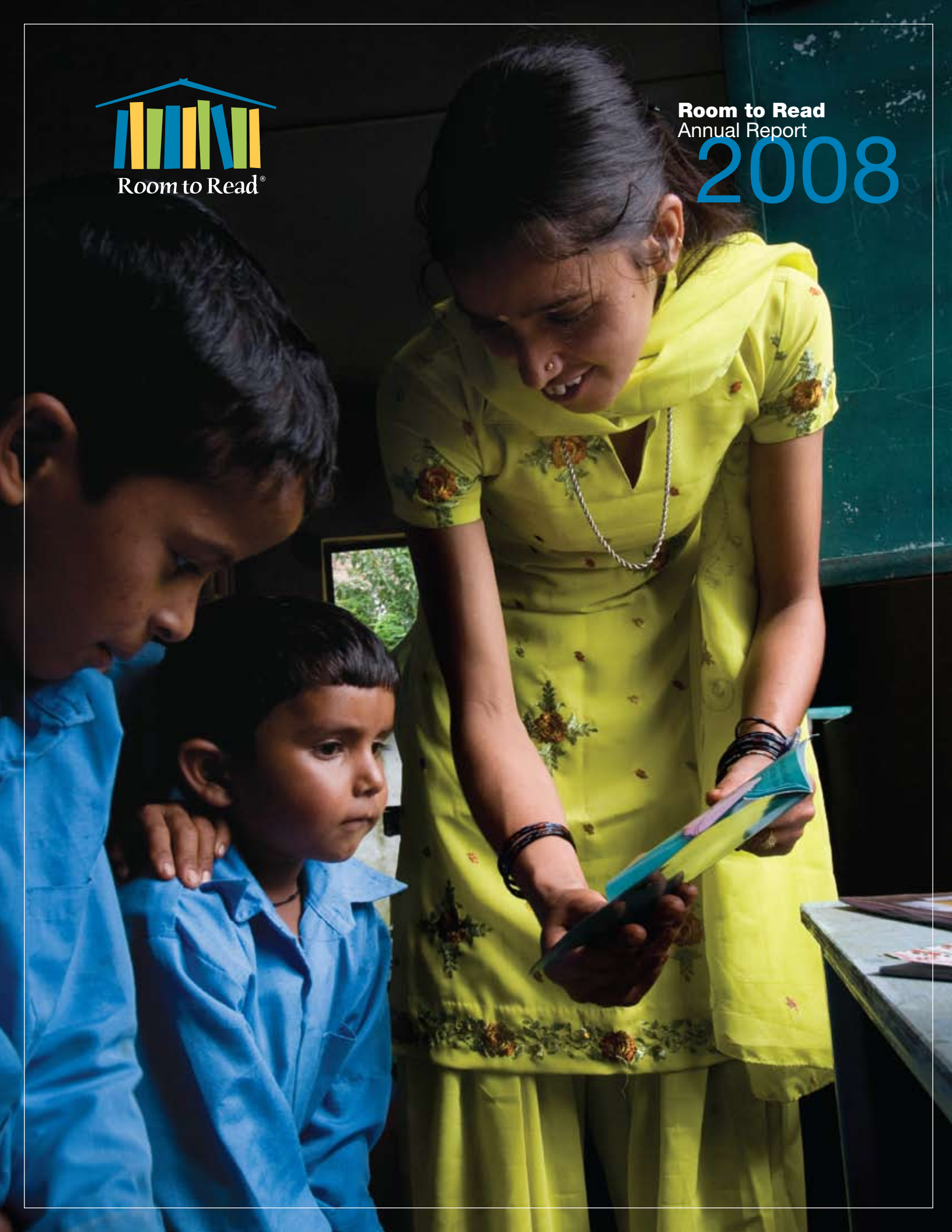




Room to Read  
Annual Report

2008







# ROOM TO READ Around the World



**Canada** Vancouver's volunteer chapter grew its revenue by 82%

**Seattle** Craig Bruya, former CFO at Microsoft Business Solutions, joined our board of directors

**Chicago** received American Library Association "Presidential Citation for International Innovation"



**New York** welcomed Herb Allen, President of Allen & Co., and Scott Kapnick, managing partner of Highbridge Capital, to the board of directors

**Colorado** became first state to have 5 active volunteer fundraising chapters

**San Francisco** chosen by both Ketchum and Oliver Wyman Group as a pro bono communications partner



**Los Angeles** featured in Daughtry's music video for the hit single "What About Now"



**United Arab Emirates** partnered with Dubai Cares for "Million Book Challenge" benefiting Room to Read



**Zambia** supported 200 girls in 3 schools in Chongwe district in the first year of the program



**South Africa** published 7 children's book titles in 11 languages



**United Kingdom** launched the UK Advisory Board with 9 members

**China** volunteer runs across the Gobi Desert to raise money for Room to Read



**South Korea** *Leaving Microsoft's* Korean version becomes standard reading material in many university courses

**Tokyo** enlisted over 300 volunteers in Japan to collectively raise over US\$1MM



**Hong Kong** John Wood featured speaker at the first Clinton Global Initiative Asia meeting



**Laos** held annual Country Management Conference bringing together 40 staff members from 10 countries



**Vietnam** graduated first class of girls through Girls' Education program

**Cambodia** distributed 140,000 local language books and posters to over 100 state-run schools



**India** created a Reading Kit sponsored by Goldman Sachs and began piloting a reading enhancement program sponsored by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



**Nepal** cut the ribbon and celebrated the establishment of our 5,000th library

**Bangladesh** launched start-up operations into our 9th country



**Sri Lanka** celebrated International Literacy Day through an event co-hosted with US Embassy

**Sydney** expanded into Australia with launch of the Sydney chapter

# A MESSAGE FROM John Wood

Dear Friends,

Two thousand eight was another year of extraordinary growth for Room to Read. During my near-constant travels around the world, I was lucky enough to connect with so many of you who have been our partners in this inspiring quest to help children across the developing world break the cycle of poverty through the power that only an education can provide.

During the inevitable wait at Customs, I thumb through my passport, and each stamp brings back fond memories. One of my favorite trips in 2008 was to Nepal, where we led a group of our investors on a five-day trek to schools in the Annapurna mountain range. Other passport stamps were acquired on the way as I traveled to meet the first group of girls we supported in a rural school on the sun-drenched plains of Zambia, and to speak at packed fundraising events in Hong Kong, London, New York, Seattle, Tokyo and in many of the other 40 cities where Room to Read now has active fundraising chapters. Everywhere I go, there is significant and passionate momentum behind our core belief that we should all work towards a world where every child receives the opportunity to gain an education.

Room to Read has become a powerful global connector. A fundraising event in Amsterdam, Boulder, Calgary or Greenwich provides funding that pays for the bricks and mortar to build a school or covers the cost for the local language books that will fill a library. Meanwhile, in Cambodia, Nepal or South Africa, community members stand ready to invest their time by digging the foundation and hauling and assembling the bricks and cement to build a coveted structure that will open the door to possibility for their children. The Ministry of Education and our partner NGOs work to put trained teachers and librarians in place to teach the eager young students. Our talented and dedicated local teams mentor our scholarship girls and encourage them to overcome every obstacle until they have finished secondary school.

I am honored and grateful to be sitting at the confluence of these very powerful connections. What resulted during 2008 was extraordinary: our local teams were able to work with over 2,200 communities across eight countries to build schools, establish libraries and provide long-term scholarships. This raised the total number of communities we have served to over 7,500. Best of all, over three million children now have access to improved educational opportunities.

However, we cannot rest on our accomplishments because there are hundreds of millions of children that we have not yet reached. Every day we lose is a day we can't get back. The world is in desperate need of action-oriented optimists. Our time is now!

Together in service,



John Wood  
Founder and Executive Chairman



photo: Andrea McTamaney

# A MESSAGE FROM Erin Ganju

Dear Friends,

As urgent threats challenge our planet – global climate change, health crises and economic meltdowns – having an educated population that is able to develop solutions to these challenges is critical. All of us at Room to Read, including the staff, volunteers and supporters, have risen to a call to action summed up in six powerful words: “World Change Starts with Educated Children.”

As we seek to galvanize people around the importance of the global educational movement, we are acutely aware that in order to deliver quality educational programs, it takes a synergetic combination of innovative ideas, efficient systems and operations, and the right people to put it all together. At our annual international management team conference, held last year in Laos, we continued to collaborate and focus on all these key areas. I know we each walked away very energized by our country teams’ accomplishments.

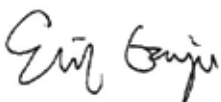
This year, we took some big steps towards maximizing our resources and strengthening our organization. First, in 2008, our board and staff recognized the need for a restructuring of our executive staff in order to position Room to Read for continued success. Following a thorough planning process, on January 1, 2009, John Wood was promoted to Executive Chairman and passed to me the mantle of CEO, which I was honored to accept. In addition, we made several key senior hires to add to our already strong international management team.

We also took a hard look at some of our programs, namely our computer lab program, and evaluated where we should focus our energy. After much analysis, consulting and discussion, we came to the difficult – yet hopefully wise – decision to put this program on hold and focus our efforts on our core strengths: helping children gain access to basic education through libraries, schools and local language books as well as supporting girls’ education.

As we look to the end of our first decade in 2010, we are more committed than ever to maximizing our impact in the quest for universal literacy. We’re currently involving our key stakeholders around the globe in an in-depth strategic planning process, which will clarify our long-term goals and define how to best use our resources. The outcome will be a road map that will guide us successfully into our next decade as we strive to impact 10 million children by 2020.

Room to Read encompasses creative, dedicated and passionate people accomplishing great results – I celebrate all of you whom I am honored to call my fellow social entrepreneurs and supporters. Together we are catalyzing change in communities around the world and working towards a brighter future where every child receives a quality education.

Sincerely,



Erin K. Ganju  
Co-Founder and CEO



**READING ROOM, INDIA**

# Sister with Books



photo: Dana Smillie

**Over 1.2 million books were checked out  
from Room to Read libraries in 2008**



**The mountain village of Rampur, a rural** district in Uttarakhand, India, has discovered that their passion for reading and learning has spread well beyond the walls of their local school and library. Thanks to the collaboration between Room to Read and the community of Rampur, students at the Rampur Government Primary School now have a library filled with colorful books they can share with friends and family.

According to the librarian, Ms. Manju Rautela, the Reading Room is a “vibrant and cheerful place” where the children are able to read and study, explore the world through maps and pictures, or play with educational games and puzzles. It’s her job to make sure the children take advantage of the over 600 children’s books just waiting to be read – many of which were written and illustrated by local artists and published through Room to Read’s Local Language Publishing program.

But the students aren’t the only ones benefiting from the new library. Ms. Manju, whom the children now call “kitab wali didi” or “sister with books,” noticed that not long after the Reading Room was established the children began asking her to keep the library open after school hours. Apparently, the relatives (parents, cousins, aunts and uncles) of the students were asking them to bring home books to share. What Ms. Manju hadn’t realized is that when school is out, the adult family members read stories aloud while children and other villagers listen. It’s a practice that is quickly becoming a favorite pastime.

Room to Read’s partnership with the Rampur school and community has been so successful that in addition to the Reading Room program, the school began participating in a two-year pilot Primary Reading Enhancement Program (PREP) taking place in 180 schools in the states of Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Since August 2008, teachers for grades 1 and 2 at the Rampur Government Primary School have been using a Reading Kit, developed by Room to Read, during their language arts lessons. The kit contains locally rel-

evant teaching tools including conversation cards, rhyme and poem books, and picture, word and letter cards. It was designed to complement the school’s curriculum and to act as a tool for engaging

students in active learning. Though still in the pilot phase, early signs indicate that the Reading Kit is particularly useful for new or under-trained teachers, and is helping to promote literacy and the habit of reading among children.



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*Ms. Manju, whom the children now call “kitab wali didi” or “sister with books,” noticed that not long after the Reading Room was established the children began asking her to keep the library open after school hours.*

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What began as a joint effort to provide new and improved educational resources to the children of Rampur, ultimately enhanced the landscape of learning for the local community and helped create a culture of reading for all.

**LOCAL LANGUAGE PUBLISHING, VIETNAM**

Welcome to Can Tho



Room to Read published works by **124 local authors and illustrators** in 2008

**Thanh knows every book in her small school library.** She's read them all, many of them several times. But the library is still a treasure trove to her because in Thanh's village, in the Can Tho Province of Vietnam, there are no public libraries or bookstores, not even a park. The school library, a long ferry ride away, is the only place where she can indulge in her passion for books, drawing and writing.

Thanh's enthusiasm for art and literature was rewarded when she was invited to attend a Local Language Publishing workshop organized by Room to Read. There she joined children from other schools in the province to participate in activities designed to promote a habit of reading and writing.

When asked to select pictures of her hometown as inspiration to create her own drawing, Thanh demonstrated her artistic skills and painted a picture of one of Can Tho's best known sights: boats gliding through the canals amid floating markets on the water's edge. At the end of the day, Thanh received a special surprise when she learned that her illustration was chosen as the opening page for a new book called *Welcome to Can Tho* that would be published in the Vietnamese language by Room to Read!

Beaming with delight, she said, "I feel very proud to be part of the workshop. It helped me become more confident because it was the first time I was able to give my ideas for a book."

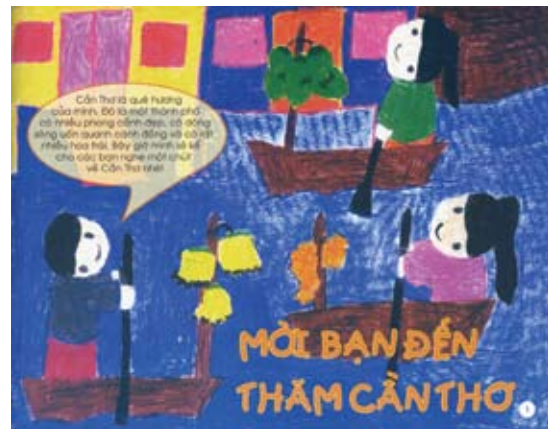
But the good news for this talented fifth grader didn't stop there; after the workshop Thanh's teacher informed her that her school library will receive many new books donated by Room to Read at the start of the next school year. As an avid reader, Thanh and her schoolmates visit the library every day at break time and have already read all the books, so hearing about new books in Vietnamese was particularly exciting.

"I like reading very much because there are so many good things to learn," says Thanh. The new local language books from Room to Read are sure to keep her and her classmates very busy during their break time visits to the library.

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*Beaming with delight, Thanh said, "I feel very proud to be part of the workshop. It helped me become more confident because it was the first time I was able to give my ideas for a book."*

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**SCHOOL ROOM, NEPAL**

# Community Pride



**Room to Read has constructed 765 schools  
serving nearly 200,000 students**

**Ram Chandra Acharya never thought he'd**

see the day when parents were clamoring to enroll their students in school. But this wasn't just any school – it's the place where Mr. Acharya has been teaching students for the past 25 years; a place that recently experienced a rebirth, thanks to Room to Read's School Room program.

Shree Bhubaneshwori Lower Secondary School is situated in the Dhading district of Nepal, 15 miles west of the Kathmandu valley. Though located nearly an hour's walk from the main bazaar, students eagerly make the journey to a school that is now regarded as the best in the district.

Until a little over a year ago, Shree Bhubaneshwori was a primary school – and that's how it would have remained were it not for the tireless efforts of the faculty and surrounding community. Part of what fueled the efforts to expand the school was something administrators knew had been a longstanding problem: many of the female students dropped out after primary school simply because there wasn't a nearby secondary school. According to Mr. Acharya, the faculty and parents saw an opportunity to change that with the help of Room of Read's School Room program.

Says Mr. Acharya, “since the community and the school cannot always provide everything, we approached Room to Read for their help.” With Room to Read on-board, the community enthusiastically responded by working together to offer whatever resources they had – whether it was time, money or labor. This commitment to the Room to Read Challenge Grant, a model that actively engages the local community in the project's development and sustainability, is “a way to show that the community really cares and is concerned about raising the educational standards of the school,” as Mr. Acharya proudly states.

Today, Shree Bhubaneshwori Lower Secondary School is the pride of the community. What started as a one-building elementary school is now a campus that includes a seven-room build-

ing with enough classroom space to accommodate hundreds of students – including the many girls who would have otherwise dropped out. Mr. Acharya speaks on behalf of the school and the community when he says, “If it wasn't for Room to Read, our children wouldn't have had the opportunity to expand their horizons at all.”

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*With Room to Read on-board, the community enthusiastically responded by working together to offer whatever resources they had – whether it was time, money or labor.*

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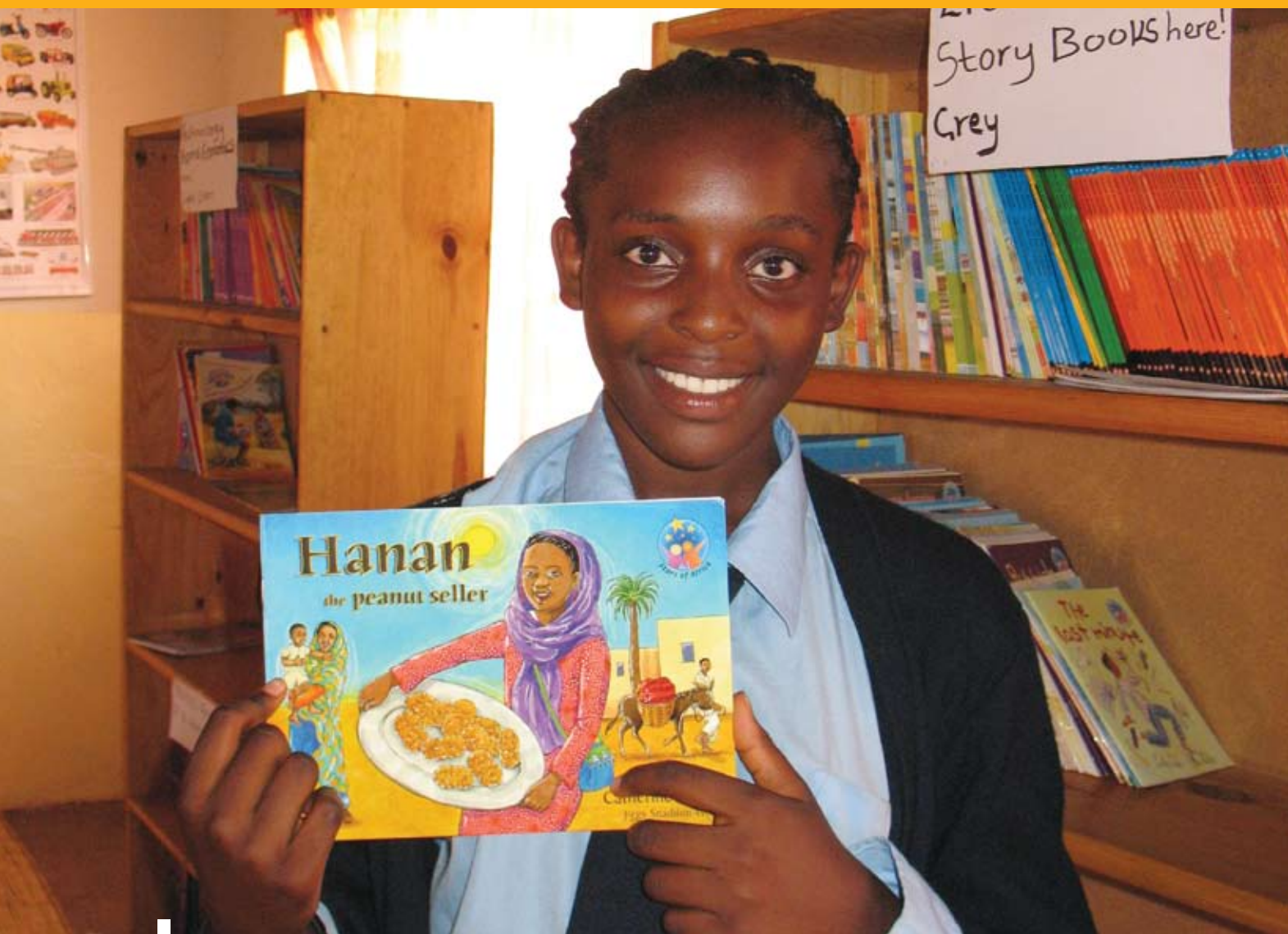
*Bhubaneshwori school, under construction*



*Bhubaneshwori school, after*

## GIRLS' EDUCATION, ZAMBIA

# Mulenga's Story



In 2008, 98 percent of girls in the Girls' Education program advanced to the next grade

**Mulenga likes to be surrounded by books.**

She has a voracious appetite for knowledge and a discerning eye for the books she thinks students should be reading and those she knows they'll enjoy reading. So, it wasn't surprising to find her first in line to volunteer as a library assistant when she learned her school would be opening a library thanks to the support of Room to Read.

Mulenga is one of 107 girls living full-time at the Lukwipa Basic School in the Chongwe district of Lusaka, Zambia. She and her classmates are supported by Room to Read's Girls' Education program. Mulenga's mother, who had just a few years of schooling, was a hair dresser until she recently had to quit due to severe asthma attacks. As one of five children, Mulenga knows that she is receiving the gift of education not usually granted to girls. That is why she cherishes her time at school. In fact, Mulenga is so dedicated to her studies that she organizes study groups with her friends – a clear indication she's determined to maximize the educational resources afforded to her through the Girls' Education program.

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*Mulenga takes her library assistant role very seriously because she understands that education is the ticket to a successful future.*

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Her hard work pays off, as Mulenga consistently receives good marks. However, she'll be the first to tell you that what she is most proud of is her role as library assistant. This responsibility requires her to arrange, label and categorize the books. She particularly enjoys being in charge of the library when the teacher is away, and her biggest thrill is when her classmates come into the library to read or study. She highly encourages both.

As a student representative on the library management committee, Mulenga is not afraid to speak her mind and share her suggestions with the adults on the committee. Mulenga takes her library assistant role very seriously because she understands that education is the ticket to a successful future – for her and her classmates.

In fact, she feels strongly that academic books should be bought for the library along with story books and has suggested this be something the committee considers in the future. In the meantime, she's taken it upon herself to make sure the library is a resource for all her fellow ninth-grade students studying for the national exam, which will determine their high school eligibility.

When she's not assisting in the library or preparing for exams, Mulenga immerses herself in story books. Her favorite is *Hanan the Peanut Seller*, a book about a girl who must leave school to work for her family, but through perseverance she is able to return to the classroom. Mulenga most appreciates a section of the book called "children and work" because it reminds her that many children in other parts of the world must work rather than attend school. Mulenga says, "I want to thank Room to Read for choosing our school to work in. You've come out to our school, which is far away, in order to support our education and we really thank you."



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Country Highlights

**Around the world, the Room to Read country office teams worked tirelessly to meet our bold goals and ensure effective and efficient project implementation to maximize the number of children accessing Room to Read's high-quality educational programs. In 2008, our country teams collectively impacted over 800,000 children through the establishment of 1,881 libraries, 101 local language book titles, 323 school rooms, 24 computer rooms and the addition of 3,137 girls to our Girls' Education program.**

### NEPAL

Two thousand eight was a year marked with political unrest and social upheaval due to major shifts in the Nepali government. Mass demonstrations, strikes and regional losses of electricity delayed the delivery of materials for construction of schools and libraries and the torrential rainy season caused further delays. Yet, despite these formidable challenges, Room to Read Nepal still reported a long list of accomplishments, including the establish-

ment of nearly 400 libraries and 40 schools, and library management training to almost 800 librarians and assistant library teachers. Additionally, the team hosted well-attended capacity-building workshops for children's book authors and illustrators, and published 32 original local language titles.

### VIETNAM

The Girls' Education program was an important focus for Room to Read Vietnam, with 24 teachers trained on facilitating life skills workshops. With help from these teachers and outside mentors, over 550 girls participated in career orientation workshops, medical check-ups and reproductive health courses – all in addition to their normal studies. Early education was also a core program component, and in 2008 the team led several successful conferences focused on designing and building child-friendly pre-schools and establishing effective early education programs. As a result, 20 pre-schools were constructed, many of which utilize the new large-format books published for the first time as part of our Local Language Publishing program.



photo: Viktoria Orizarska



## CAMBODIA

With a focus on improving the quality of its existing programs, Room to Read Cambodia sought to ensure the continued growth and viability of its core programs and resources. As a result of the country's recent war-torn history, there is a dearth of adequate reading materials for children and a lack of locally skilled authors and illustrators to produce them. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Room to Read Cambodia printed 2,000 copies of a colorful poster and distributed 120,000 copies of 12 newly published children's book titles in 2008. Additionally, in partnership with a local NGO, Room to Read Cambodia piloted a new classroom library model in 10 schools in Siem Reap province. The goal of the pilot is to determine if classroom libraries will allow for increased access to reading materials for children and an improved method of empowering teachers to integrate the books into their teaching.

## INDIA

Room to Read India expanded into two new states in 2008 – Andhra Pradesh in southern India and Jharkhand in eastern India. With this expansion came the challenge of new local languages. In 2008, the Local Language Publishing team began exploring how best to meet this need with plans to publish in Telugu, the official language of Andhra Pradesh, in 2009. The Girls' Education program transitioned to a school-based approach to target larger populations of girls in need at selected schools. In addition, the program introduced a bridge course for out-of-school children in an attempt to bring them under the umbrella of mainstream education. Room to Read also launched a volunteer fundraising chapter in Mumbai, to help us fund programs within India.





## LAOS

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Room to Read Laos targeted girls in the poorest communities of their country for long-term scholarships. Many of these girls belong to ethnic minorities, and in addition to the extensive benefits of a scholarship, several of the girls received short-term vocational training to assist them in gaining employment. All participants were carefully monitored to ensure they have the resources and tools necessary to complete high school. In addition, the team opened the 100th school built by Room to Read since opening in Laos in 2005.

## SRI LANKA

Community involvement was a primary element in much of the work in Sri Lanka in 2008. All Room to Read-sponsored buildings were constructed using 100 percent community resources rather than using outside contractors. This not only resulted in a cost savings of 14 percent, but more importantly, resulted in a greater sense of pride and ownership of the schools and libraries by the local community. Room to Read Sri Lanka also reached out to the greater population by hosting a series of monthly education lectures featuring local and regional experts.

## SOUTH AFRICA

With 11 official languages recognized by the South African government, Room to Read South Africa focused on providing educational resources that were accessible to all communities and dialects. To meet that need, in 2008 the country team published seven children's book titles in the country's 11 official languages through the Local Language Publishing program. As part of this program, a Book Development Committee was also created by professional authors who have volunteered to mentor young and upcoming writers and illustrators as well as assess the manuscripts that have been submitted for publishing. Filling key staff positions also allowed the team to forge strong partnerships with the local governments, other NGOs and corporations to provide training for teacher librarians in all existing Room to Read libraries.

## ZAMBIA

As Room to Read Zambia's first full year of operations, 2008 was a year of laying the foundation for future work. An office was secured and core staff hired, and in October, the Zambia office celebrated its official launch by hosting a donor trek. Following the identification of key stakeholders and performing a needs assessment, 50 libraries were established and 200 girl scholars were selected and provided with the supplies and support they need to succeed in school.



## BANGLADESH

The most recent addition to the list of countries where Room to Read operates is Bangladesh, where we were officially registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in July 2008. The Government of Bangladesh has made primary education a top priority, but due to overcrowded schools and high rates of poverty, less than half of the children in primary school advance to secondary school. Beginning in 2009, Room to Read will provide much-needed educational resources to encourage the successful completion of primary and secondary school.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Global Program Innovations

**In 2008, Room to Read took remarkable strides to improve and advance the core programs that have allowed us to achieve a number of successes and milestones. These successes included meeting – and in some cases exceeding – our goals for the year as we continued to expand the breadth and range of our impact in the developing world. We are most proud of the innovative initiatives that we developed as well as our emphasis on expanding our capacity.**

### EXPANDING ON OUR SUCCESSES

Building on the success of the Reading Kit developed in 2007 with support from the Goldman Sachs Foundation, we received a generous grant from the Quality Education in Developing Countries Initiative of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in 2008 to fund the development of a Primary Reading Enhancement Program (PREP) in India. As part of the program and in conjunction with the Indian government, Room to Read will train teachers to implement the Reading Kit, strengthen the reading assessment tools, and develop diagnostic tools for teachers. As a result,

we hope to raise students' reading proficiency to a point where they can take full advantage of the libraries we establish and the local language books we publish.

### DEEPENING OUR REACH THROUGH NEW PROGRAM VARIANTS

As we worked to deepen the scope and quality of our program offerings in 2008, we implemented a number of new program variants to better meet the needs of the children we serve. For our Girls' Education program, this included adding a bridge course for 350 former Kamlari girls in Nepal who had been sold into bonded labor due to a historically accepted social custom among the indigenous Tharu community. Working with a local NGO that facilitates the release of the girls, the course helped prepare these girls to transition back to their schools and communities. Our Local Language Publishing program began publishing "big books" for early readers in addition to the storybooks we continue to publish. We also added the classroom library variant to our Reading Room program for schools that are space constrained.





photo: Dana Smillie



photo: Ramune Ambrozaitis

### BUILDING OUR CAPACITY THROUGH ENHANCEMENTS

In 2008, we enhanced our programs with trainings and seminars such as the Life Skills workshops for our Girls' Education program that focus on key age-related issues like health and hygiene, as well as career guidance to better prepare the girls for the school-to-work transition. We also organized numerous Writer's Workshops and Competitions for the authors and illustrators who participate in our Local Language Publishing program. In addition, we continued to focus on our pre-school training program for teachers in Laos, Vietnam and Sri Lanka, and began developing a "Training of Trainers" model for our libraries in South East Asia and Nepal.

### ASSESSING OUR IMPACT THROUGH MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In addition to 2008 projects being monitored by our staff and partners, we also collected detailed information on 477 schools built through 2007. Each school was visited to: track student enrollment; assess the long-term quality of building construction to inform future designs; determine whether the buildings are still structurally sound; and confirm the facilities are being used for educational purposes. We also set in motion a cross-national evaluation of our Reading Room program

by developing a concept paper and selecting an external evaluator through a competitive bidding process. This evaluation will focus on assessing the impact of Room to Read's school library program on student reading habits and attitudes through interviews with students and teachers in Laos, Nepal and Zambia. Additionally, we conducted Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) workshops in each of our Asian and African countries to build staff capacity and to reinforce and strengthen an M&E perspective across all programs.

### OUR RESULTS

Since 2000, Room to Read has supported over 3 million children by providing them better access to education through:

- Constructing 765 schools
- Establishing over 7,000 libraries
- Publishing 327 new local language children's titles with print runs of over 2.9 million books
- Donating over 2.8 million English language children's books
- Funding 6,817 long-term girls' scholarships
- Establishing 179 computer and language labs

*"Children's education has long been central to what we believe is essential to thrive. The integrity of Room to Read – at every level – inspires our continued and deepening support."* – Elsa and Dave, Room to Read supporters

LOOKING AHEAD

# Strategic Planning

One of the most important activities Room to Read began in 2008 was laying the groundwork for the development of a new Global Strategic Plan – our roadmap for the future.

After an extended period of exponential program growth, Room to Read is taking the time to reflect on our achievements and lessons learned and determine what success will look like in the future. Specifically, we will focus on clarifying our desired impact as an organization and the strategies needed to reach those goals.

To accomplish this, we are developing a comprehensive Global Strategic Plan that will holistically engage the global organization – including our in-country staff, board of directors, advisory board and investors – and key external stakeholders such

as educational experts, local governments and other international and local organizations.

This plan will focus our objectives and allow us to direct our efforts and resources effectively and efficiently, both in the short-term and into the next decade. At the end of 2009, we expect to have a new Global Strategic Plan that will include a revised long-term vision, mission and core strategies.

To help us undertake this process, we have the support of Oliver Wyman Group, one of the world's leading international management consulting groups. In 2008, Oliver Wyman selected Room to Read as one of its three global pro bono partners, generously agreeing to provide consulting services in 2009 to help lead us through our strategic planning process.



## Room to Dream CAMPAIGN

The Room to Dream Campaign is the most ambitious fundraising initiative in our history. In just nine years, Room to Read has become an internationally recognized organization that is transforming the lives of millions of children in developing countries through enhanced educational opportunities. Nonetheless, we remain profoundly aware that hundreds of millions more children are still waiting for their opportunity to learn.

Room to Dream is an important next step for scaling our proven model by expanding the Reading Room and Local Language Publishing programs. The success of Room to Dream will mean that by 2010 we will have created over 11,000 libraries in impoverished communities across the world. We will fill these libraries with over 500 original Room to Read children's book titles, representing five million new books published through our Local Language Publishing program – plus an additional four million donated English-language children's books. By the end of the campaign, nine million books will be available to children throughout the developing world thanks to Room to Read!

We began this US\$60 million campaign in 2008 and when it concludes in 2010, we will have reached over five million children worldwide, tripling the number of young people we served as of year-end 2007.



photo: Andrea McTamoney

*"We are involved with Room to Read because their work is foundational to the future of every individual, family, community and nation it touches. Our family believes that reading creates self reliance and inspires hope. Room to Read's work is impactful and we are excited about the lives that will be transformed by it."*

– Bradford and Sherry, Room to Read supporters

## OUR GROWING GLOBAL MOVEMENT

# The Momentum Continues

**Room to Read saw tremendous growth in our global movement, from the expansion of fundraising chapters worldwide to the development of strategic communications partnerships to the marketing, press and speaking opportunities that further propelled us into the spotlight and strengthened our global brand.**

### EXPANDING OUR GLOBAL NETWORK

Our volunteer chapter network continued to grow stronger as we added 12 new chapters around the world including Dubai, Los Angeles, Mumbai and Sydney. We now have 40 volunteer chapters on four continents. Collectively, over 3,000 volunteers help Room to Read network, plan events and raise awareness. In 2008, chapters raised over US\$6.4 million – more than 28 percent of Room to Read’s operating budget for the year.

### BUILDING OUR COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERSHIPS

In 2008, Room to Read was selected as the exclusive pro bono partner of Ketchum, a leading public relations firm operating in 69 offices and affiliates worldwide. Ketchum will focus its efforts on helping Room to Read develop key messaging as we enter our second decade. They



will also help us secure high-profile press and speaking opportunities; expand our corporate relationships and alliances for increased marketing and fundraising opportunities; build opportunities for our local chapters to secure press coverage in their local communities; and assist with the development of our website functionality.

### INCREASING OUR MEDIA ATTENTION

Room to Read had another fantastic year of media opportunities around the globe. For instance, Dubai Cares, a leading global foundation, launched their “Million Book Challenge” initiative which gained Room to Read attention in the *Wall Street Journal* as well as countless press mentions around the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere in the Middle East.



Other media attention in 2008 included coverage in *Readers' Digest*, *Newsweek*, *Financial Times*, *GOOD* magazine, *Edutopia* magazine, CNN and the re-airing of John Wood’s appearance on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The *Stanford Social Innovation Review* also profiled Room to Read in their July 2008 issue in their section titled “What Works.”

### CHAPTERS AROUND THE WORLD

**North America** Aspen Valley Atlanta Austin Boston Calgary Chicago Dallas Denver/Boulder Edmonton Greenwich Los Angeles Loveland Minneapolis/St. Paul New York Orange County Portland Salt Lake City San Diego San Francisco Seattle St. Louis Toronto Vail Vancouver Washington DC

**Asia & Australia** Dubai Hong Kong Melbourne Mumbai Singapore Sydney Tokyo

**Europe** Amsterdam Brussels Edinburgh London Munich Oxford Paris Zurich



## FURTHERING OUR RECOGNITION THROUGH AWARDS



For the third year in a row, Room to Read was honored with Charity Navigator’s “4-star” rating (their highest),

which designates us among the most effective and efficient charities in the world. Only 10 percent of NGOs rated by Charity Navigator have received three consecutive 4-star ratings.

Room to Read was also honored to receive the Presidential Citation for International Innovation from the American Library Association. In 2008, Room to Read also remained a *Fast Company*/Monitor Group “Social Capitalist” Award winner (for the fifth consecutive year) and a Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship recipient.



## CONTINUING OUR WORLDWIDE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

John Wood continued to travel the globe speaking to key influential audiences around the world including those at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York and Hong Kong, the Skoll World Forum in Oxford and the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Erin Ganju also addressed prominent audiences at a number of Bay Area conferences including the Global Social Venture Competition supported by the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley.



photo: Dana Smillie

*“Room to Read not only deftly uses existing local resources, it also cleverly pursues new ideas. First, the organization tries new ideas on a small scale to see if they work. If a project shows potential, the organization then scales it up.”* – Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer 2008

# TOP CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION

# Sponsors

Corporations and foundations continue to show increasing support for Room to Read's results-oriented model. Blue chip funders from around the world and in all different sectors provided key support for Room to Read's global operations, as did some of the world's leading foundations.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of our corporate and foundation supporters for their generous contributions, in particular our top corporate partners for providing very significant amounts of financial and in-kind contributions that we require to scale our programs and reach millions of children across Asia and Africa.

## Top Corporate and In-Kind Supporters



**Credit Suisse** continued its long-standing partnership

with Room to Read and became our leading corporate supporter in 2008 through two distinct grants. A grant from Credit Suisse's new Global Education Initiative is allowing Room to Read to support schools and libraries across Asia and Africa as well as to provide strategic core support to our work in Africa. Additionally, a grant through Credit Suisse Asia Pacific helped us grow our Girls' Education program by sponsoring 850 girls for one year in India and Vietnam.

### Qualcomm's Wireless Reach™

initiative is supporting a pilot to create wireless computer labs in Vietnam and Nepal. Together Room to Read and Wireless Reach will set up 11 labs that are connected to the Internet via Qualcomm's 3G technology, giving hundreds of students access to global information for the first time.



The Goldman Sachs Foundation

**Goldman Sachs** continues to be a leading corporate partner of Room to Read, sponsoring the establishment of 450 libraries over three years, as well as the creation and pilot of a Reading Kit to promote reading skills for young children.

**Abraaj Capital** partners with Room to Read to fund a variety of projects throughout South Asia as part of the firm's commitment to the MENASA (Middle East, North Africa, South Asia) region.



**Barclays Capital** is a top corporate supporter of our Reading Room and Local Language

Publishing programs, providing key capital to grow these programs in South East Asia and South Africa.

**Scholastic Inc.** has been



a leading in-kind donation partner since 2001, donating more than 1.5 million English-language children's books for our network of libraries in Asia and Africa.

*"In Room to Read, Credit Suisse has found a partner which embodies the principles that guide us in our corporate citizenship activities: 'innovate, educate and participate.' We are proud to support Room to Read's efforts to break the cycle of poverty in the developing world through the transformative power of education."*

– Hans-Ulrich Doerig, Chairman of Credit Suisse Group and Chairman of the Credit Suisse Foundation

**Corporate & Foundation Donors \$50K and over  
(1/1/2008-12/31/2008)**

ABeam Consulting Ltd.  
Abraaj Capital  
Alexander Gallo Holdings, LLC  
Aurora Fund of Symphysis Foundation, Zurich  
Barclays Capital  
Better World Books  
Bloomberg LP  
CB Richard Ellis  
CAF Australia  
Credit Suisse  
Deutsche Bank  
Dodge & Cox Investment Managers  
Eureko Achmea Foundation  
Foundation for Global Community  
Four Acre Trust  
Goldman Sachs Foundation  
JPMorgan Chase Foundation  
The Kadoorie Charitable Foundation  
Microsoft Corporation  
Neiman Marcus Direct  
Prudential Corporation Asia  
Qualcomm, Inc.  
Swire Pacific Limited

Symantec Corporation  
The C COM Foundation  
The David and Elaine Potter Foundation  
The Futura Trust  
The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation  
The Lehman Brothers Foundation  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
Tudor Foundation, Inc.  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Zennström Philanthropies

**In-Kind Donors \$50K and over  
(1/1/2008-12/31/2008)**

Brother's Brother Foundation  
Egmont UK  
Pearson Foundation  
Sabre Foundation  
Salesforce.com  
Scholastic Inc.  
Ten Speed Press  
The Asia Foundation

Room to Read would also like to recognize Credit Suisse for their in-kind support of office space in London and Hong Kong and Lafarge for their gift of donated vehicles.

*“Goldman Sachs is proud to partner with Room to Read, which provides a business-like approach to meeting the educational challenges of the developing world. We are promoting the value of literacy and education in India by partnering with Room to Read to establish libraries and develop educational materials.”*

– Dina Powell, Managing Director and Global Head of the Office of Corporate Engagement, Goldman Sachs



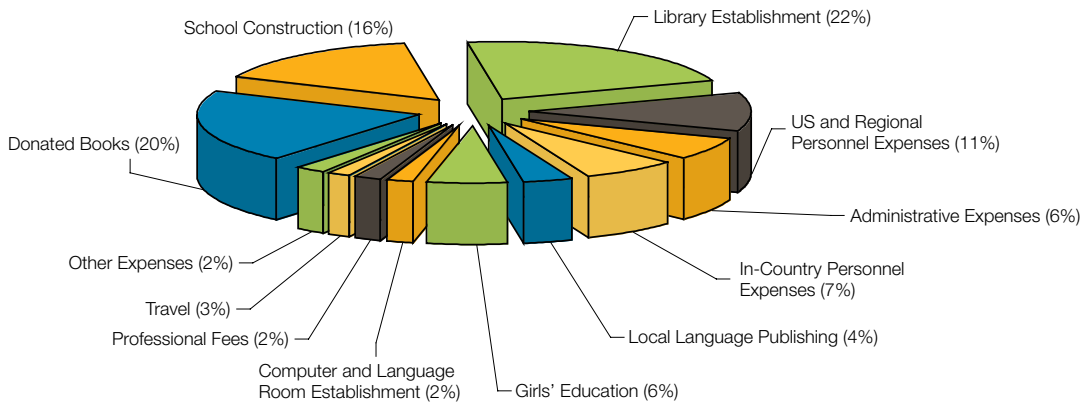
# Financial Statement

**At Room to Read, we judiciously balance ambitious program objectives and operating efficiency. This discipline is a hallmark of Room to Read and it will continue to guide management decisions in 2009.**

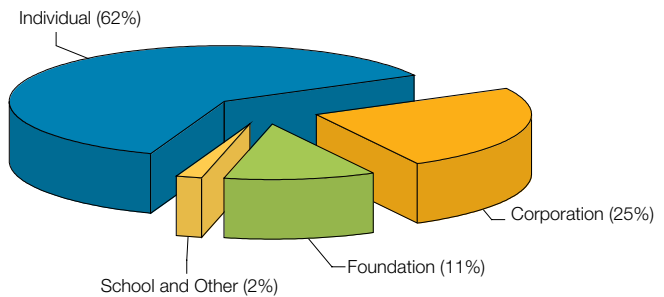
**HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR 2008 FINANCIALS INCLUDE:**

- Robust revenue growth with US\$21.7 million in cash and stock donations – a 29 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$16.8 million.
- Secured US\$4.5 million in in-kind donations – primarily children’s books donated by publishers. This constitutes a 3.5 percent increase compared to the prior year.
- Raised US\$5.7 million outside the US through foreign fundraising chapters and affiliates – a 25 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$4.5 million.
- Invested US\$20.2 million towards our programs – a 28 percent increase over the prior year’s total of US\$15.8 million.
- Spent 85 percent of our total expenses on programs – only 15 cents out of every dollar spent went towards overhead, earning us Charity Navigator’s 4-star rating for efficiency.
- Capped worldwide fundraising expenses at US\$1.8 million – only 8 cents of every dollar went towards fundraising.

**Program Expense by Type**



**Donations by Type of Donor**

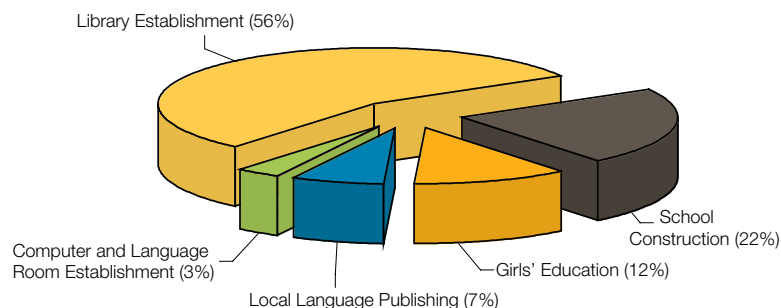


**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**  
for the years ended December 31, 2008 and 2007

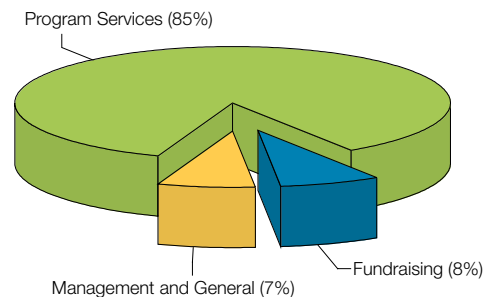
	2008	2007
<b>Support and Revenue:</b>		
Corporation	\$5,449,609	\$2,635,473
Foundation	\$2,447,819	\$1,829,358
Individual	\$13,363,196	\$12,053,154
School and Other	\$436,610	\$260,238
Donations in Kind	\$4,453,739	\$4,303,149
Book Sales	\$26,261	\$16,509
Dividends and interest	\$384,487	\$459,435
Realized/Unrealized Gain/ (Loss) on FX Transactions	\$(13,941)	\$(35,416)
Realized/Unrealized Gain/ (Loss) on Investments	\$(662,899)	\$13,063
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$25,884,881</b>	<b>\$21,534,963</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>		
Program Services		
Computer and Language Room Establishment	\$357,388	\$522,704
Donated Books	\$4,115,729	\$4,137,663
Girls' Education	\$1,194,232	\$593,048
Library Establishment	\$4,482,186	\$2,858,784
Local Language Publishing	\$743,919	\$595,133
School Construction	\$3,145,447	\$2,878,497
In-Country Personnel Expenses	\$1,389,611	\$821,535
US and Regional Personnel Expenses	\$2,150,145	\$1,099,463
Conferences and Meetings	\$179,979	\$144,820
Expansion Costs	\$251,714	\$61,686
Licensing, Filing & Organizational Dues	\$14,008	\$25,942
Administrative Expenses (e.g., rent, supplies, IT infrastructure)	\$1,265,442	\$1,063,011
Other Donated Supplies	\$193,348	\$95,434
Professional Fees (e.g., consultants, temporary help, recruiting)	\$417,409	\$483,135
Travel	\$334,126	\$391,301
Total Program Services	\$20,234,685	\$15,772,157
Management and General	\$1,686,126	\$1,181,683
Fundraising	\$1,818,954	\$1,272,555
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$23,739,765</b>	<b>\$18,226,395</b>
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,416,804	\$1,025,064
Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$728,312	\$2,283,504
Unrestricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$5,557,253	\$4,532,189
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	\$7,033,460	\$4,749,956
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$14,735,829</b>	<b>\$12,590,713</b>

Currency in USD.

**Functional Program Expense**



**Total Expenses**



# ROOM TO READ

# Board and Staff

## Board of Directors

### **Hilary Valentine (Chair)**

Partner, Black & White Design

### **Herb Allen**

President, Allen & Company LLC

### **Christopher Beer**

Founding Member, Ironmark Law Group

### **Craig Bruya**

Former Chief Financial Officer, Microsoft Business Solutions

### **Scott Kapnick**

Managing Partner, Highbridge Capital Management

### **Alastair Mactaggart**

President, Emerald Fund, Inc.

### **Dambisa Moyo**

Economist and Author, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is a Better Way For Africa*

### **John Ridding**

Chief Executive, *Financial Times*

### **Muneer Satter**

Managing Director, Goldman Sachs & Co.

### **John Wood**

Founder, Room to Read

## Advisory Board

### **John Bothamley**

Founder Trustee, Four Acre Trust

### **Rob Flaherty**

President & Senior Partner, Ketchum, Inc.

### **Cory Heyman**

VP & Deputy Director, Academy for Educational Development's Center for Gender Equity

### **Ernest Ludy**

President, EGL Investments, LLC

### **Melissa Ma**

Co-Founder & Managing Director, Asia Alternatives

### **Patte McDowell**

Founder & Board Chair, Cloud 9 Foundation

### **David Monk**

Vice President, NERA Economic Consulting, Oliver Wyman Group

### **Karen Mundy**

Director, Comparative International and Development Education Centre, University of Toronto

### **M.R. Rangaswami**

Co-founder, Sand Hill Group LLC

### **Fernando Reimers**

Director, Global Education & International Education Policy Program, Harvard Graduate School of Education

### **Dr. Carol Knuth Sakoian**

Vice President, Scholastic Inc.

### **Tim Wood**

Technical Project Manager, Grameen Foundation

### **Melody Zavala**

Director, Books for Asia, Asia Foundation

## Management Team

**John Wood**, Executive Chairman

**Erin Ganju**, Chief Executive Officer

**Joanne Chou**, Chief Financial Officer

**Lisa Hogen**, Chief Development Officer

**Lori McLeese**, Chief People Officer

**Steven Zimmerman**, Chief of Operations

## Regional Directors

**Dhir Jhingran**, Asia Regional Director

**Wiseman Ngwata**, Africa Regional Director

## Country Directors

**Florence Chibwasha**, Zambia Country Director

**Uddalak Datta**, India Country Director

**Glenfrey de Mel**, Sri Lanka Country Director

**Zaki Hasan**, Bangladesh Country Director

**Kall Kann**, Cambodia Country Director

**Christopher Mothupi**, South Africa Country Director

**Bac Nguyen**, Vietnam Country Director

**Somphet Phongphachan**, Laos Country Director

**Pushkar Shrestha**, Nepal Country Director

# In 2008, Room to Read

Trained more than 6,800 teachers, principals and librarians to work in Room to Read program sites.

Established a library every 4 hours.

Distributed 3 books a minute.

Constructed a school every 1.5 days.

Provided access to a library for US\$11 per child.

Provided over one million school days to girls who would never have had the opportunity to receive an education.



\* All averaged numbers based on data from 2008.

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

*\* Office space in Hong Kong and  
London has been generously  
provided by Credit Suisse*

World Change Starts with Educated Children.®