# Room to Read

# LITERACY PROGRAM

## Developing Independent Readers and Lifelong Learners

# UNDERSTANDING LITERACY

## LITERACY: A GAME CHANGER

Literacy reflects the potential of human learning and growth. The scope has expanded from merely reading with comprehension to being an ethical, informed, and independent reader. As early learners are exposed to an influx of information, they need to analyze and use this information to expand and improve their existing knowledge system. These foundational learning skills demand the development of independent reading and learning skills in early learners and can only be achieved through a strong foundation of early grade literacy. Several national and international reports indicate the direct effect reading has on early grade literacy to develop independent readers and lifelong learners. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 clearly prioritizes achieving universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy skills at the primary level by 2026-27. This also contributes to realizing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of achieving equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. Despite actively progressing towards universalization of primary education, for children in India, simply going to school does not ensure learning. There are reports and observations by credible practitioners that reveal the magnitude of students' struggle with emergent literacy.

- According to the report of NAS 2021, the average of the performance of students in Language at the National level in grade 3 is 323 (in the scaled score of 500). It has declined to 309 in grade 5 and has continued to decrease in grade 8 and grade 10. Even more alarming is the fact that most of the states performed significantly below the overall national score except Kerala, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Punjab.
- According to the ASER Report 2021, there has been a significant drop in student performance, which may continue to dip unless adequate measures are taken. Quoting Bhattacharjee Suman's Article in ASER 2021, it says that failing immediate steps to address the needs of our youngest learners, ASER data on learning outcomes may be even worse in future years than it has been over the last decade and a half.

## LITERACY PROGRAM

'Room to Read India's Literacy Program supports early grade children as they develop into independent readers and lifelong learners. To achieve this, we combine the learning to read with the magic of loving to read.

Using nearly two decades of field experience and scientific research, we have designed a unique and innovative approach- The Comprehensive Literacy Approach. The approach enables an environment that helps early learners acquire knowledge, unlock their potential, achieve their goals, and actively participate in their community and society at large.

Under our Literacy Program, we train teachers, create quality books & curricular materials, and establish child-friendly libraries filled with diverse quality-enriched children's books in local languages that can be enjoyed at school or home. To ensure a sustainable route, we partner with local communities, governments, and the publishing industry to test and implement innovative models that help children attain foundational literacy skills and develop a love for reading.

### Three Pillars of Comprehensive Literacy experience for children

**These pillars are further divided into nine components for effective implementation and instruction**

1. **Oral language development:** the ability to comprehend and use the language effectively

2. **Orthographic expertise:** understanding sounds and symbols in a language

3. **Exposure to a variety of rich texts:** Love for reading while learning to read



COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY APPROACH

- Focus on both reading skills and reading habit
- Focus on explicit reading and writing instruction
- Availability of appropriate reading material
- Provision of a school library
- Developing home as a learning space
- Dedicated time for reading instruction and reading activities
- Training of teacher on explicit reading pedagogy
- Monitoring and assessment
- Enable reading environment

## APPROACH TO SCALE

Using the scaffolded 'I DO, WE DO, YOU DO' approach, we have positively impacted the Indian education scenario

- We encourage the development of reading habits, and our libraries are a contributing factor
- We contribute to greater reading fluency and comprehension among children
- We train teachers and librarians in literacy and library best practices
- We create engaging and evidence-based instructional materials for reading instruction for teachers and early grade learners
- We act as both, a non-profit publisher and an active supporter of existing local for-profit publishers
- We simultaneously advocate with the governments to adopt library standards and support systems that ensure every child has access to a child-friendly library filled with developmentally appropriate, diverse, and engaging books
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted our Literacy Program to reach and support children through innovative offline and online modes

**Create Evidence of the success of model**

**Prepare the system for scale up: Simplify, Standardize and Institutionalize**

**Government lead scale up with Room to Read India technical assistance**

# I DO

# WE DO

# YOU DO

DEMONSTRATION MODEL

WE DO COLLABORATION MODEL

EXPANSION MODEL

# REACH TO ENRICH

**Children supported**
33,37,230

**Active schools**
1,32,564

**Books distributed**
4,34,947

**Literacy Program**

**Libraries benefiting schools**
1,43,632*

**Instruction based projects**
550

**Teachers trained**
2,55,376
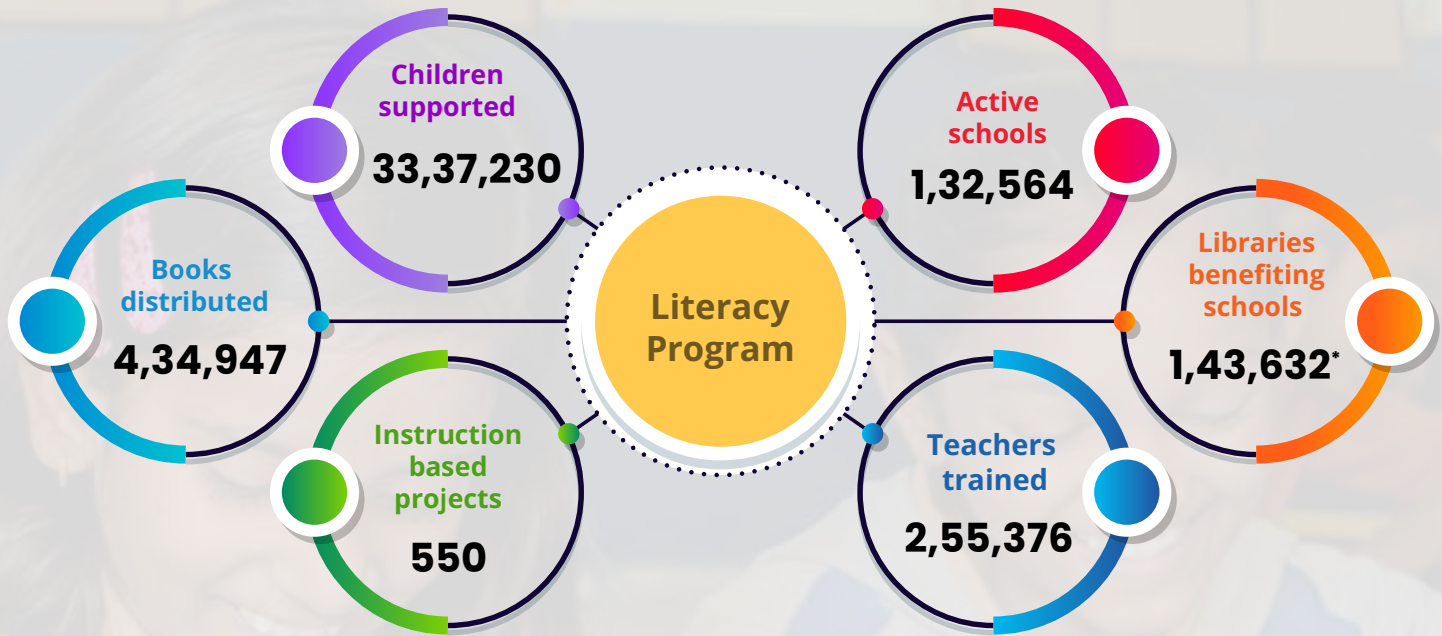
(January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022)
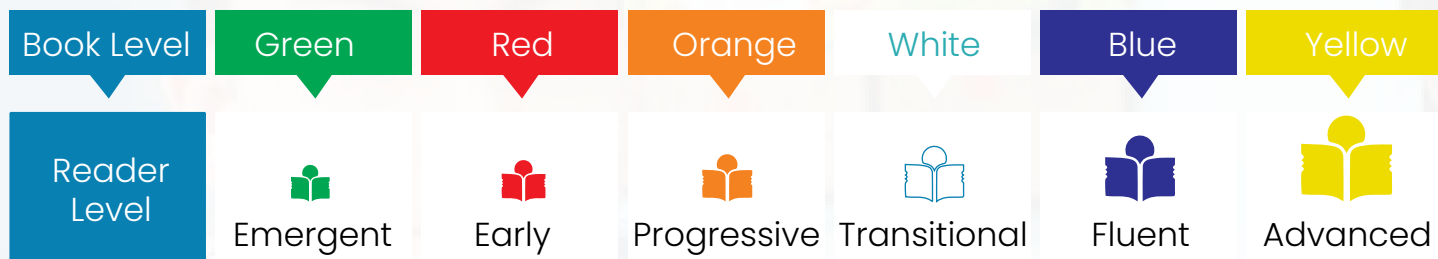
*This data is cumulative

# CREATE AND INNOVATE

## BOOK PUBLISHING PROGRAM

Started in 2005, our Book Publishing Program ensures culturally and developmentally appropriate books in local languages for young readers. These young readers are exposed to a variety of writing styles and genres to match up with distinct development levels of reading skills. These books have been published in many regional languages, including Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Kannada, and Urdu.

**226* titles**
have been published, and
**61,97,356* books**
have been distributed across different states in India

*The data mentioned is cumulative

**GROWBY Model is a book leveling standard comprising six reading levels to indicate the reading ability of a child.**

| Book Level | Green | Red | Orange | White | Blue | Yellow |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reader Level | Emergent | Early | Progressive | Transitional | Fluent | Advanced |

## HOME AS A LEARNING SPACE

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the traditional educational system. Most of our young learners do not come from a home environment that encourages learning, although it is crucial, considering that children spend more time at home. While constantly striving to find as many creative solutions as possible to mitigate the challenges, Room to Read India recognized the enhanced role played by parents, guardians, and caregivers to support the child's learning during the crisis.

A new initiative by Room to Read India, Home as a Learning Space, was started to tackle this issue by creating a strong linkage between the school and the community. Going beyond the classroom structure, Room to Read India worked with teachers, local community members, parents, and caregivers by strengthening their capacities and encouraging them to promote a learning environment at home.

## LEARNING & INNOVATION

The onset of COVID-19 led to school closures. The Government and many organizations working in the education sector displayed agility in establishing alternative learning systems. In 2020, Room to Read India introduced EdTech to connect and scale learning beyond school. Literacy skills and life skills are the core of the programmatic interventions that are being strengthened through the Edtech interventions to minimize learning loss and keep children on track to becoming readers. We reached out to more children than ever before by customizing our children's books in local languages and making them accessible online. Together with this, we continued:

- Providing virtual training for educators
- Sharing read-alouds online and via radio and television
- Providing audio games and flipbooks for children that require minimal adult supervision
- Staying in touch with students and families through messaging platforms
- Supporting parents with the tools and knowledge to support their child's learning at home
- Distributing hard copies of resources to those children who did not have  internet access, through locally available infrastructure

## LIBRARY RATING SYSTEM

Room to Read India's Library Rating System ensures our libraries are high-functioning and sustainable through bi-yearly assessments that track 15 indicators on a prioritized checklist and rate performance. The system helps prioritize and identify schools that need extra support.



## Room to Read

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