



**40%**

of rural South Asia  
has no access to  
electricity.



**Access to technology is challenging in rural South Asia.** 700 million people in India and half of Nepal have unreliable electricity or none at all. 74% of people in Bhutan do not use the Internet. Most rural schools lack access to electricity and the Internet, much less computers and other digital resources.

Despite these statistics, there are increasing opportunities to bridge the digital divide. 70% of people have mobile phones — a powerful information tool. Governments are focusing more resources on rural electrification and Internet access, giving villagers the chance to access essential information.

## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

READ Global employs sustainable technologies as powerful tools to bring critical information to rural communities. READ Centers offer information communications technology (ICT) solutions based on the needs of each community: from free access to computers and the Internet, to training programs that build digital skills:

- **Computers and the Internet:** Training programs in basic typing, Internet use, and Microsoft Office software help rural villagers access information, communicate online with their loved ones, and become more competitive for jobs.
- **Mobile and radio:** Training programs use cell phones and local radio as tools to create and disseminate information on agriculture, health, and more. This helps bridge the information divide for rural villagers who lack access to computers, or who cannot use them due to illiteracy.
- **Sustainable hardware and alternative energy:** We are installing solar panels and low-energy hardware in many Centers to reduce costs and provide a more dependable source of electricity, allowing villagers to use technology on a more regular basis.
- **Online educational content:** We are piloting ways to use the Internet to improve educational outcomes and livelihoods. In Nepal, we are creating online content to help students improve standardized test scores, and building a digital database of commonly-asked questions on agriculture and health. In Bhutan, we use tablets and educational games to engage kids. In India, we offer distance learning courses for University students.



*"I could save my tomatoes from disease due to the knowledge that I gained through the radio programs and books provided by the library... I didn't think it would be that easy. I only wish I'd known sooner."*

— Parsaram Dangi, farmer, Nepal



Over 50%

of READ Center users surveyed are more comfortable using computers to access information and resources because of their Center.

## OUR IMPACT

Our monitoring and evaluation metrics show that information and communications technology (ICT) resources and programs have great potential to create impact:

- **More than two-thirds of villagers** surveyed have used technology to access **information about livelihoods**, and 38% about income generating activities.
- **Nearly half of villagers** surveyed (47%) in Nepal report that they use their Center's **computer resources to help with school**.
- **Almost half** (47%) of Center users in India used **ICT resources to look for work**. Villagers shared in focus groups that improved computer skills helped make them more eligible for jobs.
- In South Asia, parents are often forced to migrate to other countries in search of work. **Four in 10** surveyed Center users in Bhutan use **ICT resources to communicate** with family abroad.

## FEATURED PARTNERS



**Mahatma Gandhi University** and **Karnataka State University** are partnering with READ in India to offer a distance learning program through READ Centers. The program helps villagers pursue university degrees through online classes and examinations at their local READ Center, so they don't have to move to an urban area to go to school.



UNESCO has partnered with READ in India to use information communications technologies for a "right-to-education" awareness building program. UNESCO provides multi-media tools for trainings, and READ uses the organization's free software to digitize information available at READ libraries.



REACH OUT TO ASIA  
أيادي الخير نحو آسيا

عضو في مؤسسة قطر  
Member of Qatar Foundation

**The Reach Out to Asia Foundation**, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has begun an exciting new four-year partnership with READ to allow us to build new Centers, develop new youth programs, and strengthen our information & communication technology (ICT) resources and programs—benefiting approximately 100,000 people.



**Technology for the People** is partnering with READ in the Karnataka State of India to provide computer and Internet training to rural villagers, including through open-source educational software such as video downloads from Khan Academy. A digital literacy project was also launched to educate families on how to access and apply for government services online.