



# Room to Read

## Annual Report 2010

**1 VISION FOR WORLD CHANGE.  
10 YEARS OF IMPACT.**

(And we're just getting started.)



# 1 DREAM





# We dream in dozens of languages.

It began in 1998 with a visit by John Wood to a Nepali school where the library shelves held no children's books. It became a dream of many that every child—regardless of where they were born—could receive an education. A decade later, Room to Read is a movement to be reckoned with. We will not stop until the dream becomes a reality.

Because it's not just our dream. We share it with the children whose lives are changed by our programs. On a recent trip to South Africa, Erin Ganju asked a 3rd grade class, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Ernest dreams of being a school principal. Victoria wants to be a police woman. Bruno will become a doctor...who plays professional soccer.

How do we keep these aspirations within every child's reach? First, we ensure that each library we establish is a learning environment filled with colorful, culturally- and age-appropriate local language books. Next, we train librarians, work with schools to become more child-friendly and provide materials to help educators teach reading. Last, but not least, we engage with parents, extended families and the surrounding community to encourage a supportive learning environment so that each child can thrive.

Boshiron Begum from Bangladesh is one of those parents who is dreaming big for her daughter, Asia. "Room to Read's support is encouraging me to hope for a different future for Asia," she says. "Her older sisters were not educated because we could not afford it. Asia wants to become a teacher like her father and I know that with an education, she can accomplish this and have a better life." Asia, age 12, added, "I want to set an example for others in my community, including my sisters, and show them how school can help you reach your dreams."

# A Letter from the Founder and Board Co-Chair



**Dear Friends,**

One of my favorite children's stories is one that Room to Read published in Sri Lanka in 2006. *Baby Fish Goes to School* is a simple but inspiring tale of a

young goldfish who wishes he could go to school with his animal friends. He is dismayed to learn the sad reality—since the school is on land, it is off limits for the water-bound fish. Fortunately, the animal scholars, led by Baby Rabbit, are not willing to settle for this injustice. Convening a brainstorming meeting, they decide to buy a fishbowl to scoop up Baby Fish and take him to enjoy his first day in the classroom.

The happy ending brings a smile, while also sending a clear message about the importance of finding solutions to educational barriers. Every day, our local teams find ways to run, jump or swim over, around or through the obstacles in their paths. At Room to Read, we believe all children want to learn. No child should be told, “You were born in the wrong place, at the wrong time, to the wrong parents, and therefore you do not get educated.”

As you will see in this report, we've brainstormed a lot of “fishbowls” during our first decade.

A personal highlight from my 2010 travels was celebrating this milestone anniversary year by visiting all nine countries where Room to Read runs education programs. From the mountains of Nepal to rural Zambian villages, from the slums of Delhi to remote river islands of Bangladesh, what I saw confirmed that one of the best attributes of Room to Read is our ability to put the right people in the right places. Our local teams work tirelessly, passionately and professionally to help millions of children gain the opportunities and hope for a brighter future that only an education can provide.

Whether in a car, riverboat or tuk-tuk traveling through remote areas, our local teams often ask me questions about our investors. “John, who are these people that care so much about children in Bangladesh,” our Country Director, Zaki Hasan, asked me one day. “How do you convince people in the wealthy areas of the world to care about girls living thousands of miles away in the most resource-deprived part

of a very poor nation?” My face lit up as I answered because I am so proud of the global network of investors and fundraising chapters we have built in these 10 years. I can spend hours telling our local teams about families who decide to honor loved ones by dedicating a school or libraries to them, of chapter events where attendees are asked to “raise your paddle” for literacy and gender equality in education, and of companies that make us part of their Corporate Social Responsibility campaigns.

This is all part of the magic of Room to Read: the connections we make between those who have resources and are committed to building a better world, and those teams on the ground equally dedicated to realizing that vision. I honestly (but humbly) believe that we have created one of the best teams on the planet, positioning us to make an even bigger impact in our second decade.

So it's with great pride that I introduce my newest esteemed partner, Tim Koogle, Yahoo! Founding CEO, who in 2011 joins me as co-chair of the global board of directors for Room to Read. Tim's connection with Room to Read is one of pure fate and instant bonding. He discovered my book in a small bookstore and was introduced to me soon after by his wife. Tim brings not only a lifetime of entrepreneurial wizardry, but also a commitment to providing educational opportunities to all children. Education opened the door for his own personal fulfillment and success, and he is determined that every child have the same chance.

Conquering illiteracy is a monumental task that requires an army of leaders around the globe. I can confirm that we have the leaders in place to continue to surmount whatever blockades to learning the world's children face. Together, with your continued support, we will fill as many fishbowls as we must to ensure that every Baby Fish gets to school.

**John Wood**  
Founder and Board Co-Chair

# A Letter from the Co-Founder and CEO



**Dear Friends,**

Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” As

we celebrate our 10th year in 2010, which included the opening of our 10,000th library and the enrollment of our 10,000th girl into the Girls’ Education program, we know that we are making a profound difference in the lives of millions of children in the developing world. These accomplishments are the result of the combined efforts of Room to Read and its growing global network of investors, staff, volunteers, governments, partners, and communities—all dedicated to promoting literacy and gender equality in education.

Last year Room to Read’s 2010-2014 Global Strategic Plan was launched and we are excited to report strong progress was made across our organization as we focus on enhancing literacy and gender equality in education. Central to this vision is the design and implementation of innovative pilot literacy programs, which complement our existing work of establishing libraries, publishing local language children’s books and building schools. The pilots ensure that students have access to the appropriate materials and receive quality early-grade reading instruction from well-trained teachers. During my visit to a first grade classroom in Zambia, where a pilot is underway, the teacher praised our reading skills instruction methods as more effective than others he’d used during his career. Thanks to Room to Read workbooks, his students are learning faster, and fewer are falling behind. He noted, “I wish every school in Zambia could have this program immediately.”

Also guided by our new strategic vision is our Girls’ Education program, which is committed to ensuring that girls have an equal opportunity to attend and complete secondary school, and gain the necessary skills to negotiate key life decisions. We continue to evaluate which interventions in girls’ education result in the greatest impact, and assess how and why these lead to broader social outcomes, such as increased gender equality in schools and communities. Given the important role that families and school staff play in

girls’ lives, we have begun to add new elements to the program, such as more extensive community engagement and teacher awareness training to reduce gender biases in the classroom.

In 2010, Room to Read also increased our focus on ensuring that girls in our program receive more life skills training and mentoring, as they play a major role in helping girls remain in secondary school and prepare for the important transitions into their adult lives. A key innovation was our life skills competency framework, which will help us evaluate how girls are developing communication, problem-solving, decision-making, self-awareness and critical thinking skills. I attended a life skills training workshop in Vietnam last summer and was excited to see how this part of our Girls’ Education program is evolving. To hear the newly found confidence with which these girls conveyed their future goals underscored the benefits of creating a safe place for girls to gather and bond.

I invite you to take a moment to read this year’s annual report to experience how your investment with us has impacted so many lives. With your support, Room to Read is well positioned to make great strides in our second decade. That said, we still have some big “tens” ahead, including distributing our 10 millionth book, launching our 10th country of operation (Tanzania) and reaching 10 million children through our programs.

In the words of Frederick Douglass, “Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” What greater lasting impact can we have than to support children in their pursuit of education and the freedom it provides to take control of their own destiny? Whether that freedom comes when a child’s mind soars while intently reading a book, or when an educated girl enters the workforce to secure economic independence, education’s power to transform lives is undeniable. All of us at Room to Read thank you for your generous support, and ask that you continue to partner with us in providing even more children access to a quality education—access to freedom.

*Erin Ganju*

**Erin Ganju**  
*Co-founder and CEO*





10  
COUNTRIES

## Well, almost ten.

We started in Nepal and gradually expanded, first to Vietnam, then Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka and Laos. A new continent followed, with launches in South Africa and Zambia. Our newest country, Bangladesh, will soon be joined by Tanzania—number 10—slated for a launch of programs in 2012.

Country offices in each location are staffed only by local people, because doing so makes both our education programs and our commitment to building a skilled workforce sustainable for the long term. Somphet Phongphachanh, country director for Room to Read Laos since 2005, has played a key role in the success of our programs. What keeps her passion fueled? “My mission is Room to Read’s mission—to help the children of my country get an education and change their lives. Room to Read gives me a place to work and help more children each year.”

Al O’Connor, a co-founder of Opportunity-for-All, visited Laos in 2010. “Somphet is one of the most passionate individuals I have ever met,” he says. “Her energy and dedication are unbelievable.” Opportunity-for-All has funded 16 schools in Laos and Sri Lanka since its launch in 2009. “I’ve visited many developing countries. But my experience in Laos was special. Talking with the parents in the villages where we built schools about their dreams for their children and seeing those eager young kids tackle math problems or dash a hand in the air to answer a teacher’s question was inspiring. We’re even more committed to our goal of building 600 schools by 2020.”



**100  
PERCENT**





# In so many areas...but let's talk transparency.

Our imperative is making sure Room to Read operates the highest quality programs providing the greatest benefits to children. How do we gauge how well we're doing? We continuously monitor and evaluate our programs to assess projects, identify strengths and weaknesses and facilitate dialogue with stakeholders. Thanks to the Salesforce.com Foundation, we are able to track each project in a database that houses over 30,000 records.

That's a lot of reports and numbers, but what does it represent on the ground?

One recent trip took Jagath Wasantha, Room to Read Sri Lanka's Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, to Trincomalee, a former conflict zone where Room to Read has established more than 130 library projects. "Travel in Trincomalee can be quite difficult," he explains. "Some days I must take a ferry, a car, a tuk-tuk, and then a motorbike just to reach some of our projects. Although it's quite tiring, it's important to visit the schools, monitor their progress, and let staff know that Room to Read is there to support them in their efforts to educate children."

More than 4,000 miles away, Madoda Hlongwane plays a similar role in South Africa to ensure our projects stay on track. He sometimes visits six schools in one day and as many as 30 in one week. "Monitoring plays a crucial role in the success of our work," he believes. "Not only does it help our partner schools know what they're doing well and where they can improve, but it also gives us data to help keep our internal and external stakeholders informed."



In the course of our first 10 years, Room to Read operations have grown from one school library in Bahundanda, Nepal to over 10,000 throughout Asia and Africa. In 2010 alone, we continued to expand the reach of our vital educational programs, establishing 1,985 libraries, building 314 new schools, publishing 120 original children's books and offering 10,594 girls new learning opportunities. During our 10<sup>th</sup> year, Room to Reach touched the lives of 985,493 of the world's children.

We also took time in 2010 to continue to strategize for our future by refining and improving our programs and the impact they have on children and entire communities. Specifically, we began aligning all operations to impact our two pillars of emphasis: Literacy and Gender Equality in Education. In addition, we devoted significant energy to strengthening the capacity of all of our programs by launching new initiatives, increasing our monitoring and evaluation efforts and expanding into new regions.

## Country Highlights

### Nepal

#### Multiple Awards

Since 1987, the Nepal Library Foundation has granted the Saraswati Award in recognition of individuals and organizations making outstanding contributions to library development and infrastructures for sharing knowledge. In April 2010, Room to Read Nepal received the international award, named for the Goddess of Learning, from an organization of professional librarians working to support a national library system in Nepal.

Two Nepali titles released in 2010 through the Local Language Publishing program garnered prestigious awards from Nepal Bal Sahitya Samaj, the Nepalese Society for Children's Literature (NESCHIL). Room to Read books won in two categories. *Ping Khelda* took the prize in the 4-8 year old age group and *Laxmaniya and Bachhedi* won for best illustration.

#### 10,000 Libraries

Room to Read's very first library was established in Nepal in 2000. Eight years later, we celebrated the inaugural of our 5,000<sup>th</sup> library—also in Nepal. In April 2010, just two years after launching library number 5,000, Room to Read reached yet another significant milestone when a new library opened at the Shree Jana Kalyan Secondary School in Dulegauda, Tanahun bringing our official library tally to 10,000.

### Vietnam

#### Reading Festivities

To increase community involvement, Room to Read Vietnam held its 3rd annual Reading Festival Day in Tien Giang and Ho Chi Minh City. The day-long festivities brought together families, teachers, education managers and local





authorities and promoted the importance of children learning to read. To maximize the use of our libraries over the non-school months, Room to Read Vietnam ran a summer reading program in three provinces—enabling participating schools to keep their libraries open daily and sponsor language games and writing contests. The Department of Education and Training has asked that the summer program be offered again in 2011.

#### Girls' Alumnae Network

Graduates of the Girls' Education program in Vietnam formed a network of alumnae to create a forum for sharing their experience and offering guidance to those following in their footsteps. In addition to providing encouragement, alumnae participated in career orientation and tutoring sessions, and assisted with scholarship and student loan searches and applications.

#### New Books Published

2010 saw the addition of 10 new Vietnamese-language titles to the growing catalog of Room to Read children's books. Six books focusing on traditional folk tales, games and

songs were commissioned to meet the recommendation of educators in targeted provinces. Four additional titles for teaching phonics were produced to supplement existing language textbooks.

### Cambodia

#### Reading on the Radio

Tapping a new medium to encourage school kids to read, Room to Read Cambodia launched "Story-Telling for Children" at the close of 2010 on Kampong Thom's national radio station, 98.3MHz. The one-hour program airs each Thursday and Friday to entertain and engage children while mobilizing their parents and communities to foster the habit of reading.

#### Collaboration on Library Standards

Room to Read Cambodia initiated a collaborative effort with *Soutien à l'Initiative Privée pour Aide à la Reconstruction* (SIPAR) and the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) to establish a common, national standard for school libraries across the country. Assistance from a number of technical teams in the departments charged with library

affairs at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport was invaluable.

#### Royal Honors

Room to Read founder John Wood traveled to Siem Reap province in September 2010 to receive the royal medal *Mony Saraphorn Maha Serei Wat* for dedicated promotion of educational development in Cambodia. We are deeply gratified to have been singled out by the Cambodian government for this high honor.

### India

#### Government Support, International Recognition

The State Education Department of Andhra Pradesh agreed in 2010 to match Room to Read India's initiatives and open libraries in schools previously beyond our reach. This made it possible to extend operations into the districts of Mehboobnagar and Kurnool. Additionally, the Andhra Pradesh government asked us to create model libraries in the districts of Guntur and Nalgonda which it will replicate and scale. In Delhi, three teachers who are active promoters of our Reading Room programs in

# Country Highlights



their respective schools were cited by the state government for teaching excellence. On the international scene, the National Book Trust shortlisted three of our Indian-language titles at the 2010 Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy.

## Pilots and Preparations

An extensive pilot exercise began in 2010 to standardize India's Reading Room materials along grade levels. This will make it possible for libraries across the country to catalog books according to recognized reading levels for each grade. The pilot program is being implemented in Chhattisgarh with technical support from the Hippocampus Foundation. Elsewhere, the Symantec Corporation sponsored a feasibility study in Maharashtra as part of our preparation for launching Room to Read initiatives in the state. Thanks to positive results, the Symantec Corporation has committed US\$300,000 per year for the next three years towards programmatic expansion.

## Laos

Working to shift primary education in Laos to a more student-centric

model, the Ministry of Education developed a Grade 1 textbook and teacher's guide that encourages collaborative and interactive learning. To address a shortage of guides and other resource materials for teachers struggling to adopt the new curriculum, Room to Read collaborated with the ministry to develop complementary classroom materials—including story books, conversation charts, flash cards and writing workbooks—as well as on-going professional development programs for educators.

## Publishing Promotes Literacy

Local book publishing continues to dovetail with and support the Room to Read literacy initiative in Laos. The Local Language Publishing team offered a series of workshops in 2010 for writers, illustrators and editors designed to generate new Grade 1 and Grade 2 titles that would increase enthusiasm for reading and advance the goals of the new national curriculum. A total of 25 manuscripts targeted to early readers were created as a result—a powerful testament to what can be achieved when program teams work hand-in-hand to advance a common goal.

## Sri Lanka

### Post-conflict Expansion

On the heels of a decades-long civil war, Room to Read expanded into severely impacted Northern Sri Lanka in 2009. In 2010, at the request of the government, we partnered with the Ministry of Education to help reconstruct the educational infrastructure in the province of Mannar, which included building 42 new pre- and primary schools and establishing libraries there.

### Artistic Exploration

In the Girls' Education program, 2010 saw students discovering creative expression as a means for learning important life lessons and skills. In conjunction with the Local Language Publishing program, 20 girls participated in story writing workshops and 20 pursued illustration. Their collective efforts were published in book form as *Punchi Ape Katha Potha*.

A total of 80 girls got involved in theatrical productions in Matale, Hatton and Monaragala, where they formed groups to write and perform plays depicting the challenges girls face. The players acted out scenes of engaging with others to negotiate, problem solve and work toward positive change.

## South Africa

### New Province, New Books

Room to Read added a new province, Limpopo, to the list of those served in 2010. More than 100 new libraries were established in the four provinces now served, bringing the total to 292 in South Africa. The Local Language Publishing program added 10 new titles to a growing list of children's books in seven indigenous languages. Two of these were written and five





were illustrated by students who received training from our staff.

#### **School Library of the Year Awards**

More than 300 people from the rural Mpumalanga province attended an awards ceremony hosted by the provincial Department of Education to recognize the achievements of several local school libraries. Of the more than 200 libraries in consideration, two Room to Read libraries, the Kennen Primary School (supported by Sterling Brands) and Ehlanzeni Siyakhula, shared the award for School Library of the Year.

#### **Library Support: Grass Roots to Governments**

Parent volunteers in six schools began managing libraries on a full-time basis in 2010, making it possible for students to use these facilities outside of school hours. Provincial governments continue to train teacher-librarians in our partner schools; Mpumalanga alone has enrolled more than 100 teachers in university library science programs.

## **Zambia**

#### **First Ladies Read**

The First Lady of Zambia accepted an invitation to visit the Room to Read booth at the 2010 Agricultural and Commercial Show of Zambia and brought along her friend the First Lady of Malawi, who gave a lively reading of *Issa and Anima* to a large audience of children and their parents.

#### **Creative Local Partnerships**

Expanding into the Kafue district in 2010 posed certain logistical challenges. Distances and demanding terrain made transportation costs nearly prohibitive. Room to Read Zambia came up with a creative solution through engaging the local community. The international food producer ZAMBEEF delivered the first shipment of supplies. When a larger shipment called for more hands, a military vehicle and Zambia army soldiers tackled the job. The Zambia police and local PTA members pitched in too.

#### **Children's Literacy Workbook Prototype**

Over two labor-intensive months at the close of 2010, the Zambia

literacy team wrote and illustrated a workbook prototype conceived to help children read in their local language. For the classroom trial, 3,600 workbooks, 100 teacher's guides and 10 training manuals were produced.

## **Bangladesh**

#### **Revising National Primary Curriculum**

When the government of Bangladesh announced that it would undertake a comprehensive revision of the national primary school curriculum, the plan involved a major policy shift. For the first time, NGOs were selected to participate in the process. Education officials familiar with our work invited Room to Read Bangladesh to join the committee tasked with overhauling the primary curriculum in three years.

#### **Books in Bangla**

Room to Read Bangladesh launched the Local Language Publishing program this year and published their first five books in the Bangla language targeted to early grade readers. Collaborating with the Literacy team as well as pairing emerging local authors and illustrators with already established writers and artists, the Bangla-language books focused on literacy acquisition using techniques such as rhymes and word repetition.

#### **Boat to Read**

In 2009, the Girls' Education program expanded into the "char" region, remote river islands where monsoons often stranded students. In 2010, the local team joined forces with our NGO partner, SHARP, to devise a solution: Boat to Read. With 101 girls using the service (close to half the total enrollment for 2010), absenteeism dropped immediately.

# Program Highlights



## Expansion of Literacy Pilots

An important aspect of Room to Read's Literacy mission is supporting educators as they teach children to become readers. To develop the most effective model for classroom reading instruction, the Literacy team has been collaborating with our country teams to create literacy skills pilot programs that complement and supplement the curriculum in each country while aligning within a global framework to address local language specificities and learning needs. Room to Read developed this framework based on reading and learning research conducted on several other literacy programs throughout the world. In 2010, Literacy pilots were up and running in five countries, with further pilots launching in 2011.

Country teams are in close communication with government institutions and staff at national, provincial and local levels to discuss government support for the pilot strategy, professional development for teachers and curriculum and student assessment issues. In Laos, for example, the

new program was functioning in 28 schools by the end of 2010 and was designed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education to directly support the national government's evolution of teaching literacy to early-grade readers.

Because each pilot focuses on reading instruction initiatives implemented in the classroom, it integrates naturally with Room to Read's existing work of establishing libraries and publishing local language children's books.

## Government Partnerships for Libraries

In 2010, our Reading Room program team sought to increase the number of working partnerships with the governments in all nine countries of operation. Our model has always been to complement the government's work by aligning our activities with the school curriculum, in-service teacher professional development programs, textbooks and assessment systems. By developing stronger relationships with government officials at the local, regional and/or national level, Room to Read helps align program activities with

government priorities and support scalability and sustainability.

In Bangladesh, Room to Read was one of four NGOs invited to work with the National Committee of the Government to review and redesign the national primary school curriculum. In South Africa, Room to Read libraries in Limpopo and Mpumalanga were designated "focus schools" by the national government and will serve as models for surrounding schools seeking to effectively integrate library resources into classroom activities.

Based on international best practices in primary school libraries, all nine countries began a project to categorize every book Room to Read provides to a school library by reading level. This approach makes it easier for children to choose books appropriate to their reading ability and to use the library independently during and after school hours. Each country is working to align its library book classification system with existing government policies.

## Cross-Pollinated Publishing

The Local Language Publishing team began collaborating in 2010 with Room to Read's Literacy team to develop reading materials for literacy skills pilots. In addition to the titles the team published for Room to Read libraries, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal and Laos also produced manuscripts, big books or instructional materials that support the government curriculum. The Laos workshops yielded 23 book manuscripts directly linked to the Grade 1 curriculum.

To ensure sustainability, our local teams are now taking the lead in facilitating creative workshops and expanding our talent pool of writers and illustrators outside capital





cities and urban areas. In 2010, our workshops included Tharu writers in Nepal, Khmer artists from Siem Reap and Battambang, and participants from both Sinhala and Tamil-speaking communities in Sri Lanka—all from varied professional backgrounds.

### Tracking Our Schools

The cross-national School Room program review launched in 2009 concluded on a very positive note in 2010. The study measured staff operations in countries where libraries and schools are being constructed and results demonstrated that a majority of the School Room staff conducted the program in accordance with known best practices. The evaluation allowed country teams to share strategies across the network and offered insight and guidance to regions in need of additional support.

The results suggested that Room to Read dedicate additional resources to administrative tasks such as record keeping and cross-national trainings. Looking ahead to 2011, we anticipate the country teams will develop action plans for addressing these recommendations.

### Girls Focus on Community and Life Skills

In 2010, the Girls' Education program developed an even more holistic approach to programming that will be rolled out in the coming years. This includes enhanced engagement with parents, schools and communities to foster an environment that is very supportive of girls' education. This year, many countries focused on community outreach, and in Cambodia, girls themselves organized an awareness campaign on the importance of education for all. Worldwide, over 85 percent of the parents and guardians of girls participated in Room to Read awareness-raising activities.

Life skills education was another area of focus for us this year. Workshops held in India and Vietnam explored best practices and strategies for future life skills programming. The outcome was a common Room to Read framework for developing comprehensive life skills training in self-awareness, communication, decision-making, critical thinking, coping with stress and more. These skills will be linked

to content areas relevant to girls' lives, including "my education," "my rights and protection" and "my future." Building the life skills of girls in our program is especially vital as more and more graduates transition to higher education, employment and family life. Room to Read proudly graduated 149 girls from the program in 2010: 88 in Cambodia, 19 in India, 6 in Nepal and 36 in Vietnam.

### Measuring Our Progress

Room to Read's Monitoring and Evaluation team assessed more than 17,000 unique projects underway across nine countries over the course of 2010. In considering our literacy initiatives, the team found that 96 percent of Room to Read libraries had high-functioning book borrowing and classification systems in place, while 98 percent of librarians had received comprehensive training in library management from Room to Read staff or our global partners. The Local Language Publishing program increased its output over the course of the year, publishing more than 1.1 million copies of children's reading materials.

2010 also saw the continuation of data collection activities for a three-year, cross-national study of the Reading Room program that looks at the impact of the program and students' reading habits. The second year of data collection was completed in Zambia, Nepal, and Laos, while the first year of data collection was completed in South Africa, Sri Lanka and India. Preliminary results underscore the importance of creating child-friendly libraries that are well used during the regular school day.

# 1,000 SCHOOLS



## With space to learn.

Desks, lights, books—even toilets—are not guaranteed fixtures of schools in the developing world. Overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings don't motivate children to learn or suggest that they can become educated and literate adults.

This is why Room to Read works with local communities to improve learning spaces through the construction of classrooms and school buildings. We want the people who will benefit from the project to participate in the process and share the success—to enjoy a sense of ownership.

In 2010, 91 percent of our new schools were constructed entirely by local communities, with over 3,000 individuals trained in project management and construction techniques. In Dhading, Nepal, head teacher Tika Bahadur Acharya praised the much-needed expansion of the Shree Rakt Bachala Lower Secondary School building. “The best thing about the project is that the community not only realized the need to add to the existing school building but also realized that it was only with a team effort that we would be able to make that happen.” Volunteers dug trenches and laid foundations under the hot Nepali sun to make sure their children get the best education possible.

“It’s so big,” one excited student, Prabin, said of the finished product. “I don’t have to feel cramped all day.” His friend Ramesh agreed, adding, “I wish all of the students could take their classes here.”



*One of the original classrooms at the Shree Rakt Bachala school, pictured here, was not only small but it allowed little light and ventilation. Now, the school's classrooms are spacious and provide a good learning environment for students (see as proof the happy faces of Prabin and Ramesh on page 14).*





**10,000  
LIBRARIES  
10,000  
GIRLS**

## We like milestones.

Making goals is coded into Room to Read's DNA, and in 2010 we hit two special ones. For starters, we cut the ribbon on our 10,000th library not far from where we opened our first in 2000. For the encore, we enrolled our 10,000th girl in the Girls' Education program.

Each of those girls is now guaranteed long-term academic support. While financial support helps keep them in school, Room to Read also provides essentials like uniforms, books, bikes, tutoring, mentoring and life skills training. In 2010, 97 percent of our scholars advanced to the next grade and 149 girls graduated from the program. At 22, Hema, a graduate from India, was the first in her family not only to finish high school, but to graduate from college. Her master's degree in political science is next.

Life skills training and career guidance are critical elements of the program that help prepare girls for life beyond the classroom. With support from Goldman Sachs' *10,000 Women* initiative, the Empowering Girls through Education and Entrepreneurship Program gave 400 girls in India the chance to learn about entrepreneurship and career opportunities firsthand. One participant, Priyanka, was surprised to meet local entrepreneurs from economic backgrounds similar to her own. "I always assumed these businessmen were born into rich families," she said. "But after the workshops, I realized that some world-famous entrepreneurs came from very poor backgrounds and had little money when they started." Priyanka could hardly contain her excitement. "Now I can start thinking about my own small business that can help support my family."

# Global Recognition



Room to Read further expanded its network in 2010 through its ever growing chapters and base of volunteers, strategic partnerships and leadership appointments, and prestigious awards and media opportunities. Through all these efforts, Room to Read has been able not only to expand our brand and name recognition, but to continue to grow our global movement so that we are in an even greater position in our second decade to impact more children around the world.

## Growing Our Chapters and Offices

Room to Read's volunteer chapter network continued to expand in 2010 by adding seven new chapters to our global network. These new chapters emerged in Charlotte, North Carolina; Columbus, Ohio; Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Houston, Texas; Paris, France; Perth, Australia and Seoul, South Korea. We now have 52 worldwide chapters and more than 10,000 volunteers helping Room to Read plan events and raise brand awareness. In 2010, the chapters collectively raised over US\$12 million which is 35 percent of Room to Read's total revenue.

To complement our chapter growth and maximize their potential, Room to Read also expanded our fundraising operations beyond London and Hong Kong by opening fundraising posts in Australia, Japan and New York. We owe special thanks to both Credit Suisse and the *Financial Times* for their generous donations of office space to all of our satellite fundraising teams.



## Room to Read Chapters Around the World



# Global Recognition



## Strengthening Our Board and Management Team

Room to Read added fresh leadership to our global board in 2010. Tim Koogle, venture capitalist, entrepreneur and Yahoo! Founding CEO joined the board in June 2010. In addition, Jerry del Missier, Barclays Capital President, and Fernando Reimers, Ford Foundation Professor of International Education and Director of International Education Policy at Harvard University both joined in January 2010.

Strengthening our management team, we welcomed Dr. Cory Heyman as Room to Read Chief Program Officer in 2010. Cory was a close advisor to Room to Read since 2004 and served as a member of the advisory board since 2008. Cory's extensive experience in international development and education, most recently with the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Gender Equity, is a welcome new addition to our management team. In addition, Dhir Jhingran, IAS, transitioned roles to Room to Read Chief

Literacy Officer after serving as Chief Program Officer and Regional Director for Asia. Dhir has over 18 years of professional experience with primary education. Prior to Room to Read, Dhir worked as director in the Ministry of Education in India.

## Keeping Our Ratings High

Room to Read received Charity Navigator's highest 4-star rating for sound fiscal management. Charity Navigator is America's largest and most utilized independent evaluator of charities. Receiving this honor five years in a row is a distinction that only six percent of their rated charities can claim.

Additionally, for the second consecutive year, Room to Read was ranked in *Barron's* annual "Top 25 Givers" issue that measures and ranks socially conscious individuals who are making the greatest impact on some of the world's most urgent issues. The list, compiled in collaboration with Global Philanthropy Group, ranked Room to

Read at #9, advancing two places over last year to break the top 10. *Barron's* gave "especially high points to giving that has strong ripple effects or is magnified through alliances with others."

## Generating Global Headlines

Room to Read was featured in key global media throughout 2010 including a broadcast segment on CBS "Evening News" with Katie Couric on our Local Language Publishing program in India. Room to Read also saw media attention in the *New York Times*, the BBC, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the "Charlie Rose Show." In addition, John Wood and Erin Ganju authored a number of prominent online opinion editorials including those for Forbes.com, BusinessWeek.com, HuffingtonPost and CNBC.

Room to Read joined into a new entertainment experience by partnering with Nokia and the Pearson Foundation to launch Conspiracy for Good (CFG). Created by Emmy award winning "Heroes" creator



Tim Kring, CFG was a pilot project for a first-of-its-kind interactive story that allowed audiences to take real-life action and create positive world change. This storytelling experiment included Room to Read in the narrative and allowed the audience to gain an in-depth view of our mission and work.

### Raising Awareness Through Social Media

Room to Read and Twitter partnered on a unique social media campaign to increase awareness of illiteracy on September 8, International Literacy Day. Becoming the most tweeted message on September 8, Room to Read and Twitter spread an illegible tweet—symbolizing how every sentence looks to the more than 796 million people worldwide who cannot read or write. Users were able to decode or “read” the indecipherable tweet and send the coded message through Twitter’s hope140.org site to spread the word about the importance of reading and literacy.

In addition, as Twitter’s first Corporate Social Innovation partner, we were thrilled to participate in the launch of Twitter’s branded wine called Fledgling (@fledgling) that was produced through Crushpad winery. Now available to consumers, US\$5 from every bottle of the Chardonnay or Pinot Noir sold benefits Room to Read’s programs in India.

### Our Leadership in the Spotlight

John Wood self-published his first children’s book named “Zak the Yak With Books on His Back.” Written in rhyme and illustrated by noted Nepali artist, Abin Shrestha, the book follows Zak and his two friends, Manju and Arul, as they deliver a yak-load of children’s books to a remote village in Nepal. Room to Read’s corporate partners, The Republic of Tea, underwrote two printings of Zak the Yak, and the Atlassian Foundation created a special website at [www.zaktheyak.org](http://www.zaktheyak.org).

Room to Read was again featured at the Clinton Global Initiative 2010

Annual Meeting and announced its pledge to enhance education for nearly one million girls in the developing world by 2012. John Wood took the stage alongside former President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Barclays Capital PLC President Robert E. Diamond and Goldman Sachs Vice President Noa Meyer, to formally announce the organization’s plans to equalize access to education for girls in some of the world’s most underserved communities. CEO Erin Ganju also presented at the California State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the University of California at Berkeley and the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University.

### Join Us

[f.com/roomtoread](https://www.facebook.com/roomtoread) (@roomtoread)  
[f.com/roomtoread](https://www.facebook.com/roomtoread)





**100,000  
BOOKS**

## That's just in one week.

Yes, the children who use our libraries are checking out well over 100,000 books per week—more than seven million books per year—many of them published through our program that sources new materials from local authors and illustrators.

One such author is Riem Nuon, a teacher from Cambodia whose first book, *The Dog and the Coconuts*, came to life through Room to Read's author workshops. After his book was published, Riem Nuon returned to his home village and took it upon himself to use his training to help aspiring student authors write books of their own.

Ten-year-old Kimlay, a 3rd grader from a village outside Siem Reap, Cambodia, loves checking out books like *The Dog and the Coconuts* from her new school library. Two years ago, Kimlay was ranked 27 out of 30 in her class. That changed in 2010 when Room to Read opened a library at her school. "I remember when I was told about the library, I was so excited that I could hardly concentrate and wished the lunch bell would ring so I could go to see it!" Kimlay became a library regular, even convincing the librarian to let her check out extra books.

The teachers see a change in all of their students. "Since we got the library, children are visiting it to read during breaks instead of playing," said 3rd grade teacher, Miss Dany La. "They have grown from passive to active readers." She then added, "Kimlay, of course, is a cut above the others." Kimlay is now ranked third in her class and continues to bring home a stack of books each night.

## Institutional Funders



In 2010, Room to Read's institutional supporters continued to help our organization scale and fund much of our innovative work. From leading foundations, to large financial institutions, to cutting-edge technology companies to government grants, Room to Read thanks all our institutional partners from around the world for their generous contributions. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not have been able to succeed as we have and continue to reach more children across Asia and Africa.



### **Atlassian**

creates bug tracking, technical writing and software development tools that help more than 21,000 organizations deliver products faster, from concept to launch. Atlassian's Starter Licenses provide startups and small teams perpetual, fully supported software for 10-users for just US\$10 with all proceeds going to Room to Read. The popularity of Starter Licenses has raised US\$1 million for Room to Read.



### **Barclays Capital**

has partnered with Room to Read for more than three years by supporting the development of libraries, local language publications and girls' education in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and South Africa. Barclays Capital also served as the lead sponsor for the *Financial Times*' 2009/10 seasonal appeal in aid of Room to Read, which raised a total of US\$4 million.



### **Bloomberg**

has supported Room to Read since 2008. With Bloomberg's support, Room to Read has reached over 50,000 children and teachers with libraries and books, and Bloomberg employees across the world have participated in events and activities in support of Room to Read's programs. In 2011, Bloomberg will be Room to Read's primary supporter of the Local Language Publishing program in Asia, funding the printing of almost half a million children's books and story cards.



### **Caterpillar Foundation**

has partnered with Room to Read to provide three years of holistic education to 1,000 girls and establish 36 libraries with the goal of bringing enhanced educational opportunities to more than 10,000 children.





**Credit Suisse** has been supporting Room to Read since 2005, through its Global Education Initiative. It continues to support the organization's programs throughout Asia and Africa, benefitting over 30,000 students to date. In 2011 this support will focus on Room to Read's literacy pilots in Asia. In addition to financial support, Credit Suisse donates free office space for Room to Read staff in Hong Kong, London, Tokyo and Sydney.



**Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women** has partnered with Room to Read to support the education of 400 high school girls in the Girls' Education program in India. Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women is also supporting the development of an Entrepreneurial Skills Package that is being piloted within the Girls' Education program. The grant is only the latest in support from Goldman Sachs, which through *Goldman Sachs Gives*, has contributed US\$5 million over the years to support Room to Read programs worldwide.



**Lafarge** has been a supporter of Room to Read's work in Zambia. Over the past several years, Lafarge has provided a wide array of support to Room to Read, including free cement for the construction of new library buildings, donated vehicles, logistical support on shipments of books to Zambia and monetary support of our Girls' Education program.

## Top Institutional Funders

(1/1/2010-12/31/2010)

### \$500,000 and over

Artha Capital  
Atlassian Foundation  
Barclays Capital  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Caterpillar Foundation  
Credit Suisse  
Goldman Sachs  
The ELMA Foundation

### \$250,000-\$499,999

Dubai Cares  
Skoll Foundation

### \$100,000-\$249,999

Adolf H. Lundin Charitable Foundation  
Bookoff Corporation Limited  
John and Frances Beck Foundation  
Jones Day Foundation  
Planet Wheeler Foundation  
Priory Group  
Quintessentially Foundation  
Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd.  
South and Central Asia Bureau, U.S. Department of State

### \$50,000-99,999

ABeam Consulting Ltd.  
Best Buy Children's Foundation  
Better World Books  
Bol.com  
CAF Australia  
Dodge & Cox  
Financial Times  
First Calgary Financial  
Fondation Segre  
Nokia Corporation  
Pearson Charitable Foundation  
Prudential Holdings Limited  
Red Deer Community Foundation  
Squidoo LLC  
Symphysis Charitable Foundation  
The Charitable Foundation  
The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation  
The Warburg Pincus Foundation  
Tudor Investment Corporation

## Top In-Kind Donors

Berry Bros. & Rudd  
Brother's Brother Foundation  
Credit Suisse  
Financial Times (Pearson)  
KPMG  
Lafarge  
Morrison & Foerster LLP  
Sabre Foundation  
Salesforce.com  
Scholastic, Inc.  
Small Luxury Hotels

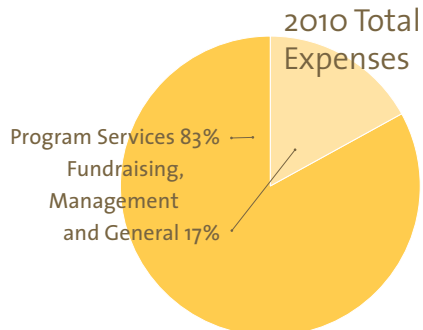
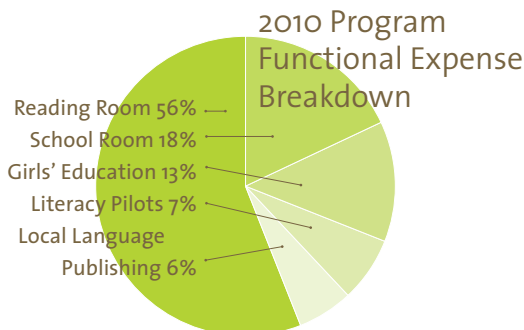
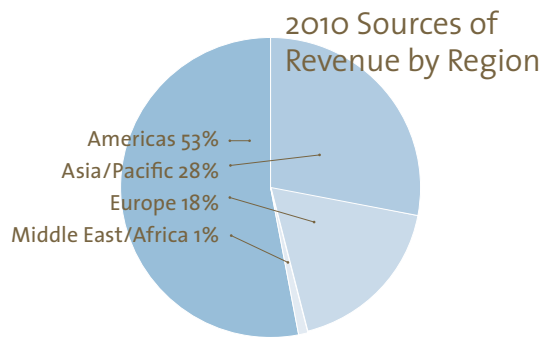
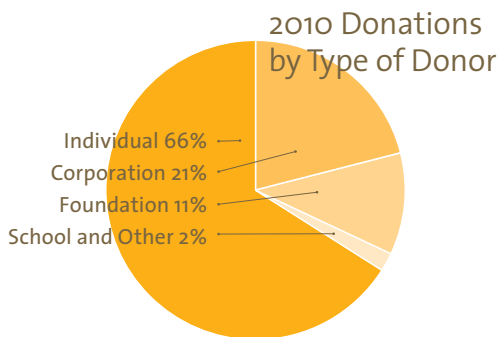
# Financial Statement

Room to Read takes great pride in being transparent with our investors about our financials and we have been recognized year after year for our exceptional fiscal responsibility and financial health. For five consecutive years, Room to Read has been awarded Charity Navigator’s highest 4-star rating for sound fiscal management. Room to Read is equally committed to maintaining a careful balance between its ambitious program objectives and operating efficiency. To achieve this, we maintain a diversified funding base within various sectors and geographic locations and are careful to keep our administrative spending low so that as much of our investors’ dollars can go into programming.

## Highlights

In 10 years, Room to Read has grown into a US\$30+ million dollar organization. Highlights of our 2010 financials include:

- **Robust revenue growth** with US\$33.8 million in cash donations—a 20 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$28.3 million; and US\$5.1 million in donations in-kind, primarily children’s books donated by publishers, a 12 percent increase over last year’s total of US\$4.6 million
- **US\$17.6 million raised** outside the US through foreign fundraising sources—a 33 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$13.1 million
- **US\$31.8 million invested** toward our programs—a 35 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$23.5 million
- **Programmatic spending** constituted 83 percent of our total expenses, meaning that only 17 cents out of every dollar spent went towards overhead



## Statement of Activities

For the years ended December 31, 2010 and 2009 (USD)

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
Corporation	\$7,220,068	\$4,192,452
Foundation	\$3,732,244	\$5,409,025
Individual	\$22,353,935	\$18,302,598
School and Other	\$519,871	\$351,508
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$33,826,118</b>	<b>\$28,255,583</b>
Donations in Kind	\$5,123,969	\$4,557,956
Investment Income	\$589,031	\$239,651
Other Income	\$(115,669)	\$59,374
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$39,423,449</b>	<b>\$33,112,564</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Library Establishment	\$8,076,865	\$5,612,707
Donated Books and Supplies	\$4,736,251	\$4,347,079
School Construction	\$3,812,170	\$3,460,638
Girls' Education	\$1,830,725	\$1,278,447
Local Language Publishing	\$1,115,184	\$679,326
Literacy Pilots	\$858,456	-
Conference, Travel and Meeting Costs	\$1,590,428	\$1,083,025
Information Technology	\$812,099	\$526,810
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$451,607	\$145,214
Professional Fees	\$665,779	\$395,536
Program Operating Expenses	\$1,241,148	\$987,215
Program Personnel	\$6,610,663	\$5,022,968
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$31,801,375</b>	<b>\$23,538,965</b>
Management and General	\$2,243,153	\$1,824,427
Fundraising	\$4,456,540	\$3,038,851
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$38,501,068</b>	<b>\$28,402,243</b>
Translation Adjustments	\$326,437	\$327,423
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$(2,980,776)	\$1,326,707
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$4,229,594	\$3,711,037
Unrestricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$8,300,764	\$6,974,057
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$11,472,809	\$7,761,772
<b>Net Assets at End of the Year</b>	<b>\$21,022,391</b>	<b>\$19,773,573</b>



# 1,000,000 HOURS



# All of them donated by volunteers.

We're estimating, but with 10,000 volunteers dedicating their time in 52 chapters from New York to Hong Kong to Sydney to Zurich to Mumbai, the hours add up quickly.

Londoner Sarah Dyson was part of an initial group of volunteers who, in 2004, helped develop the London chapter. She's been a dedicated volunteer ever since, organizing gala events and forming a women's network to raise funds for our Girls' Education program.

What keeps Sarah motivated? "I have gotten to visit Room to Read projects in both Vietnam and India through chapter treks and those experiences have meant the world to me," she says. "My favorite memory was in Vietnam when girls approached me on their bikes and asked me to write my name and where I was from in their schoolbooks. When I later saw these girls at their school, they were huddled together practicing their English by saying, 'Sarah from England.' Their appetite to learn was inspiring."

David Ray co-founded the Tokyo chapter in 2006 as an expat living in Japan. While serving as chapter leader from 2008-2009, he witnessed a huge volunteer growth spurt. "People were looking for volunteer opportunities in an entrepreneurial environment," he explains. "Our chapter spoke to that." Room to Read's volunteers in Japan now number over 1,000—more than any other chapter. What started in Tokyo has spawned new chapters as volunteers move around the country and the world, including David, who recently moved to Portland, Oregon and reignited that local chapter. He says, "Room to Read is a lifelong pursuit, no matter where you live."

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# It started with a dream and became a vision for success.

As we embark on our second decade, Room to Read is committed to reaching 10 million children by 2015. How will we hit that mark?

“Solid, well executed growth,” says Tim Koogle, Yahoo! Founding CEO and, as of 2011, the co-chair of our board of directors. “I love working with young, fast-changing organizations and sharing what I’ve learned over the years to help them find ways to grow. Room to Read has already achieved incredible things. But, as we all know, there is still so much need in the developing world in removing the barriers to both literacy and gender equality. We have an incredible opportunity to have a positive impact in these areas by growing with quality at the right pace. If we do this right, I guarantee that the world will be a better place.”

We are already starting to see the promise of our new strategic vision come to life through literacy pilots. As these programs expand, their benefits ripple throughout entire communities.

That’s what happened to Richard, a 1st grade student in Zambia, and his grandmother, Maureen. Room to Read began implementing literacy pilots in 2010 in the local language, Cinyanja, which included producing a student activity workbook and conducting training for teachers. Richard asked his grandmother for help with his homework, but she had never been taught to read Cinyanja. So Maureen decided it was time to learn and accompanied Richard to school. “He makes me very proud,” she says. Richard likes having his grandmother in class because, “it makes learning fun and it also makes homework easier to do!”



# 10,000,000 CHILDREN





# Room to Read believes that World Change Starts with Educated Children.

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, we develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children, and support girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.



Room to Read®

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

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