

*Complementing  
UN World Food Programme's  
'School Feeding Programme'*

## **LITERACY PROJECT IN COX'S BAZAR**



**Room to Read®**

Bangladesh is climbing the human development index, and poverty is in the decline. However, the country must address several challenges. In primary education, near-universal enrolment has been achieved, but the quality of teaching and literacy scores are low. Unfortunately, almost 8% of primary school teachers never receive any training, nearly 20% of children drop out of primary school, and resource materials that appeal to early-grade learners are either inadequate or absent (ASPR 2017).

**To assist the Bangladesh Government in meeting its education targets set out in SDG 4, UN World Food Programme (WFP) is implementing their ‘School Feeding Programme’ that combines improving health and nutrition, as well as literacy, for children in pre-primary and primary schools.**

Room to Read Bangladesh has been entrusted with improving the literacy of children in Ukhiya and Kutubdia, two upazilas of Cox’s Bazar. To build the capacity of teachers to deliver expert classroom instruction and support head teachers and relevant local government officials with

governance, transparency and management practices, Room to Read will deliver engaging, relevant, and evidence-based training. Our goal is to create an enabling environment that complements WFP’s health and nutrition program, while creating lifelong readers.

Room to Read is funded through WFP and USDA’s McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The project spans three years and will culminate in December 2020. The project reaches 135 government primary schools and 11 *Ebtedayee* madrasas. Additionally, Room to Read will provide technical support to Muslim Aid in Ukhiya and to YPSA in Kutubdia sub-districts of Cox’s Bazar.



## Project's target numbers:

146 primary schools & madrasas  
45,012 early-grade school children  
841 teachers of Grades 1 - 5  
146 head-teachers (and SMC)  
146 community mobilizers  
20 PTI & URC instructors

877 classroom libraries  
10 new storybooks  
102 RtR storybooks in reprint  
544,544 storybooks for libraries  
49,725 pupil books & other materials  
45,012 sets of classroom supplies

Room to Read is developing and distributing classroom instructional manuals for Bangla teachers of grades 1 and 2. We are also establishing classroom libraries, which are reading corners equipped with locally relevant, age-appropriate, illustration-rich storybooks. Our target is to incorporate these books into classroom-based teaching instruction to enhance learning. Additionally, local writers and

illustrators will develop ten storybooks with characters and compositions that relate to Cox's Bazar.

Teacher training on effective reading and writing instruction will be delivered. We will also cover library management best practices and effective pedagogical approaches. Literacy-focused events will be organized as well.

**We have a dream that all children will grow a fondness for reading and become lifelong, independent, fluent readers. To that end, we have set a few milestones for the project:**

At least of 35% students completing grade 2 will be able to read a minimum of 45 words a minute – a literacy standard relevant for Bangladesh. Moreover, students will be able to answer 4 or more (of 5) comprehension questions from a story they have read independently. By the end of the project, students will have grown an interest for reading. We expect to see at least 70% of students checking out 10 storybooks a year.

By improving the quality of literacy teaching and providing relevant and interesting storybooks, we hope to increase the number of students reading at grade level and to reduce student dropout. Based on our interventions in similar contexts, we believe that students will grow more confident and passionate about reading as evidenced by high usage of the classroom libraries. Furthermore, our work building the capacity of SMCs will ensure sustainable and continued positive impact of the literacy interventions.

**Founded in 2000 on the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children<sup>®</sup>, Room to Read's innovative model focuses on deep, systemic transformation within schools in low-income communities during two time periods that are most critical in a child's schooling: early primary school for literacy acquisition & secondary school for girls' education.**

We work in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations, and governments to develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children and ensure girls can complete secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions. Room to Read has benefited 16.6 million children across more than 30,000 communities in 16 countries. In Bangladesh, we have worked in 5 districts (now 4).

2009-2018 figures  
from Bangladesh:

- 1,206 government primary schools reached via Literacy Program (LP)
- 301,500 children supported with diverse literacy focused interventions
- 5,630 teachers trained on Bangla reading instruction & library mgt.
- 5,700 classroom libraries established in 1,126 govt. primary schools
- 122 Bangla storybooks published (+800 thousand copies distributed)
- 4,286 girls supported through the Girls' Education Program (GEP)

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