a reading campaign from 15th August, 2020 to 8th September, 2020 to sustain reading habits among primary students during these unpredictable times. During the campaign, reading content was shared with 3,57,592 students and their families, as well as 31,512 teachers across 96 districts in nine states across the country through radio, mobile libraries, interactive voice response systems, social media and WhatsApp. To make the campaign commitment driven, Room to Read India Trust launched the hashtag #PledgeReadingTime on 24th August 2020 where Room To Read asked the government agencies, donors, school children and the public at large to pledge for reading and experience the joy of reading.

#HARKADAMBETIKESANG CAMPAIGN



The COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to traditional modes of schooling. Assessments predicted that the pandemic stood to undo 70 years of progress in the field of girls' education. It was time for a deeper commitment to girls' education at every level.

In solidarity with girl students across the globe, Room to Read launched the #harkadambetikesang campaign from 8th October, 2020 to 30th November, 2020 around the issue. The campaign reached out to all stakeholders to fuel commitments towards girl child education and ensure that no girl would leave school due to the pandemic. Through a series of webinars, the campaign reignited nationwide discussions and debates on the issues facing girls' education in the country. The campaign reached 193,243 people through different activities like on-ground activation exercises, virtual engagement and reflection exercises, while 65,969,500 people were reached through the radio networks.



EDUCATION ENDURES – BACK TO SCHOOL A NDTV CAMPAIGN



In December 2020, Room to Read India, in association with NDTV, launched “Education Endures: Back to School.” Over the course of four weeks, NDTV India and Room to Read captured and presented six incredible stories of change. The campaign also included two half-hour shows on NDTV India and NDTV 24x7 focused on the Literacy Program and the Girls’ Education Program which featured Bhupesh Baghel, the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Actors Anil Kapoor and Nandita Das along with Room to Read India Country Director Sourav Banerjee, decision makers and subject experts.

ET NOW COLLABORATION

Room to Read in partnership with ET Now organized a one-hour webinar on “Reading as a Critical Skill.” The webinar panel included Author, Commentator & Public Intellectual - Gurcharan Das, Journalist, Author & Columnist - Jug Suraiya, Faculty Member, Azim Premji University - Dr. Shailaja Menon and Project Director, Room to Read India – Saktibrata Sen. It was followed by the publication of an article “Reading as a Critical Skill” in all 16 editions of Economic Times, the highest circulated business newspaper in India.



GIRLS' EDUCATION ENDURES-A WEBINAR


Organised on 3rd December, 2020, the Room to Read webinar “Girls’ Education Endures” witnessed the participation of Dr. Erin Murphy – Graham, Associate Adjunct Professor, Graduate School of Education, University of Berkley, California as the Keynote Speaker and Ms. Lucina Di Meco, Sr. Director, Girls’ Education Program, Room to Read Global Office, San Francisco who gave the Special Address. The panel included Ms. Vrinda Swarup, Ex-Secretary, Dept. of School Education & Literacy; Dr. Jyotsna Jha, Director, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru; Dr. Suman Sachdeva, Education Specialist, UNICEF, Delhi; Professor Mona Yadav, Head - Gender Studies, NCERT and Room to Read Alumna - Ms. Kamala Bisht. The session was moderated by Puja Trisal, Director, Program Operations, Room to Read India. The webinar took stock of the next immediate steps that needed commitment and action to ensure that India’s progress in the area of girls’ education was not lost due to the pandemic. The participants discussed the empowerment approach of interventions in girls’ education during the health emergency, gender responsive strategies in multi-stakeholder initiatives on girls’ education and examined policy prescriptions in the context of eroding girl’s education.



NAVIGATING LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN A WORLD WITH NEW NORMAL



The India Gets Reading campaign ended with an international webinar, the highlight of which was a key note address by Dr. Maryanne Wolf, an expert on literacy in a digital culture. The UCLA Distinguished Visiting Professor of Education said, “My ideal world does not include total digital online learning for early grades. We are all uncertain what is best for our children. I know many people will be forced to go online for the whole time during the COVID-19 pandemic, I understand that, but that should not be the “IN Thing”. We don’t want “IN Thing” in education. We want education based on research. That gives us the best chance for the best learning. Dr. Wolf emphasized on the urgent need of a new pedagogy for early grade language learning in the new normal digital age as the pandemic has wreaked havoc on the education system. She further added about the consequences of digital online education in early grades, “if reading largely changes to adapt to digital characteristics: we will reduce deep reading, with less time to grasp complexity, to understand another’s feelings, to perceive beauty, and to appreciate our cultural heritage. That is why we need to have biliterate approach to early childhood education that means combination of digital and print medium.”



OPINION

Girls and boys need equal tech access

Among the stark consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps the most visible and immediate impact has been in the field of education. Schools were ordered to shut overnight for an indefinite period to prevent children from getting infected as social distancing emerged as, and still is, the most effective solution to contain the virus' spread.

Advanced institutions quickly turned digital, providing learning and online tools to meet education requests. Virtual classrooms were promptly created where students from kindergarten to higher grades continued through a chain of online conferencing platforms, attending classes from homes. Teachers, too, were not left behind, when the physical classroom will again be filled with the curiosity of eager students, the next best alternative, therefore, was to adapt to the virtual world.

Over the last several months, students, teachers, parents, and schools actively adapted to the new world of screen-based learning from homes. The pedagogical quality of such a system is a matter of debate, but standard teaching spans across the last millennium where schools continued to remain shut.

The clearest argument favouring such an approach is that, at the very least, it establishes continuity in education, even if it is marginalised. There is no denying the fact that a wide digital divide can occur as

A powerful force to spread literacy and build a knowledge-based society. For the disadvantaged and the marginalised, education opens a whole new array of opportunities.

While, on the face of it, there can be no dispute over imparting education digitally given the current conditions, there is a more essential question that needs deeper scrutiny to define, create teaching involving the gender issue against girl students.

A few data points can be helpful to examine this. According to 'The World Gender Gap Report 2020' of the Economic Intelligence Foundation (EiF), a few data points can be helpful to examine this. According to 'The World Gender Gap Report 2020' of the Economic Intelligence Foundation (EiF), a few data points can be helpful to examine this.

... (text continues with similar repetition) ...



Girls and boys need equal tech access for online school classes

A strong political will and sharp policies are the need of the hour to bridge this gap swiftly before it becomes an issue of grave social prejudice.

By Sourav Banerjee
PUBLISHED ON DEC 25, 2020 05:20 PM IST



According to The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020 of Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA) that represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, only half of the women in India use mobile internet compared to men—21% among of women compared to 42% of men (HTPHOTO)

Among the many consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps the most visible and immediate impact has been in the field of education. Schools were ordered to shut for an indeterminate period to prevent children from getting infected as social distancing emerged as, and still is, the most-effective solution to contain the virus' spread.

How This 9th Standard Student Stopped A Minor Girl's Marriage In Her Village

By Room to Read | In: Back To School, Child Rights, Education, Staff Picks, Women Empowerment | 20th October, 2020 | More from Room to Read




How Did a 15-Year-Old From Chhattisgarh Help Her Family Stay Afloat During COVID-19?

The preparations of a Sangeet (Musical ceremony) and Mehandi (Henna) Ceremony were in full swing when a police vehicle with a wailing siren screeched to a halt in front of the house. The cop knocked on the door of the Shah family, bringing the preparations within to a screeching halt.

This cascade of events was not into motion during the lockdown, when Roshni, a grade IX student from the girl's education program of Tilda Block of Raipur district of Chhattisgarh, started spending time at home discussing various topics with her mother. One day, her mother informed her about the upcoming marriage of a girl in their village. Roshni got lost in her thoughts about, Mehandi, sangeet, and good food... something to

This campaign ensures pandemic does not impact girls' education

Nisreen Niaz | THE11 Updated: Nov 21, 2020, 09:59 IST



RAIPUR: To ensure education to girls belonging to low income groups, 'Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang, School Chootne Ne Denge Hum', a national level campaign is being organised in the state. The campaign is conceptualized by Room to Read International NGO, and is run with the collaboration of state government.

Amid the ongoing pandemic, a lot of girls have dropped education in the rural areas. Acknowledging the same, in October, Room to Read, launched a campaign to sensitize the community towards girls education.



No lockdown on learning

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in India and other countries by focusing on early literacy and gender equality in education. Its collaborations with local communities, partner organisations and governments to ensure that primary school children can become independent readers equipped with the skills and habit of reading and girls can complete secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions.





Learning in a post-Covid world

How will children at a learning stage alongside the school, reaping benefits? Development in helping children develop a habit of learning.





Room to Read's journey towards building foundational literacy in India

By [Name] | Updated: Dec 20, 2020, 10:41 AM



As they say, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. It's a similar story with Room to Read, that launched its operations in India in 2003 as one of the very few NGOs in the country that were focused on building foundational literacy skills and reading habits. Over years, the initiative has gained momentum and is today the largest operating program for the organization.

There is a critical need for foundational literacy and numeracy, according to India's pioneering National Education Policy 2020. The policy notes, "The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an essential prerequisite for all other cognitive and physical learning."

Importance Of Developing Reading Abilities And Habits In Children In Early Grades

The ability to read and write in early grades can determine the future of a child and the nation.



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

(from past 20 years)



Great Place to Work for 6 consecutive years (2015-2020); National Commission for Protection of Child Rights Certificate of Excellence (2017); The Way Forward Award (2008); United Way Worldwide Grant funded by Target (2016); The Scale Readiness Award (2019); The Laadli Media & Advertising Award for Gender Sensitivity 2015-2016 (Northern Region); Recognition for Technical, Financial and Moral Support from Himachal Pradesh Voluntary Health Association (2013); The Federation of Indian Publishers Awards for Excellence in Book Production (Second Prize) (2019); The Times of India Special Impact Awards; CSR Excellence Awards (2017).



FINANCIALS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF ROOM TO READ INDIA April 2019 to March 2020

Support & Revenue	(Figures in INR)			
Support & Revenue	2019-20 (%)	2018-19 (%)	2019-20	2018-19
Project & General Fund	14.81%	18.35%	10,10,96,658	12,17,70,525
Grant Revenue:				
Room To Read US	51.22%	39.19%	34,96,08,783	26,01,12,043
UN Agencies	2.39%	1.70%	1,63,18,209	1,12,98,135
USAID India	7.30%	14.31%	4,98,51,323	9,49,62,340
Corporations	15.89%	17.85%	10,84,51,148	11,84,46,073
Foundations	7.28%	6.29%	4,96,99,665	4,17,36,926
Donations (Individuals)	0.11%	1.19%	7,29,408	78,86,041
Investment Income	1.00%	1.12%	68,25,689	74,40,472
Total of Support & Revenue	100%	100%	68,25,80,883	66,36,52,554
Operating & Administrative Expenses	2019-20 (%)	2018-19 (%)	2019-20	2018-19
Program Expenses:				
Literacy Program	47.49%	52.72%	26,56,33,120	29,66,01,989
Girls' Education Program	23.05%	19.09%	12,89,37,165	10,74,06,583
Book Publishing Program	1.81%	2.71%	1,01,14,319	1,52,20,614
Indirect Expenses	25.27%	23.54%	14,13,79,985	13,24,04,969
Fund Raising Expenses	2.38%	1.94%	1,33,33,681	1,09,21,741
Total of Operating & Administrative Expenses	100%	100%	55,93,98,270	56,25,55,896
Bank and Cash Balances including deposits and advances	100%	100%	12,31,82,613	10,10,96,658

The financials are extracted from the Audited Report and its annexures for the year ended 2019-20 and 2018-19.



Children reading from books distributed by a mobile library in Uttarakhand.



TRUSTEE AND LEADERSHIP TEAM

A. TRUSTEES



Geetha Murali
Trustee



Yashvinee Adarkar
Trustee



Apala Majumdar and Pooja Vinayak Sharma
representing Room to Read India Private Limited



B. INDIA REGIONAL BOARD

Room to Read is honored to have a group of distinguished, committed and thoughtful members on the India Regional Board to help guide our strategic growth and impact in India. The board has helped advocate the work of Room to Read through network introductions, stewardship events and resource development throughout the year. The members of the India Regional Board include: Board Chair Gaurav Dalmia, Chairman of Dalmia Group Holdings; Jitu Virwani, Chairman and Managing Director of Embassy Group; Khozem Merchant, Partner – India Head at Brunswick Group; Mickey Doshi, Managing Director and Country CEO of Credit Suisse India; Ravi Raheja, Group President of K Raheja Corp; Sumati Raheja, General Manager – Legal, K Raheja Corp. The invaluable guidance and direction provided by the board has been crucial as Room to Read enters a new era in 2020 with Room to Read’s 20th anniversary and the official launch of our new strategic plan, Vision 2025.



From left to right: **Khozem Merchant, Geetha Murali, Mickey Doshi, Sumati Raheja, Gaurav Dalmia, Ravi Raheja, Jitu Virwani**



C. LEADERSHIP TEAM



From left to right: Program Operations Director - **Puja Trisal**, Programs Director - **Saktibrata Sen**, Finance Director - **Jitender Bansal**, Deputy Country Director - **Poornima Garg**, Sr. Admin Manager - **Gagandeep Puri**, Country Director - **Sourav Banerjee**, Communication Manager - **Sanjay Singh**



Protik Banarjee
State Coordinator
Chhattisgarh



Roopak Chauhan
Field Manager
Delhi and Uttar Pradesh



Raja Sekhar
Field Manager
Gujarat and Maharashtra



Rajesh Patel
Field Manager
Karnataka and Telangana



Yeshvardhan Uniyal
State Coordinator
Madhya Pradesh



Nishant Shrivastava
State Coordinator
Rajasthan



Pushplata Rawat
Field Manager
Uttarakhand



Donors Speak

“

I can't emphasize enough that education for children is transformational. And I know that Room to Read is uniquely positioned to solve illiteracy and gender inequality. The strong commitment of the Room to Read Board on achieving results and a culture of innovation ensures the programs are of high quality and continue to evolve. I was impressed to see how swiftly the programs were pivoted to address the education emergency caused by the pandemic during this uncertain year.

Mickey Doshi
CEO,
Credit Suisse India

”



“

Room to Read is our education partner for providing a reading and literacy program for 19 Government Schools in Bangalore and Mumbai, aimed at transforming our students into independent learners. It's been extremely rewarding to align with an organization who also strongly believes that education empowers the next generation, providing them with the skills to thrive now and in the future.

Shaina Ganapathy
Head of Community Outreach,
Embassy Group

”

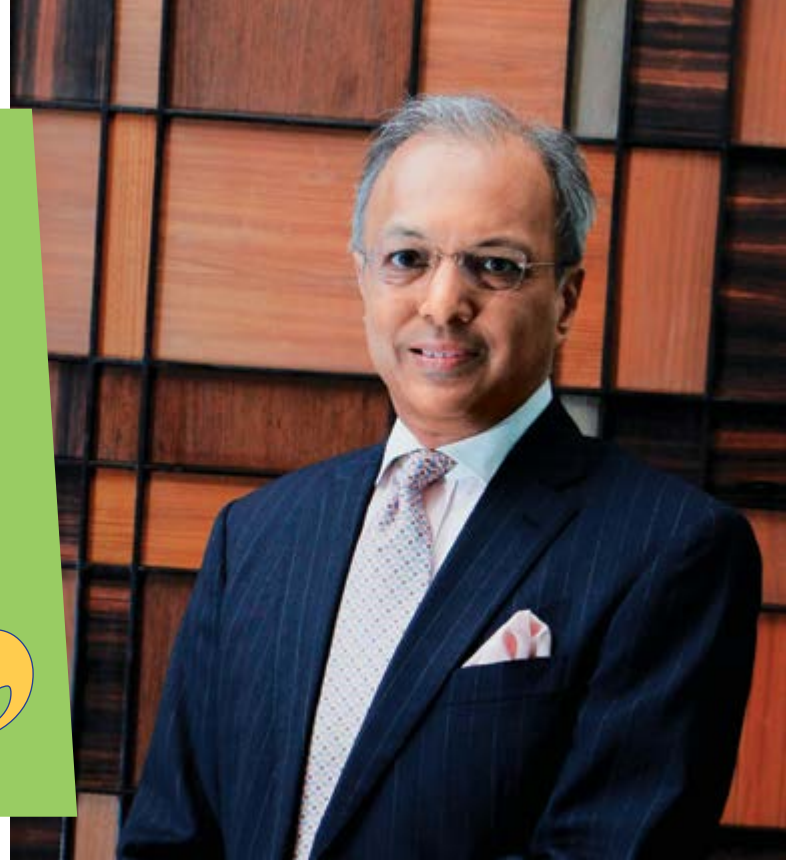


“

It is a well-known fact that education is the magic potion out of poverty. Less well known is the fact that girl's education is probably the best investment societies can make for improving their social and economic indicators. Room to Read's experience globally, it's template, and its focus are a gift to our country. I am both proud and humbled to see all the good work that is going on. "Build Back Better" may be a new American phrase but should be our rallying cry as well.

Gaurav Dalmia
Chairman,
Dalmia Group Holdings

”



“

Since 2014, Bank of America and the Room to Read partnership has established 230 new school libraries in government primary schools in Delhi, Maharashtra and Hyderabad. This program enable children to develop good reading habits. The bank supports their Girls' Education Program, helping 1,205 girls to complete secondary school and have the skills for key life decisions. Working together Room to Read reached over 47,500 children through its Literacy and Girls' Education Program.

Devesh Mathur,
Chief Operating Officer,
Global Business Services, Bank of America

”



“

BNP Paribas group entities supported our Girls' Education Program across India in 2020 through their corporate social responsibility grants and employee engagement. This partnership has helped more than 2667 girls to succeed in secondary school and develop key life skills.

Franciska Decuyper
Head of Territory,
BNP Paribas India

”



KEY DONORS

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Bank of America - BA Continuum India Pvt Ltd

Bloomberg

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The Hans Foundation

Trent Limited

UBS India

UNICEF

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

UPS SCS (India) Pvt. Ltd.



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