

# 2015 Annual Report





# From our Executive Director

Thank you for all the heartfelt support and encouragement we received as our strength and courage was truly tested in 2015. Since the two massive earthquakes hit Nepal on April 25th and May 12th, many rural communities we serve have faced tremendous hardship and a slow steady road to recovery. Thousands of people lost their homes and their livelihoods. Despite the challenges that remain for Nepal, it was an awe-inspiring year to witness the strength of our network of READ Centers as they have supported each other through this difficult period.

The resilience we have seen confirms that empowering communities to manage their own crises rather than waiting for external aid is truly the best way forward. This has been READ's approach since we began our work in 1991 and we are more committed than ever to this sustainable approach to community development.

Nevertheless, READ still continued on a path of growth and meaningful impact in 2015 as we also saw India and Bhutan expand their reach to new communities, contributing to our mission to serve the rural poor and facilitate graduation towards self reliance and empowerment.

These milestones in South Asia were only made possible because of the many donors who invested in our rebuilding efforts and the program partners who believe in our model's steady approach to community development. We are absolutely thrilled to have you be a part of the READ Effect!

In service,



Tina Sciabica  
Executive Director



Deborah Jacobs  
Board Chair



Interactive games are played at the temporary library that the Nuwakot community constructed within 2 weeks of 2015's second earthquake.



## Global Highlights

**86** READ CENTERS **2M** VILLAGERS REACHED

**1.5M** villagers had access to free internet through READ Centers

**41,223** trainings attended, including women's empowerment, technology, and education

**273** villages were reached by READ Centers

**119** sustaining enterprises launched to date

**7** new READ Centers were opened



READ believes **empowering** rural communities is critical to alleviating global poverty. We envision a world where **individuals, families and entire communities** have access to the knowledge, resources and opportunities necessary **to build more prosperous futures.**



March 2015: Opening day at Kalika READ Center, located in Bardiya District, Nepal.



# By The Numbers

Every year, READ Centers change thousands of lives across rural South Asia through unique trainings and resources tailored to each community's specific needs. Here are just a few examples of our impact in 2015.

21,620

trainees learned about microfinance, business management, marketing, and livelihood skills.



3,486

trainees were empowered by information and communications technology, including computer and radio trainings.



3,470

men and women heard from experts about health and sanitation and had access to medical services.



10,949

villagers were trained in agriculture, including farming and organic pesticides.



15,547

children participated in art classes, writing competitions, and reading programs.



15,103

villagers learned more about civic participation, leading to an increase of women running for office and voting.



2,679

women were empowered with literacy trainings, confidence building, and civic participation.



1,805

READ Center users learned how they can combat climate change through environmental education.



# Recovery in Nepal

Two massive earthquakes tragically struck Nepal in April and May of 2015, killing thousands of people and destroying countless homes, particularly in rural areas. Both the immediate and long-term disaster response by the network of READ Centers in Nepal demonstrated that READ's community-driven approach did exactly what we expected: it empowered rural communities to take immediate action to



*Youth from our READ Nepal Centers played a crucial part in distributing relief supplies*

meet their most urgent needs, instead of waiting for days or even weeks for external aid to arrive. In the weeks after the disaster, READ Centers mobilized more than 1,000 volunteers and provided direct relief to more than 50,000 people by distributing food, blankets, tents and medical supplies. It was inspiring to witness the connection between READ communities. Those that didn't suffer damage quickly mobilized to help those that had. It reaffirmed READ Global's commitment to locally-owned, community-driven solutions.

Six of the 62 READ Centers in Nepal were seriously damaged and needed to be rebuilt. In these same communities, most of the homes were destroyed. Yet many communities wanted to rebuild or repair their READ Centers even before homes could be rebuilt, demonstrating just how vital these centers are to these villages in their daily lives. READ Centers

have always served as hubs for many activities and programs that serve communities, but in this time of crisis, communities relied on them more than ever. READ Centers provided both a platform for immediate disaster relief efforts as well as longer-term programs to help the community rebuild and be prepared should disaster strike again. In one community where 99% of the homes were destroyed, they worked with READ to build a temporary READ Center within two weeks of the second earthquake, and that center was soon being used by the local government to register earthquake victims, in addition to providing the only space where villagers could access the Internet and stay connected with the rest of the world.

We have learned a lot and are still adapting. We've added new programs to ensure that communities with READ Centers can be even more effective in their response if there is another disaster, including Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Training and earthquake-resilient designs. These changes to our approach have been made possible by funding and technical assistance from German relief organization Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund. Additionally,

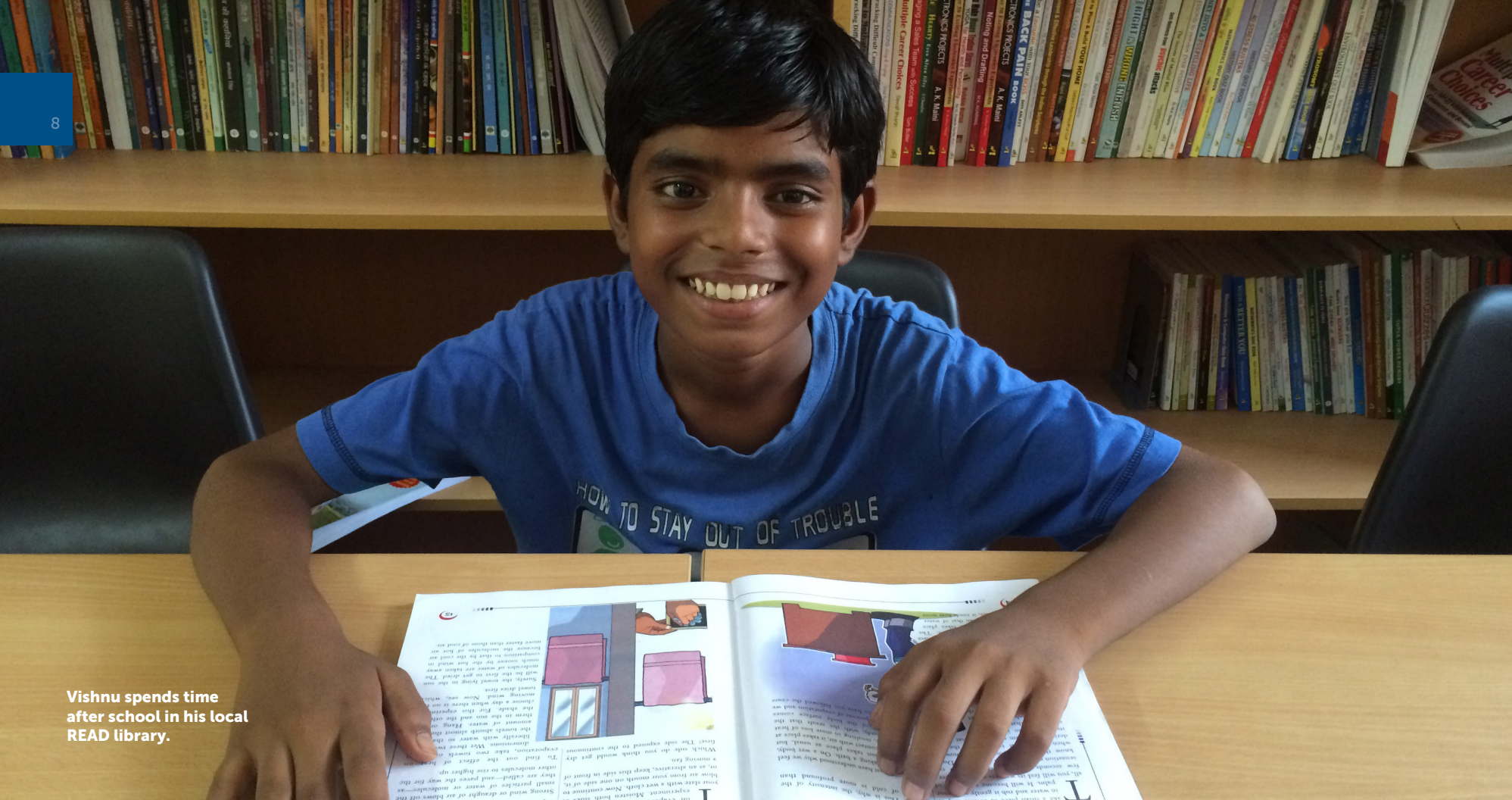
READ also introduced expressive art and earthquake trauma relief programs for both children and adults, providing safe spaces for earthquake victims to heal from their experience and begin to rebuild their lives.



*Youth affected by the earthquakes partake in a session of READ's Expressive Art and Earthquake Trauma Relief sessions*

**If you are interested in helping our communities in Nepal rebuild, please contact READ Global at [info@readglobal.org](mailto:info@readglobal.org).**





Vishnu spends time after school in his local READ library.

## Finding a Voice Through Books

### VISHNU WAS ALWAYS THE SHY ONE IN HIS CLASS – TIMID, NERVOUS, AND QUIET TO OTHER CLASSMATES AND TEACHERS.

Although he was a bright boy with a very creative mind, he had little access to learning materials, which took a heavy toll on his self-confidence.

Vishnu's life was changed after the launch of the READ Center in Wazirabad, India. As he started attending READ Center classes regularly, Vishnu began to develop a passion for reading. He checked out books from the READ library on a daily basis and became a top student in his computer class, eventually transforming into a completely different and engaged student.

His ability to unlock new ideas and information through stories and the Internet had instilled a

self-assurance that he didn't realize was even possible. With this newfound confidence, he now answers his teacher's questions without hesitation, has built friendships in his classroom, and excels in his studies!

**“Before, we had nothing to do after school. Now, I come to the library and read books and participate in all the center activities. I feel that our village has got a wonderful opportunity through READ Center.”**



## New Futures For Her Children

**RINZIN PEMO, 42-YEAR OLD MOTHER OF THREE, NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO SCHOOL BUT WANTED BETTER FOR HER CHILDREN.**

"I want them to have a good education," she says. "I don't want them to miss out like I did."

In 2014, Rinzin was introduced to the Changjiji READ Center in Bhutan and began attending a weaving training program for women. She also eventually became involved with other educational trainings that were not available to her when she was a child. Today, Rinzin attends adult literacy classes at her local READ Center four days a week and all three of her children attend school as well.

"I had no knowledge of yathra weaving, so I'm so glad I enrolled. I learned so many skills, and most

importantly, I learned that I definitely want my children to have an education."

In 2015, Rinzin was chosen as a trainer to impart the same weaving skills to another group of women. Today, she still weaves and continues to bring in income for her family.

“

***I feel so happy to teach my friends and pass on the skills that I have learned. It's been such a fulfilling experience."***



Rinzin practices her new writing skills in a literacy training.





A READ Nepal girls' soccer team wins their first trophy.

## Empowering Nepal's Youth

**DURING ONE OF OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TRIPS TO NEPAL, SHE SAT AMONGST A CROWD CHEERING ON TWO SOCCER TEAMS – BUT THIS WASN'T YOUR TYPICAL SOCCER MATCH.**

What made this match special is that the players were all teenage girls from rural Nepal – girls who never dreamed they'd be wearing shorts and playing sports in public. Now, they're battling for a championship trophy, with people of all ages and genders from their community cheering them on!

READ's soccer program – made possible by our partners at Reach Out To Asia and Restless Development – is the first of its kind in these villages. Gender norms in Nepal dictate that girls are typically not encouraged - or even allowed - to play sports, much less battle for a championship trophy. These soccer clubs are changing a lot for

these young women, giving them the courage to aspire for something different and ambitious.

And it's not just the girls! Young men are also becoming empowered through newly-launched youth clubs at several READ Centers. Everyday, thousands of boys and girls are getting guidance about career planning, technology training, tutoring and more.

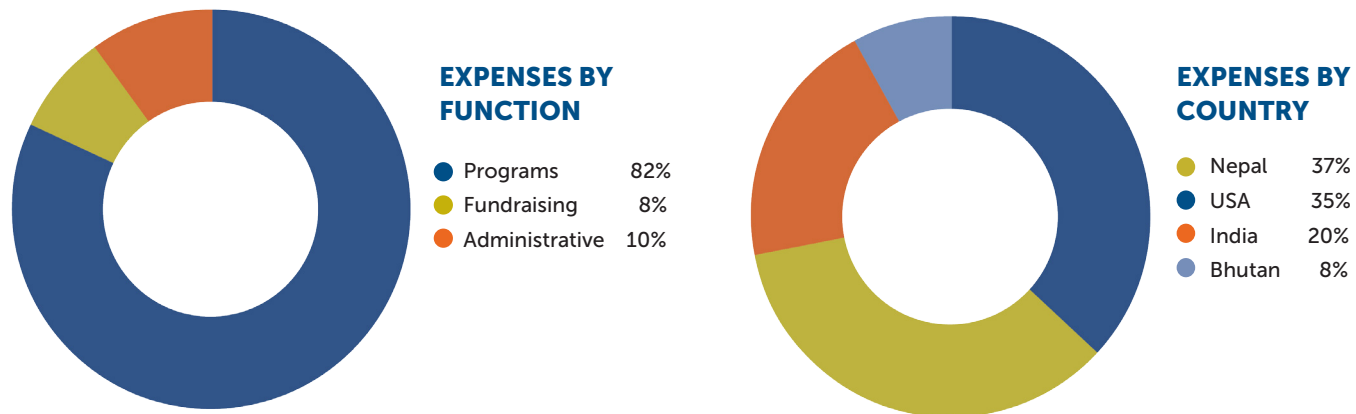
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***We now have confidence and a sense of pride from playing in public for our community members.”***



# Financials

In the final year of the capacity building grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, READ was able to continue the expansion of the ICT upgrades for our centers in Nepal, India and Bhutan. READ Global also cultivated the capacity of the country office staff to build their expertise on fundraising, program development, organizational enhancements and community mobilization.



## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the fiscal years ended  
December 31, 2015 and 2014

(US Dollars)	2015	2014
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>2,692,217</b>	<b>2,490,725</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Programs		
Bhutan	209,171	*
India	529,199	*
Nepal	967,062	*
USA	434,085	*
Total Program Expenses	2,139,517	1,704,663
Administrative	273,758	341,987
Fundraising	198,183	328,323
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,611,458</b>	<b>2,374,973</b>
<b>NET ASSETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>2,333,911</b>	<b>3,635,282</b>

*\*In FY14, READ utilized a consolidated approach to financial statement presentations and therefore did not separate the program expenses by country in years prior to FY15.*



## Institutional Partners

**BILL & MELINDA**  
GATES foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation continues to be an integral partner for READ, providing capacity-building funding to help strengthen our program design, ICT program, monitoring and evaluation processes, and fundraising capacity.



ASB Nepal is funding the rebuilding of earthquake-damaged READ Centers, in an earthquake-resilient and accessible manner, and building the capacity of READ staff to offer Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction programs.



Reach Out to Asia (Member of the Qatar Foundation), in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is partnering with READ in Nepal on a four-year, \$2 million grant that is allowing us to significantly increase the number of READ Centers, develop new youth programs, and strengthen our information and communications technology (ICT) resources and programs—benefiting approximately 100,000 people.



Caterpillar Foundation partnered with READ to continue our expansion in India to the states of Karnataka and Maharashtra. Through this \$500,000 partnership, we established six READ Centers and provided communities with educational programs that benefited over 25,000 people.



Accenture has provided funding through its Skills to Succeed program to support skills development for hundreds of women in READ communities in rural India. The program develops women's entrepreneurial skills and facilitates local market connections.



Walmart India completed a three-year partnership with READ to launch a women's empowerment initiative in rural Rajasthan, India providing education, leadership development, and livelihood training to more than 2,500 women in the underprivileged community of Geejgarh.



Amazon India partners with READ India on the Amazon Cares program to deliver Education, Women Skilling, Health Awareness and Youth Development programs in rural communities in Mewat District and Sonapat, Haryana, India.



The Beautiful Store Foundation partnered with READ to establish community safe spaces in Sindhupalchowk District, Nepal in rural villages affected by the earthquakes.



Practical Action and READ continue to implement the Practical Answers program to solicit and respond to thousands of questions from rural villagers on livelihoods, health, and other concerns. Practical Action provides both program and financial support.



UNICEF funded the establishment of 20 Temporary Learning Centers in Nepal in the aftermath of the earthquakes to provide safe spaces for children to continue schooling and education programs in earthquake-affected villages.

**Featured Partners:** Myths and Mountains, Bryan Cave, Techsoup, Salesforce, John Robert Gregg Fund/NY Community Trust,

T&J Meyer Family Foundation, The West Foundation, Google, Norwegian Amateur Theater Association, Kavli Trust and IREX



# READ Global Leadership

## U.S. MANAGEMENT TEAM

### **Tina Sciabica**

Executive Director

### **Naita Saechao Chialvo**

Deputy Director

## ASIA MANAGEMENT TEAM

### **Karma Lhazom**

Bhutan Country Director

### **Geeta Malhotra**

India Country Director

### **Sanjana Shrestha**

Nepal Country Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Strategy and Ops Manager, Effectiveness, Google

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Co-Founder and Chief Strategy Officer, BBMG

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Attorney

### **Melissa Anderson**

Child Psychologist

### **Ed Lhee**

Partner, New Harbor Capital LLC

### **Dr. Antonia Neubauer (Founder)**

President, Myths and Mountains

### **Karen Sage**

Co-Founder, Corporate Visions, Inc.; Owner, Hotel Sutter

### **Sean Wallace**

Managing Partner, IAB Capital