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## A LETTER FROM OUR CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR



Jennifer Young Perlman

#### Dear friends and supporters,

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals to accelerate progress against the most pressing challenges of our generation. The challenges included preventing women from dying in childbirth, stemming the spread of pandemic disease, helping people re-skill for a new economy, and ensuring that all people have access to quality education.

That same year, Pearson decided to put its stake in the ground on the one issue that we believed would have a significant impact on all the rest – illiteracy.

We often refer to illiteracy as the invisible curse because you don't see it the way you might see poverty or hunger or homelessness, but it's no less urgent. To understand why Pearson would invest a significant amount of resources in this campaign - £14.2 million over five years – it's important to understand just how urgent an issue it is:

- One out of every 10 people on this planet cannot read or write a simple sentence (and this number is likely an underestimate).
- Three-quarters of those who cannot read are women.
- Low literacy costs the world \$1.19 trillion every year.

And yet for over a decade, the rate of progress on literacy has stalled and in some parts of the world, even declined. Given the magnitude of the challenge and Pearson's own experience and resources in supporting better outcomes in education, we felt a moral imperative to take action.

Pearson pledged a five-year commitment to a coalition-based campaign for global literacy, Project Literacy. Its aim was to make significant and sustainable advances in the fight against illiteracy by 2030 so that all people—regardless of geography, language, ability, race, class, or gender— could have the opportunity to fulfil their potential through the power of words.

Over the last five years, we have united over 120 partner organizations—partners as diverse as UNESCO, The World Bank, USAID, Microsoft, Worldreader, Room to Read, Doctors of the World, and The Hunger Project. And what we've achieved together as a coalition is significant. We have raised awareness of the challenges of illiteracy through influencer and advocate-led cause marketing that has surpassed a reach of 3 billion. And we have supported programs that have directly impacted over 650,000 learners and partnered with social enterprises that are improving access to literacy for over 44 million learners. This impact includes adults who are learning to read for the first time, parents who now have the tools and the confidence to be their children's first teacher, and children who are better able to access education through improved literacy.

As a campaign and a network, we are encouraged that the number of people unable to read and write globally has decreased over the last five years – from 781 million to 750 million. But that means that a quarter of a billion people are still shut out of opportunities that literacy can provide. This includes 100 million youth who do not have basic literacy skills. The same youth who will be called upon to propel the economy forward as part of the labor force around the world ages into retirement.

Our experience has demonstrated that a challenge as urgent as illiteracy requires a collective impact approach that coalesces the support of a broad range of practitioners, influencers, and funders. We have set a movement in motion. The work will carry forward through a grassroots network of international, national and community organizations, led by Results for

Development. The work will continue to extend the reach of the campaign and facilitate an exchange of knowledge among front line workers helping make literacy attainable for all.

We hope you stay involved in this movement, too, and explore the pages of this five-year report to see just how far we've come. Our experience has demonstrated that a challenge as urgent as illiteracy requires a collective impact approach that coalesces the support of a broad range of practitioners, influencers, and funders.



Jennifer Young Perlman

Director of Social Impact & Innovation, Pearson



## THE BIG CHALLENGE

750,000,000 people can't read this sentence.



Women make up

63% of adults who are unable to read and write.



**Children** of parents with low literacy skills have a

**72% chance** of being at the **lowest** reading levels themselves.3



Of adults with the lowest literacy levels,

live in poverty.

- ed Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2017). EFA Global Monitoring ort 2017/18-Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments. Ch. 14. Literacy and Numeracy, p. 202. //gem-report-2017.unesco.org/
- IESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS fact sheet; Vol.:45; 2017 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002589/258942m.pdf
- 3 ProLiteracy, 2018. https://proliteracy.org/Resources/Adult-Literacy-Facts
- 4 ProLiteracy, 2018. <a href="https://proliteracy.org/Resources/Adult-Literacy-Facts">https://proliteracy.org/Resources/Adult-Literacy-Facts</a>

**PROJECT LITERACY** AND OUR **IMPACT** 

Since we started in 2015, we've focused on raising awareness and mobilizing action, driving innovation for new solutions, and advancing best practice in the literacy field.

#### **3 BILLION PEOPLE REACHED**

(online, print, and broadcast)

650,000+ people directly impacted

£14.2

total investment in the movement with an additional £9 MILLION matched by in-kind support from influencers and partners

200,000+ **PEOPLE** in our Supporter Community

**PRESTIGIOUS** AWARDS. including Cannes **Lions Grand Prix** 

**PARTNERS** 

200+ **ACCESSIBLE** READING **RESOURCES CREATED** 

**MAJOR Campaigns** 

5 WORKING **GROUPS** 

in our Community of Practice

#### How we do it:



Raising awareness and mobilizing action



Advancing **Best Practice** 



Innovating for **New Solutions** 

Our Collective Impact

## SCALING INNOVATION AND MARKET-BASED SOLUTIONS

## Wizenoze + Cell-Ed + Project Literacy

Wizenoze founder Diane Janknegt and Cell-Ed founder Dr. Jessica Rothenberg-Aalami went from being complete strangers to fast friends. They met in 2017 at Project Literacy Lab, a partnership between Pearson and Unreasonable Group dedicated exclusively to scaling up ventures that are positioned to close the global literacy gap by 2030. Rothenberg-Aalami said, "Right away our solutions and experiences aligned."

**Wizenoze** develops technology that enables learners to search and find relevant and trusted content online that matches their interests and reading skills. **Cell-Ed** enables learners to acquire literacy, language, and workforceready skills through a mobile solution. With their complementary offerings, Janknegt and Rothenberg-Aalami decided to collaborate on upskilling employees. "We're both driven by the fact that we want people worldwide to increase their reading skills," said Janknegt. Rothenberg-Aalami's team works closely with partners who need to deliver on-demand mobile learning to employees, and Janknegt's team provides curated, readable content matched to an employee's reading level. Janknegt explained, "Cell-Ed is the way to teach learners how to read and Wizenoze is the way to provide easy-to-read content." Rothenberg-Aalami added, "We can go from very dense, high-level reading material and with the help of Wizenoze convert that to a readability level for all."

Both companies have outstanding results. Cell-Ed has a 91% learner approval rating, and 91% of students using Wizenoze had a better learning outcome than their peers who didn't use it. Janknegt and Rothenberg-Aalami both felt supported through the Project Literacy Lab, and have continued to work together to reduce illiteracy. "It was just ideal that we were partners," said Rothenberg-Aalami. Janknegt couldn't agree more.

PEARSON HAS WORKED WITH THE UNREASONABLE GROUP TO SUPPORT 29 HYPER-GROWTH VENTURES AS PART OF THE PROJECT LITERACY LAB PROGRAM





\$2.74
MILLION TOTAL
INVESTED BY
PEARSON

29 VENTURES





\$260
MILLION COMBINED
REVENUE &
FUNDING

MILLION JSERS - REACH





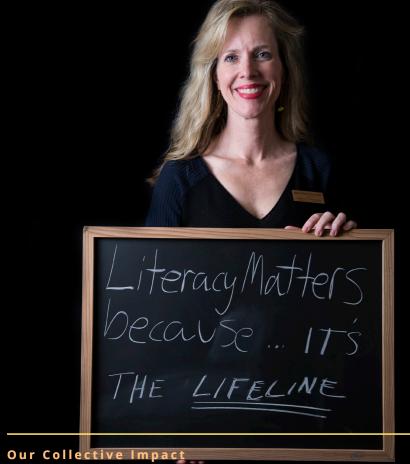
180+
countries

8,932 EMPLOYEES

PR#JECTLAB

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PEARSON + UNREASONABLE GROUP









## IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

#### **UNESCO + Project Literacy**

The digital divide looks different today than it did in the past. The primary cause of the gap now is not cost barriers or limited technical access, it's limited skills.

**UNESCO** participated in Project Literacy to join a partnership committed to improving understandings about how technology might be developed to better accommodate people with minimal education and low levels of literacy.

Under the Project Literacy banner, UNESCO and Pearson launched an initiative called 'Improved Livelihoods in a Digital World'. It sought to examine how technology solutions – outside of education – can be made more inclusive, accessible and usable for low-skilled, low-literate youth and adults, and those who cannot read or write.

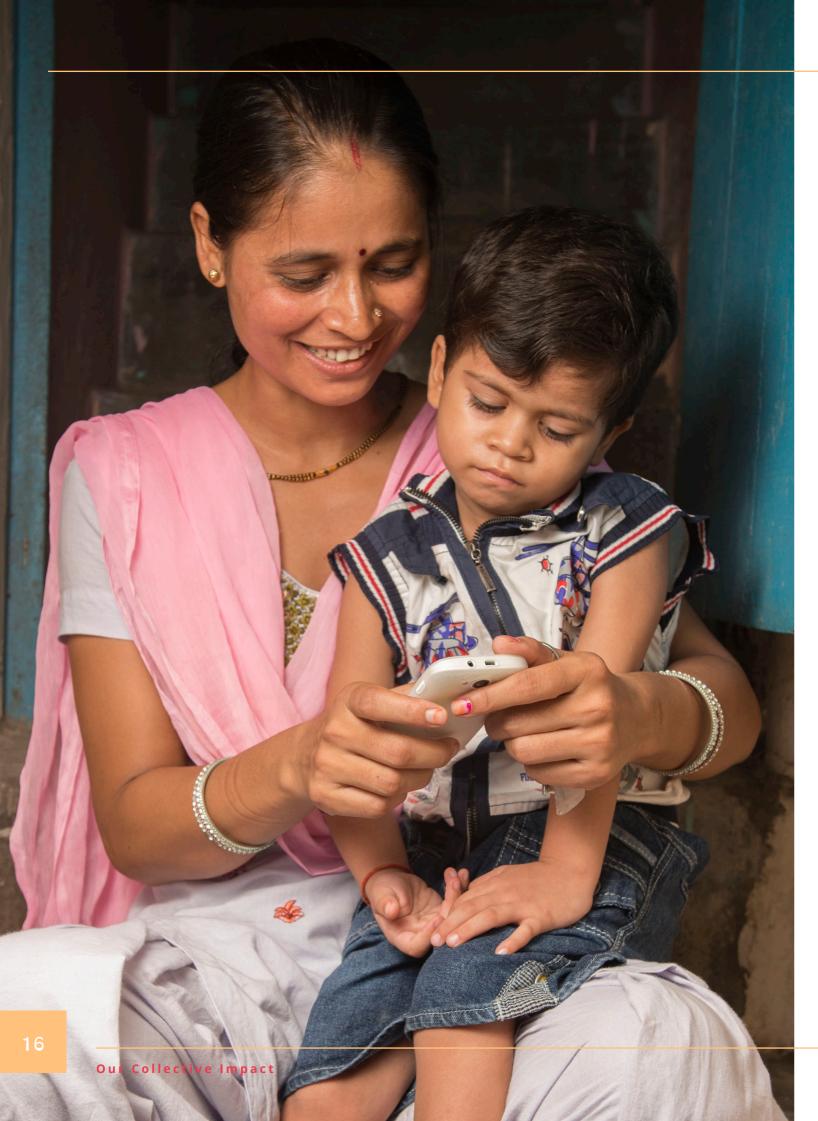
The work documented 14 case studies to share specific examples of technology projects that have successfully targeted and benefited low-skilled users in developing countries. Extracting lessons from the case studies and a larger landscape review, UNESCO produced guidelines that are helping technology pioneers build more inclusive digital solutions. These solutions enable users with emerging literacy skills to discover life-changing portals to information, social services, and community engagement, while simultaneously providing reasons and means to improve foundational literacy skills.

The UNESCO-Project Literacy case study on Talking Book, an audio device by **Amplio** that can hold a library of informational content, offers one example of the many ways thoughtful product design and content can make technology more inclusive. Talking Book's technology works in villages with no electricity or network, providing rural and remote communities with access to life-changing knowledge like health, agricultural, and financial strategies. The Talking Book program has reached over 400,000 users in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. Cliff Schmidt, the founder of Amplio, said, "In working with UNESCO and Project Literacy, we found organizations that truly understand the reality and unique challenges behind using technology to reach people who are illiterate."

The UNESCO partnership with Pearson allowed the two organizations to identify and share strategies to meet the digital needs of underserved populations. "We know that once someone starts using digital technology, a virtuous circle is created where users begin to build literacy skills and take an educational step forward. We wanted to help technology providers jumpstart this virtuous cycle," said Mark West, a project officer at UNESCO. West examines how technology can be leveraged to improve educational opportunities.

The Guidelines have achieved international recognition since their launch in 2018 and are used by numerous technology and donor organizations to better tailor digital services so they can benefit low literate people.





## LEVERAGING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO EMPOWER PARENTS

### Worldreader + Results for Development + Project Literacy

If you read to a child in their pre-literate days, the learning outcomes for the rest of that child's life are changed. In a world of educational unknowns, Luke Heinkel, Senior Program Officer at **Results for Development**, is certain about that fact. How, then, does one encourage caregivers to read to their children? That question was at the root of Heinkel's work with **Pearson's Project Literacy** and **Worldreader**, a non-profit championing digital reading in underserved communities.

In 2015, Worldreader, Project Literacy, and global development non-profit Results for Development (R4D) launched Read to Kids, a digital reading pilot that promotes the school readiness of young children by empowering caregivers to read aloud to them via mobile phones. Worldreader designed and developed the WorldReader Kids app, and R4D used an adaptive learning approach to ask critical questions about digital literacy in India. WorldReader also partnered with influential community-based organizations across Delhi to foster a habit of reading to children. Trying to change home literacy environments is challenging, but the diversity of partners, undoubtedly, helped.

Worldreader brought Read to Kids to Syrian refugees in Jordan and the program will expand to Peru next. Wendy Smith, Director of Education at Worldreader, credits Pearson for bringing publishing and the evidence generation from R4D closter to nonprofits. "If we want to move the needle on education, in these very difficult settings, it's going to take everyone—public, private, tech, and traditional education systems—rolling up their sleeves so we know what's working and what's not. Read to Kids was a great model for everyone and certainly one that should be replicated."



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Worldreader

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

#### EVOKE: YOUTH-CENTERED SOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

EVOKE: Leaders for Literacy takes a game-based learning platform originally developed by the World Bank and uses it to improve youth literacy in South Africa by leveraging young people as social innovators.



Learn more at <u>allchildrenreading.org/</u> <u>solutions/leaders-for-literacy</u>

#### CREATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

In 2018, Project Literacy and R4D established a global community of practice that virtually convenes literacy practitioners in 20 countries to tackle barriers to closing the literacy gap. These implementers, researchers, and funders identified common challenges facing literacy programs and are co-creating free, public solutions.



Follow along at **r4d.org** 



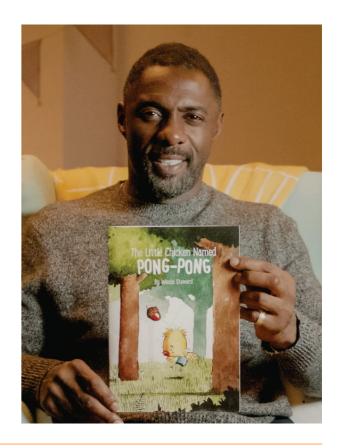


#### CAMPAIGNING FOR AWARENESS: GIVE YOUR WORD

In 2017, Project Literacy highlighted the story of Wanda, who did not learn to read and write until she was an adult. She was encouraged by her desire to read stories to her children. On International Literacy Day, we celebrated her literacy journey by publishing her first book, *The Little Chicken Named Pong-Pong*, which was downloaded over 3,000 times, and read aloud by actor and activist, Idris Elba.



Download the book at <a href="mailto:projectliteracy.com/">projectliteracy.com/</a>
<a href="mailto:rewritinglives">rewritinglives</a>



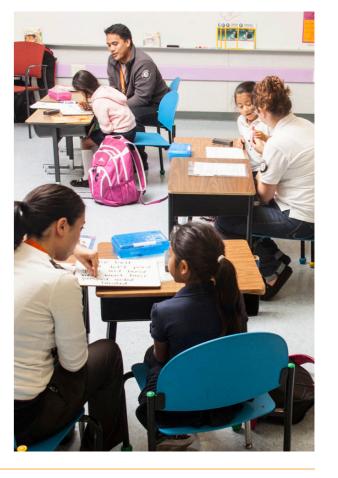
#### READING PARTNERS: REACHING MORE LEARNERS

Reading Partners helps children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results.

Pearson, as part of the Project
Literacy campaign, made a three-year commitment to help expand and deepen Reading Partners programs across the country. Since our partnership launched in 2015, we have helped the organization serve 26% more elementary school students in 73% more schools and reading centers, ultimately providing an increase of 30% more tutoring sessions.

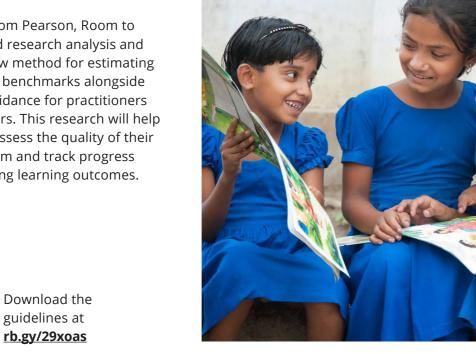


Learn more at readingpartners.org



#### **ROOM TO READ:** SUPPORTING RESEARCH TO MOVE THE FIELD FORWARD

With support from Pearson, Room to Read conducted research analysis and developed a new method for estimating reading fluency benchmarks alongside step-by-step guidance for practitioners and policymakers. This research will help policy makers assess the quality of their education system and track progress toward improving learning outcomes.





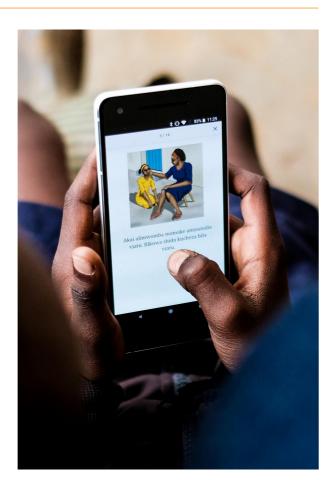
guidelines at

#### **BOOK BOOST: ACCESS FOR** ALL CHALLENGE

Around 250 million children of primary school age are unable to recognize basic letters and numbers. For the millions of children with disabilities that impact their use of traditionally printed material, the shortage of quality books in accessible formats is even worse. To address these challenges, we launched Book Boost: Access for All Challenge with All Children Reading to drive innovation in accessible publishing. The winners, eKitabu and SIL LEAD have produced more than 200 books and reading resources for learners with varying abilities.



Learn more at allchildrenreading.org/competitions



#### REACHING LEARNERS EARLY

Through support from Pearson, Too Small To Fail, an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, partnered with Univision and Text4Baby to conduct research into the best practices in mobile texting programs to engage parents and caregivers. We've also supported research by Jumpstart on the value of texting as a low-cost, low-effort activity to promote family engagement.





Follow their work at toosmall.org and jstart.org.



Workforce Atlas, a platform developed in partnership with ProLiteracy, is an online careers pathway platform. It assesses adult learners' literacy, numeracy, and workplace skills before directing them to recommended occupations, online resources and local providers that can help them achieve their aspirations. To date, the platform has been piloted with 239 adults across the United States and will continue to scale in the coming year.



Learn more at workforceatlas.org.





# **OPPORTUNITIES** IN THE **LITERACY FIGHT** Citizenship MINIMUM II

## LEARNINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE TEAM

Over the last five years, we've learned a lot about running a global advocacy campaign and programs. We're sharing those learnings with you now, in the hopes that you apply them and share them with others.

#### **LEARNINGS**



Partner with social entrepreneurs. They are a key part of the solution with their innovative, highly scalable, and financially sustainable solutions.



Harness the power of influencers. Find your champions, arm them with the facts, and let them use their voice to support you.



Apply an innovation mindset and approach to social impact. Our orientation towards trying things and learning along the way led to impactful new learnings for the literacy field.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**



#### **POLICY CHANGE**

While we focused on public advocacy which can impact policy, we did not focus specifically on influencing policy change to support literacy. There's still a great need to do more of this.



#### **FOUNDATIONS**

We are proud to have partners from many different sectors, and yet we realize that we have had limited collaboration with foundations.

Together, alongside governments, nonprofits, social entrepreneurs, and companies from the private sector, we can create the maximum momentum and impact for literacy.



#### SPREADING ACCESS

In our last year and a half leading Project Literacy, we joined forces with Results for Development to create five working groups. They have created tools that serve the literacy field. The opportunity is to help spread access and usage of these free tools.

Image: Shutterstock

#### OUR TEAM, ADVISORS AND **PARTNERS**

#### **ADVISORY GROUP**

The Project Literacy Advisory Group, which is comprised of diverse talent across global education policy, corporate social responsibility, business, and media, drove the campaign forward to reach our 2030 targets. Project Literacy is grateful for the stewardship of our Advisory Group members:



Priscila Cruz Founder & Executive President, Todos Pela Educação



**Aria Finger** CEO & Chief Old Person, DoSomething.org; President, TMI



Ben Goldhirsh Co-CEO & Co-Founder, GOOD Worldwide

Jane Nelson

Senior Fellow

and Director of

Responsibility

Kennedy School

Corporate Social

Initiative, Harvard



leff Hoffman Entrepreneur and Founder of Priceline.com



Michael Lombardo





Marianne **Ponsford** Director, CERLALC -Centro regional para el fomento del libro en América Latina v el Caribe



Rapelang Rabana Founder and Chair, Rekindle Learning



#### **PROJECT LITERACY TEAM**



Young Director, Social Impact Programs,

Jennifer



Gockel Manager, Social Impact Partnerships,

Luisa



Sara **Perkins** Senior Manager, Digital



Julia Firestone Manager, Social Impact Partnerships, Pearson



#### **OUR PARTNERS**

The Project Literacy movement has included some of the world's greatest innovators, practitioners, and researchers. We know that literacy is key to unlocking talent and leadership to solve the world's biggest challenges, and we're proud to have worked with over 120 diverse organizations.

28 Too Many 826 National Achievement for All Action on Addiction **Afripads** Angaza Asia Foundation Beeline Reader The Big Issue Foundation **Book Aid International Book Trust Books Beyond Words** Breakthrough Collaborative **Bulverde Spring Branch Library** Foundation (BSBL) Cell-Ed CENPEC Center for Literacy Cradles to Crayons Curious Learning Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia Doctors of the World UK Edom Edovo Eduze Emote *EOTainment* Extreme Dialogue Feed the Minds Fight for Peace First Book Fondazione per la Scuola della Compagnia di San Paolo Football Beyond **Borders** 

Guru-g

Hackney Pirates

Guten

**IGAUPM** Impact Network Indy Reads Iowa City Public Library Iris Speaks Jumpstart Karadi Path KickUp Kingo Kodable Lanka Jathika Learning Games Studios Lessons for Life Foundation Letrus Library for All Lightsail Literacy Action Literacy Inc. Literacy Partners Literator LitWorld Livox Mary Ward Center Microsoft Ministry of Stories Minnesota Literacy Council National Braille Press National Literacy Trust **NEI Foundation** Office of Adult Education, City of Philadelphia Parent-Child Home Program Pearson Pencils of Promise Pratham Books Project Literacy of Bergen County ProLiteracy Raising a Reader

Reach Out and Read

READ Alliance Read Easy UK Reading is **Fundamental Reading Partners** Reading Rescue Robbie Al RocketLit Room to Read San Francisco **Education Fund** Shannon Trust **SpeakMODalities** Stones2Milestones SunCulture TabLab Tales2go Team Read The Beat Within The Dream Center The Hunger Project The Indigenous (ILF) The Literacy Lab The Reading Agency ThinkCerca Too Small To Fail True North Ubongo Un Millón de Niños Lectores **UNESCO** Unreasonable Group **USAID** Veerni Institute War Child UK We Need Diverse Books Western Cape Primary Wizenoze Womankind Worldwide World Literacy

Foundation

Literacy Foundation Science Programme World Vision Worldreader

MANY **THANKS TO OUR AGENCY PARTNERS WHO HELP THE CAMPAIGN THRIVE:** 

Arabella Advisors FCB Inferno GOOD Bradley Dyer NOW Pledgeling Results for Development Weber Shandwick Yes&Pepper

**THANKS TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS** WITHIN **PEARSON WHO MADE THIS CAMPAIGN POSSIBLE:** 

Kate James, Emilie Colker, Emma Buckle, Dasle Kim, Chris Treen, Ivana Mallett, Rosina Merrett, Karrie Sadowska, Sarah Radford, Anna Bowen, Buddhika Amis, and our many colleagues who participated in volunteering and the Challenge Fund.





#### THANK YOU TO THE **ORGANIZATIONS** AND INDIVIDUALS IN **OUR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

1Child 1Book Aga Khan Rural Support Program Aga Khan University Institute for Human Development BeeLine Reader Beyond the Classroom Book Aid International Bridge/Coalition for Quality Education WC Cardinal Educational and Development Initiative

Cell-Ed Chemonics International Child Dream Foundation Classroom, Inc. Fabretto Children's Foundation FACE for Children in Need Family Support and Rescue Organization Feed the Minds Fight for Peace Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative Harvard Libraries Impact Network International *Indus Action* Iris Speaks *lumpstart* Kenya Society for the Blind

Kidogo Innovations Learning Games Studios Lessons for Life Literacy Trust Literacy4All Little Rock ECD Center LitWorld Luganda Lusoga Lugwere Vehicular Cross-border Language Commission Magic Bus India Foundation National Centre for School Leadership National Literacy Trust Obafemi Awolowo University Open Learning Exchange Ghana Pencils of Promise Pizza Hut

Power 2 Prikkle Academy Project Literacy of Greater Bergen County Queen Rania Foundation ReadABook Nigeria Initiative Reading Partners Sightsavers STIR Education Stones2Milestones Tai Solarin University of Education The Click Foundation The Parent-Child Home Program The Reach Trust Tushinde Children's Trust Ubongo Learning

**VVOB** Wagnon Strategies Wangoh Dynamics Technologies We Love Reading Worldreader Youth Care Development and Empowerment Initiative - Nigeria Zaya Learning Labs Amit Pathak Anne Tengler Jamison Crawford Josh Cleveland Mutuma Moses Paige Sholar Sarah Jaffe Robin Beck

**THANK YOU** TO THE STEERING **COMMITTEE MEMBERS** FOR GUIDING THE **DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY MEASUREMENT: A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK** 

Australian Council for Educational Research People's Action for Learning Network ProLiteracy Room to Read

26 Our Collective Impact Project Literacy's 5-Year Report



# Project Literacy campaign support totaled £12.4 MILLION



#### FUNDING BY SOURCE

As convener and founding partner of Project Literacy, Pearson contributed **£14.2 million** from 2015 to 2020 with additional matching support of **£9 million** from media, non-profit, corporate, and individual sources.

## Pearson

**Our founding partner** 

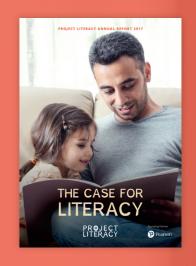
Pearson is the world's learning company, with expertise in educational courseware and assessment, and a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology. Pearson products and services are used by millions of teachers and learners around the world every day.

Our mission is to help people make progress in their lives through learning — because we believe that learning opens up opportunities, creating fulfilling careers and better lives.

PR#JECT LITERACY

projectliteracy.com

Our Collective Impact



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY



2016 Annual Report
PR@JECT
LITERACY



projectliteracy.com/
evaluating-impact

