



School Libraries

Fostering a habit of reading, one library at a time



“Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.”



– Kofi Annan,
former United Nations
Secretary-General

In order for children to become independent readers, effective communicators and lifelong learners, they need time to practice and exposure to a variety of texts. With age-appropriate reading material extremely scarce in developing countries, many children are expected to learn to read using only a single textbook. **Our school libraries fill that void, providing both access to engaging reading material and a safe space to learn and play.**

Building a safe, child-friendly space

In many communities, the school library is the only place designed around the needs of children. It is vital that the library facilitates effective learning, socialization skills and play. Although our libraries come in all shapes and sizes, they share a few common traits, including educational puzzles and games, child-sized furniture, colorful, print-rich decorations and shelves full of local-language books.

Putting the library in place is only the first step. Once it's complete, we work with school administration to ensure that children have ample time during school to explore the new resource and train teachers to effectively utilize the library materials to support the curriculum. This training and support continues for three years to ensure students best benefit from the new library.

Community investment

Each community is challenged to invest in its new library. Parents, community leaders, and school administration contribute to the project by providing labor and materials. The completed library is owned and operated entirely by the community in partnership with the local Ministry of Education, who are responsible for all upkeep and staffing. Room to Read provides three years of initial training along with ongoing support to get the library up and running, and lay the foundation for long-term sustainability.

Our flexible, focused approach provides educators with a solid foundation in library management in addition to opportunities for informal, on-the-spot training.

Books for everyone

Room to Read libraries are stocked with a variety of locally-relevant books designed to capture the imagination of young readers. We classify storybooks, nonfiction texts and chapter books by reading level so that all readers can find materials at their level and continue to improve their budding literacy skills. As students' reading skills improve, they can move up the scale and find new books to challenge their minds and engage their curiosity.



Access to resources

In places where community libraries or internet access are non-existent, Room to Read libraries serve as one of the few resources for independent learning and information-gathering for curious young minds. Our goal is to provide a variety of content to children in these communities, covering a myriad of themes including: gender equality, the environment, health, art, beginning words and basic vocabulary, morals and values, family life, folktales, rhymes and poems.

Our results

Room to Read has established more than 15,000 great new school libraries in developing countries since the year 2000. We have stocked them with a variety of bright, colorful, locally-relevant materials to inspire and encourage young minds. Our in-country teams staffed by local nationals have also provided them with three years of professional development, training, and mentorship to aid their success. More than six million children have benefitted from these libraries during the three years of support each library receives from Room to Read. With your help, we can continue to bring these great resources to more children across the developing world.

	Libraries established through 2012	New in 2013 (projected)		Libraries established through 2012	New in 2013 (projected)
Bangladesh	375	90	South Africa	359	45
Cambodia	1,537	120	Sri Lanka	1,431	152
India	5,765	574	Tanzania	15	15
Laos	1,065	49	Vietnam	672	95
Nepal	3,446	185	Zambia	432	35

Libraries established: **15,097**



Give with confidence. Room to Read has received seven consecutive Charity Navigator four star ratings for best charities. We take pride in our transparency and accountability.

Have questions?
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