



ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Figures at a Glance

9 New Centers

142 Centers

1,038 Villages serves

440,141 people served in 2024

In 2024, READ trainings reached the following number of individuals:



13,672

Livelihood Skills



26,428

Literacy



892

Entrepreneurship



3,799

Climate Action



5,563

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)



11,025

Safe Migration



10,395

Participants in READ Savings Cooperatives

Letter from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Dear Friends,

Founded more than three decades ago, READ Global has advanced a bold vision: that every community has the potential to chart its own course toward opportunity and resilience. Since launching the first READ Center in rural Nepal, READ's unique model has empowered more than a thousand communities across South Asia to lead, sustain, and multiply their own progress. Currently there are 142 READ Centers providing services that are available to more than 2 million people and new Centers are opening every year.

When Nepal faced conflict, disaster, or the COVID-19 pandemic, it wasn't outsiders who protected and sustained these Centers—it was the community. They became shelters, coordination hubs, and lifelines for connection and hope.

Because of your support, these spaces haven't just survived—they've evolved. This year, communities once bound by bonded labor at brick kilns came together to build their own READ Center—a space for learning, leadership, and liberation. As one woman said:

"Our world used to be just the brick kilns. But now, we have choices. We haven't merely left that life—we're creating a space to transform our community. A place where our daughters can grow up free to dream, to speak, to lead. We're becoming the role models we never had."

This is your legacy. Across Nepal, India, and Bhutan, thousands now access inclusive, dignified, community-led opportunities. Your investment is sparking movements, nurturing confidence, and passing courage from one generation to the next.

Together, we're launching bold new initiatives in youth leadership, climate resilience, digital skills, and entrepreneurship—designed by communities, for communities. We're also documenting our approach so others can build on it globally.

Thank you for walking alongside this work. Your belief is steady, alive, and growing.

With deep gratitude to our staff, board, and every partner in this journey,

Sanjana Shrestha
Executive Director, READ Global

Letter from **READ's Board Chairs**



Dear Friends,

In a time when so much in the world can feel uncertain or overwhelming, it's more important than ever to remember where hope lives—and how it spreads. At READ Global, we see it every day: in individuals discovering their voice, in communities stepping into collective power, and in shared spaces where dignity, courage, and leadership take root.

This year's Annual Report reflects that spirit in action. From children learning to read in Bhutan, to women in India building new livelihoods, to families in Nepal creating spaces for learning and connection—READ Centers are places of transformation. They're not just physical hubs; they're anchors of possibility, co-created and sustained by the communities they serve.

We are filled with deep gratitude for the people and partners who have walked alongside us—many of you for years. Your belief in this work and in our approach has helped READ grow, evolve, and more fully understand its role in supporting community leadership. Because of your partnership, thousands now have greater access to opportunity and the confidence to shape their own future. This progress belongs to all of us.

As Co-Chairs of READ Global's Board, we are continually inspired by what unfolds when communities lead and when values like trust, inclusion, and shared purpose guide the way. What begins in one community often becomes a spark for others—igniting new energy, new ideas, and new models for locally led development, hope, and lasting change.

And now, as we look to the future, we invite you to continue walking with us. Whether you are a long-time supporter or just discovering READ, your partnership matters. By investing in our approach to genuine community-led development, you help nurture something powerful: not just change but collective strength, resilience, and a deeper kind of hope that endures.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

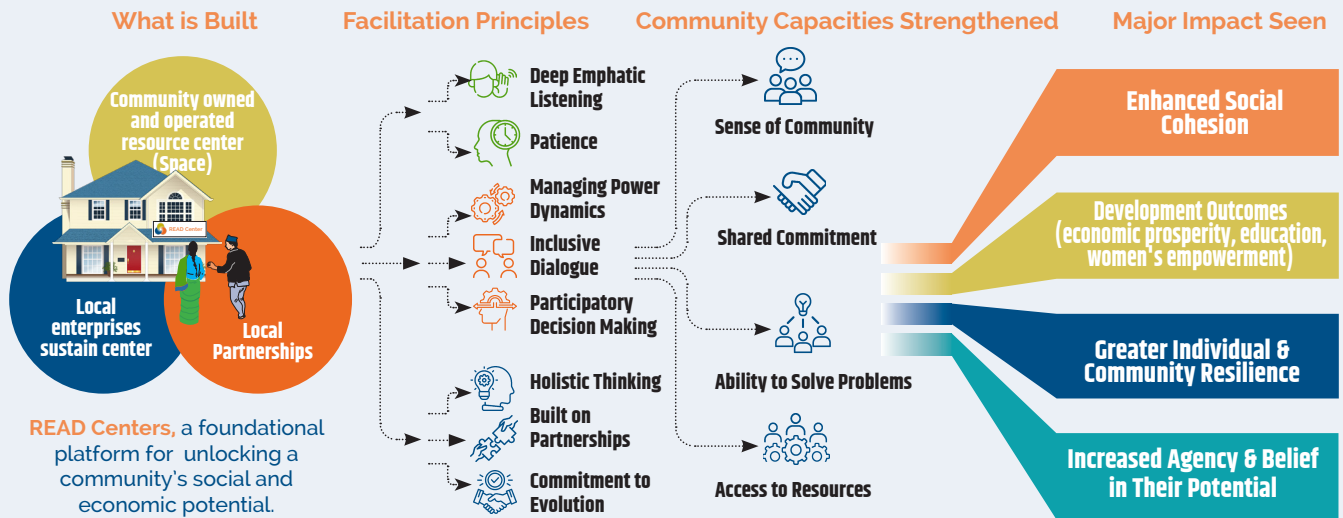
With gratitude,

Anouk Hungate & Swathi Massar

About READ Global

At READ, we believe that lasting change starts when communities take the lead. That's why we create locally-owned library and resource centers that grow into hubs for learning, opportunity, and community leadership—sustaining impact for generations.

The READ Method for Transformational Change



Values Underpin Enduring Impact



What Makes READ Unique

Lasting transformation doesn't come from short-term projects or externally designed solutions. At READ, we've seen that change endures when communities define their own priorities, lead the work, and sustain it over time. Across three decades and more than a hundred Centers, five themes have consistently emerged that highlight how trust, community leadership, and long-term partnership create impact that lasts.



Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals

READ's work contributes to the following SDGs:



Our People:

Local Staff, Board, and Volunteers

READ's impact is driven by more than 40 READ country affiliate staff across Nepal, India, and Bhutan, working alongside hundreds of volunteers and partners. Our global board of directors brings expertise in community development, education, and non-profit leadership.

READ Global Board Members

Anouk Hungate Co-chair	Swathi Massar Co-chair	Steve Wiel Advisory Board Member
Dr. Melissa Anderson	Kristy Balsanek	April Burks
Vasanthi Chandrasekaram	Keith Kehrer	Shivraj Mundy
Era Shrestha	Sanjana Shrestha	Kristin Carlucci Weed

READ Global Management Team

Sanjana Shrestha Executive Director	Megan Volk Deputy Director
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READ's Country Partner Leadership

Kezang Choden (READ Bhutan Executive Director)	Geeta Malhotra (READ India Executive Director)	Kabita Shrestha (READ Nepal Act. Executive Director)
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2024

Program Highlights

READ Bhutan

5

READ Centers

2

School libraries supported by READ

20,604

Individual trained in 2024

140,000+

Individual users 2024

READ Bhutan, which has been operating since December 2010, and supports 5 READ Centers and 2 school-based libraries across the country. Its priority program areas include literacy and education, ICT, and gender inclusion and empowerment, and livelihood and sustainability.

Building Resilient, Inclusive Communities in Bhutan



READ Bhutan trained **3,282** people to build sustainable livelihoods, reduce disaster risks and advance social inclusion

With support from Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) and German government, READ strengthened the resilience of Bhutan's most vulnerable communities—especially persons with disabilities (PWDs) and older adults—through inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR), economic empowerment, and improved access to social services. A total of 3,282 people were trained to reduce disaster risks, build sustainable livelihoods, and advance social inclusion.

Inclusive Reach

- **162** People with disabilities trained in entrepreneurship
- **91%** of targeted households adopted risk mitigation measures
- **1,125** at-risk households developed disaster preparedness plans

Sustained Solutions

- **9** local disaster management structures revitalized
- Accessibility and safety improved with user-friendly toilets at the Muenselling Institute for the Blind, new accessible pathways, and upgrades to the Kanglung evacuation center.

Boosting Reading Skills for Bhutan's Children

In partnership with seven primary school libraries and two READ Centers, and with support from the Magic Libraries Foundation, READ Bhutan delivered an ambitious reading recovery program in 2023–2024 to help struggling readers in Thimphu and Punakha. A total of **3,099** students received targeted support to improve their reading comprehension and literacy skills. By investing in school infrastructure, enriching reading materials, and providing intensive reading support, the program helped ensure that more children gain the foundational literacy skills necessary to succeed in school and beyond.

Sustainable Solutions

- **Upgraded seven schools**—five in Thimphu and two in Punakha—to create stronger literacy environments
- **Added 2,640 new books** to school libraries and READ Centers and **trained and supported school librarians** to level and catalog new and existing books

Building Skills and Agency

- Conducted **88** reading recovery sessions for students in Grades 3–6



Tandin Bidha (Finance and Admin), Kezang Choden (Country Director), Rinchen Choden (Program Officer)

READ India



READ India is registered as an Indian NGO with status of a Trust and has an approved FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) registration. Presently, READ India has supported communities to establish 62 Centers and counting across 14 states, offering access to services for over half a million people. READ India receives funding directly from a wide range of corporate donors. Since 2014, READ India has trained 170,469 individuals.

Equipping Women with Skills to Succeed Across India

With the valued support of Accenture, READ India is implementing the Skills to Succeed program—a nationwide initiative reaching 22 districts across 12 states designed to expand livelihood opportunities for women and youth from underserved communities. The program delivers industry-relevant, market-aligned training that helps participants gain practical skills and increase their earning potential.

Building Skills and Agency

- **7,688** women trained in livelihood skills such as garment making, IT, and herbal product creation
- **4,118** women increased their income following the training
- **615** women were inspired to re-enroll in formal education following the program.

By focusing on demand-driven skill development and economic empowerment, Skills to Succeed is helping thousands of women build brighter, more sustainable futures for themselves and their families.

Learning for Holistic Development

In partnership with Perkins India Pvt. Ltd., READ India implemented the Learning for Holistic Development program to support marginalized communities in and around Aurangabad. Through a network of READ Centers, the program trained **3,532** individuals—most women and youth—through education, skills training, health awareness, and early childhood development.



Building Agency

- Trained **70** community health workers to create job skills while expanding local access to health services.
- Conducted health awareness sessions for **1,673** participants

Sustained Solutions

- Opened an early learning center as a sustainable private enterprise now serving **54** children
- Built toilets for girls at **4** schools to increase safety mitigate missed school during menstruation
- Improved local environmental sustainability through water conservation infrastructure, solar power installations, and community-led tree planting initiatives.

By delivering holistic support that addresses diverse community needs, the program is strengthening local capacity and laying the foundation for more resilient communities able to address their own challenges and build a better future.

Building Agency in Action

Karuna, from Mohammadpur Ahir village struggled to support her family on her husband's 10,000 (\$114) monthly income. With three children to raise, finances were tight—until she enrolled in READ India's Sewing and Stitching course. Today, she works at Maharani Company, earning 5,000–7,000 (\$57–\$80) each month making school uniforms. Her income now supports household expenses and her children's education. *"My family is proud of me, and I'm proud of myself,"* she says, crediting READ India for giving her the confidence to change her life.



READ India Team

READ Nepal



READ Nepal was the birthplace of the READ Method, opening the very first Community Library and Resource Center in 1991. Since then, the network has grown to 73 Centers nationwide, each built and sustained by local communities.

Major Programs

Tech Age Girls – Legacy Leaders



Tech Age Girls used street dramas, trainings, and peer mentoring to reach more than 14,000 of their peers on issues such as child marriage and climate action

In 2024, with support from the Stone Family Foundation, READ centers trained 386 adolescent girls across six Centers in five districts, equipping them with 21st-century skills in digital literacy, leadership, and climate awareness and building their agency to set and pursue ambitious goals.

- **Self-Propagating Progress-** Participants reached **14,000+** community members with awareness on climate change, digital literacy, and gender inclusion.
- **Cultivating Agency:** Girls' belief in their power to change their communities rose from **18.2%** to **88.7%**; **91%** of participants are now seen as leaders in school, up from **20%**; 98% reported better grades; math A grades rose from 10% to 66%; science A grades from 5% to 64%.
- **Systemic Change through Parental Shifts:** Families opposing child marriage increased from **63.7%** to **95.9%**.

Expanding READ's Network

Through a partnership with Shanti Volunteer Association and others, READ Nepal opened two new Centers in 2024, and constructed two additional Centers launched in 2025.

- **Sustained Solutions:** **2** new READ Center launches, 2 additional Centers constructed (launched in 2025)
- **Cultivating Agency:** **658** community members trained in ICT, agriculture, and vocational skills; **341** individuals completed life skills, literacy, and women's empowerment courses.
- **Self-propagating Change:** In Dhankuta, **118** literacy classes' members shared their experience and new skills with neighbors and encouraged them to attend. In part due to their effort the Center's monthly users more than doubled from **1,326** to **2,831** users offering more people than ever access to knowledge, skills, and opportunities.



Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR)

With support from Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), READ worked across six districts to enhance community and household disaster preparedness. An emphasis was placed on the inclusions of persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable strengthening community resilience.

- o **Inclusive Reach:** **22,468** individuals reached directly; 107,846 indirectly with disaster-preparedness information and tools
- o **14,988** households developed emergency preparedness plans and 12 ward governments have developed emergency response plans



For 60 years, I lived in a world where words were strangers to me. The desire to read and write was always in my heart, but life never gave me the chance. I watched my grandchildren study and wished they could teach me, but they were always busy. And even if they had time, there was no school or opportunity for someone my age to learn. Then, the library opened its doors to me. In the advanced literacy class, I held a pencil for the first time with trembling hands, and little by little, I learned. Today, I can do basic math and write my own name—something I once thought was impossible. I never imagined the joy of reading, the power of understanding, the pride of signing my name. I used to believe I would leave this world without ever knowing the beauty of letters. But now, I can read. And it feels like I am experiencing heaven while still alive.

Kamala Shrestha, Dhankuta

Self-perpetuating Change in Action:

◦ The Mothers of Moti Prove Education Has No Age Limit ◦



Inspired by their daughters' success in the Legacy Leaders program, a group of mothers in Moti, Nepal made a bold decision—it was time to return to school.

Watching their daughters grow in confidence, leadership, and digital literacy sparked something powerful. Sangita Sunar (28) and Laxmi Tiwari (32), both of whom had to leave school early due to early marriage, felt their long-lost dreams reignite. With the support and encouragement of their children, Sangita is now attending Grade 8 classes alongside her daughter, and Laxmi has resumed her secondary education.

These mothers are a living testament to the program's ripple effect: when girls rise, they lift their families and communities with them. Their journey proves that it's never too late to learn—and that empowered daughters can inspire empowered mothers.



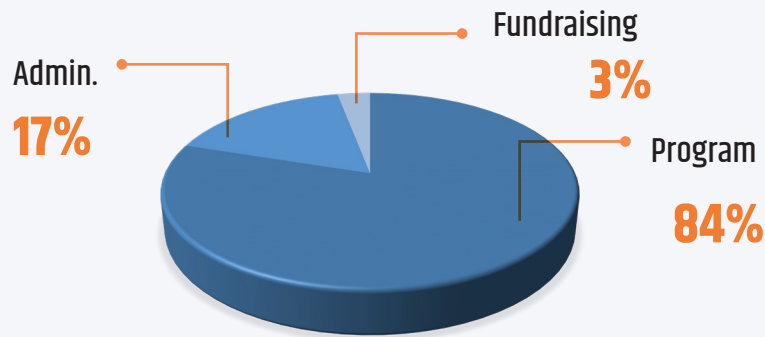
READ Nepal Team

Financial Summary

2024 TOTAL REVENUE:	\$339,529
2024 TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$469,068

2024 Functional Allocation

(This does not include program funding secured directly by READ country affiliates)



Funds raised directly by READ country affiliates

READ India	-	\$1,396,331
READ Nepal	-	\$203,820

Looking Ahead to 2025 and Beyond

In 2025 and in the years to come, READ will build on the momentum of our community-led model by expanding our network of Centers and scaling proven programs like Tech Age Girls and youth-led climate action. These initiatives are not only transforming lives—they're shaping a generation of changemakers.

At the same time, we're beginning a new chapter: sharing READ's principles beyond South Asia. By partnering with others who seek to spark community-driven progress, we aim to extend the reach of what works—supporting more communities to lead their own development.

This is a pivotal moment—and we need you with us. Whether you fund a program, amplify our story, or help us connect with like-minded allies, your support fuels everything we do. Together, we can ensure more communities have what they need to lead with confidence, resilience, and purpose.

Thank You

None of what we do would be possible without you—our community of donors, partners, volunteers, and READ Center members. Whether you give your time, your resources, or your voice, you are part of the engine that drives locally led change in Bhutan, India, and Nepal.

Stories of Generosity

This year, we were humbled by many acts of generosity. Among them, longtime supporter **Dan Alterman** donated his treasured collection of 300+ South Asian mountaineering books to READ. Many of these books are first edition and signed by legendary climbers like Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary.

These treasured volumes are finding homes in READ Centers across Nepal—from the towering Himalayas to the lowland plains—where they will serve as powerful resources celebrating Nepal's breathtaking geography and rich mountaineering heritage.

We are also deeply grateful to the estate of **Angela Japha**, whose \$100,000 legacy gift in 2025 will help build new opportunities for youth and women in rural communities for years to come. Her generosity and commitment continue to inspire us.



In addition to being a generous supporter of READ, Angela Japha was an accomplished photographer whose images are featured in READ publications (left)

Our Partners

Together, we are not just funding programs—we are fueling movements. Thank you for walking this path with us.



With financial support from the



The Bhutan Society of the UK
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