

A GLOBAL BOOK FUND



Photo: Devon McLogg Ritzer



**250 MILLION CHILDREN
WORLDWIDE
CANNOT READ**

Around the world, 250 million children are unable to read. Because of a lack of teaching materials, they struggle to recognize even basic words and numbers. In many countries, learning assessments have found that more than 50 percent of students can't read a single word after several years of school. Without basic literacy, they can't go on to learn math, science, and other subjects. The result is a lost opportunity for personal and intellectual growth and a massive loss in economic growth and development for their countries.



**BOOKS ARE
ESSENTIAL FOR
LEARNING TO READ**

Children must learn to read in the early grades so they can read to learn for the rest of their lives. Children love reading and can quickly learn this critical skill, but they must have well-trained and supported teachers and early grade books in languages they understand. Despite decades of government and development partner funding, few schools or communities have an adequate supply of early grade reading materials.



**INCREASING QUALITY,
DECREASING COSTS:
LEARNING FROM THE
HEALTH SECTOR**

A Global Book Fund could use innovative financing strategies from the health sector for book development, production, procurement and distribution, thereby lowering costs and increasing quality. Advances in technology and funding mechanisms make it possible to efficiently provide high-quality books in all languages. A range of partners are commissioning analytical work to explore the potential for a Global Book Fund.



250 MILLION CHILDREN AREN'T READING



WHY SHOULD PEOPLE CARE?

- Reading is the basic skill of education, and children who don't learn to read can't learn other subjects.
- If students in low-income countries could read, 171 million people would be lifted out of poverty.
- This hidden epidemic costs governments and economies US\$129 billion dollars.



WHY AREN'T CHILDREN READING?

- Children lack access to books designed to teach them to read in languages they speak and understand.
- Learning to read requires texts, and teaching is difficult without printed materials.



WHY ARE THERE NOT ENOUGH BOOKS?

Current practices in developing, procuring and distributing reading materials for the early grades do not ensure equitable availability for all young students.



WHO ARE POTENTIAL KEY PARTNERS?

- Governments
- Publishers
- Private Sector
- Civil Society
- Donors
- The Global Reading Network

A Global Book Fund would transform the supply of reading materials so that the right books are accessible to children at the right time, and for the right price. With support from government and development partners, the Fund would strengthen reading instruction, produce dramatic increases in literacy rates and accelerate economic development.



Photo: Dana Schmidt

WHAT COULD A GLOBAL BOOK FUND DO?

1. Develop technical specifications for reading materials, particularly for the early grades, in children's first languages.
2. Collect open source titles and develop agreements with publishers to make content widely available.
3. Stimulate production of more books through software, crowdsourcing, contests and workshops.
4. Support a digital repository of downloadable materials, or a "global library," that would help ministries, reading programs and the public upload, download and print materials.
5. Improve book supply chain management, including distribution systems for print and digital materials.
6. Set standards and group purchases to structure markets, improve book quality, and decrease cost.
7. Monitor and evaluate impact.
8. Work with governments and partners to make these practices sustainable.