# LitWorld Annual Report 2016





Be the Story.



## About LitWorld

LitWorld is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization strengthening kids and communities through the power of their own stories, together authoring a bold new world of equity and opportunity. Founded by renowned literacy expert Pam Allyn, LitWorld works with a broad coalition of national and international partners to ensure that young people worldwide can experience the joy and empowerment of reading, writing, and storytelling. We are currently in 26 countries providing year-round programming that builds connection, understanding, and resilience through transformational literacy.







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## Letter from the Executive Director & the Chair of the Board

Dear Friends.

Literacy allows us to shape our life stories.

It grants us the independence to navigate the world, an outlet to understand ourselves and each other, and the confidence to reach our full potential. LitWorld's approach embraces the many ways literacy allows us to shape our own lives, and we work with communities to share the power of this transformational literacy with kids across the globe. This year, we have embraced our responsibility as first responders, bringing urgently needed literacy programs to people who have experienced trauma or natural disasters, and to children everywhere who experience the crisis that comes with being deprived of one's right to literacy. The power of LitWorld, though, is that we stay for the long term--cultivating sustainable learning structures with local partners to support children to gain skills that will carry them through life.

This year, our team visited Nepal and Haiti with graduate students from the NYU Wagner School of Public Service. We worked with our partners to illuminate the impact of our innovative approach of empowering local leaders to deliver responsive literacy programs, and to deepen and grow our replicable, resilience-building model. In Pakistan, we established LitClubs and community libraries in Faisalabad and Khushal to make the effects of reading and writing visible to parents and community members. We hope to help to change the value placed on children's education in a country where over six million children are out-of-school and only 20 percent of girls in rural areas go to school.

Our message across the board is that literacy is not optional: it is a lifeline.

We are lucky to say that our work has spoken for itself. In addition to the positive impact on our LitKids and their families, LitWorld grew as a leader in the transformational literacy movement--earning support and recognition from influential publishers, celebrities, and organizations.

Together, we can continue to empower children to shape their own lives through the magic of literacy.



LitWorld litworld.

## Why?

758 million people around the world cannot read and write. LitWorld stands up for the millions who face systemic barriers to literacy by celebrating literacy as a social equalizer and a source of joy for children everywhere. We are passionate about our mission because literacy is about so much more than words on a page. Literacy is about stories, and stories are the easiest tool we have to enrich the lives of children, build resilience, and cultivate independence. Too many children are forced to go through life feeling that they do not have the agency to create change or excel as learners. LitWorld is changing that.

#### How?

LitWorld provides a powerful curriculum that supports children's social-emotional development through literacy-based activities. Our programs, including LitClubs and LitCamps, empower children to advocate for themselves, identify as strong readers, and become confident, compassionate leaders. LitWorld's impact multiplies through our mentorship model, where our team in New York works with grassroots organizations who enroll passionate LitClub mentors, combining LitWorld training with their own expertise to reach many more children. Through these partnerships, we are able to provide and scale programs that help kids celebrate their strengths and share their stories.

#### What are LitWorld's Results?

- A dramatic increase in children's sense of personal value, reading and writing capacities, future outlook, and civic engagement
- An increase in a value for literacy within the community and a positive change in overall literacy levels and literacy habits of all community members
- Inclusive literacy communities where every child has access to supportive network of mentors and peers
- Core partnerships that strengthen local organizations as they become more economically stable, established, and permanent in their communities.

## LitWorld's Core Programs



**LitClubs and LitCamps** provide safe spaces for youth to read, write, and raise their voices. LitClubs encourage kids to use their own stories as a vehicle for both improving their reading and writing skills and cultivating self-empowerment and social change through literacy. LitCamps provide 365 days of learning as our summer program, and have greatly scaled in the U.S. in partnership with Scholastic.

The HerStory Campaign was launched in partnership with Global G.L.O.W. to address the gender inequality prevalent in access to literacy and education. We work side-by-side with teams of women and girls in local communities to empower learning and support girls in pursuing their hopes and dreams. We use literacy and mentorship to strengthen and amplify girls' voices, boldly acting on their insights to promote gender equality and inspire positive change in the world.

**World Read Aloud Day** motivates children, teens, and adults worldwide to celebrate the power of words and creates a community of readers taking action to show the world that the right to literacy belongs to all people. World Read Aloud Day is celebrated by people in more than 100 countries, and is centered around the idea that the simple act of reading aloud can transform a child's life and create sustainable, accessible reading communities.



## 2016 LitWorld Highlights



This year, LitWorld saw not only immense growth but also an important deepening in the work that we do. We expanded our programs, reaching thousands more children than ever before. We further developed our mentor trainings and built capacity alongside our partners, together strengthening our organizations to better serve children everywhere.

We scaled meaningfully in 2016 and we saw it in the numbers. After a pilot year with Scholastic LitCamps, we reached over 60,000 kids in classrooms across the country this year. We had our most successful World Read Aloud Day yet with participation in over100 countries, and hosted 50 women and girls in NYC for our first annual HerStory Summit in collaboration with Global G.L.O.W.

Our relationships with our grassroots partners deepened, and we saw the impact in their ambition and vision for the work. Nigeria Reads started two new LitClubs to serve girls who are internally displaced from conflicts in their communities. Our partners in Detroit and Cameroon hosted incredible Story Summits. In South America, two of our partners launched their first LitCamps in Honduras and Colombia. In Pakistan, we opened a new library with over 100 registered members. The librarian there noticed that older kids borrow books to take home to read to their younger siblings, carrying the light of literacy far and wide.



## LitClub & LitCamp Highlights

This year, we saw LitKids everywhere take initiative to give back to their communities in a powerful way. Through LitClubs, 5,000 young people in 25 countries felt empowered to take action for positive change.

In Detroit, DPS LitClub members showed incredible kindness and leadership in their community. They organized fundraisers to bring safe, clean bottled water to people in the neighboring city of Flint, Michigan who were affected by a contaminated water system.

In Rwanda, Ready for Reading LitClubs received great praise from their community during the annual Genocide Commemoration ceremony, where LitKids participated in a day of service. The village chief said, "I have been hearing about LitClubs, but now I have experienced LitClub. It is the right of other youth in the village to do the same. When this program is spread to other places in our country, we will have a better Rwanda."

When LitClubs are no longer in session, LitCamps ensure kids have access to communities that empower them as readers and leaders all year. Unequal access to summer learning accounts for over half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth. By the end of sixth grade, children who lose reading skills over the summer will be two years behind their classmates. LitWorld is closing the summer literacy gap with this groundbreaking LitCamp program. LitCamp re-imagines summer learning, combining the pure joy of camp with reading and writing experiences that affirm and enhance the strengths of every child.

2016 marked our biggest year for LitCamp, yet! From New York City to Detroit, Austin to Oakland, we are making it possible for all children, no matter their zip code, to grow, thrive, and strive as readers. Thanks to our partnership with Scholastic, our standards-based LitCamp reached 60,000 kids across the U.S. in 32 states and 115 cities.

Through LitClub and LitCamp, we hope that every child can experience the joy and the power of a strong literacy community.



## The HerStory Campaign

Girls' voices are silenced when they cannot read, write, or feel free to tell their stories.

The HerStory Campaign amplifies and acts upon the authentic stories of women and girls by elevating the power of story to champion real change. LitWorld and Global G.L.O.W. work side-by-side with teams of women and girls in local communities to empower learning and support girls in pursuing their hopes and dreams. We use literacy and mentorship in LitClubs and LitCamps to strengthen and amplify girls' voices, boldly acting on their insights to promote gender equality and inspire positive change in the world.

2016 marked an amazing year of growth for the campaign, as we hosted our first annual Global HerStory Summit in New York City in March. Fifty women and girls from HerStory communities around the world, representing 14 of our partnerships, came together for a joyful week of storytelling and advocacy for gender equality. The Global HerStory Summit coincided with the United Nations 60th Annual Commission on the Status of Women and culminated with a HerStory presentation to the UN. Ahead of the Global HerStory Summit, young women leaders from LitWorld and Global G.L.O.W. presented the HerStory Campaign at the UN Women's Youth Forum to share ideas and innovations with passionate youth who are leading social change in their home communities.

In the fall, the momentum of this work continued as we co-hosted two #HerStoryCampaign Twitter chats with Global G.L.O.W. and UN Women for Youth. The chats were an incredible success: #HerStoryCampaign was trending on Twitter, enrolling many more advocates for our work. Women, men, activists, and global leaders gave their insights on how we can act on the stories of the women and girls to create change. During the chat, gender rights activist Malvika lyer responded, "There is no force more powerful than a girl determined to rise."

Our work at LitWorld contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and The HerStory Campaign highlights our efforts to bring gender equity and quality education to young women. The power of literacy and story itself empowers girls to advocate for change and to go forward more resilient and hopeful, joyful and strong. Breaking down barriers for women and girls affects all areas of development, including wide-spread economic growth and positive social outcomes.





#### Community & Family Program Highlights

Our family and community programs flourished this year. We had a transformational year in Story2 I, facilitating technology-based literacy learning with families in Harlem, NYC.

In the Philippines, the girls, teens, and mothers in our LitClubs practiced storytelling in all its forms during an intergenerational "River of Life" bookmaking activity led by teaching artist Tina Villadolid. They painted the paths of their lives using colors and words to express where they are from and where they are going.

In India, our partners at the Center for Development involved parents in LitClubs by meeting with mothers and home visits when LitClubs begin in each community.

In Pakistan, our new mobile libraries with the Seeds of Hope Foundation extended our support to remote rural communities and invited families everywhere to participate in the joy of reading. With the support of all of our partners, parents were involved in World Read Aloud Day and Stand Up for Girls activities around the world.

### World Read Aloud Day Highlights

World Read Aloud Day calls attention to the power of reading aloud and connects the world as a community of readers. World Read Aloud Day 2016 enrolled over one million people in 100 countries to celebrate the power of the read aloud. At home, work, school, and in their communities, people gathered to spread the joy of the simple read aloud and to show that literacy should be an accessible human right.

Over 1,000 Scholastic Book Fairs were held across the country to empower super readers everywhere, and literacy experts Pam Allyn and Donalyn Miller hosted a Scholastic Twitter chat to rev up for the big day. Together with Scholastic and Ralph Lauren Kids, School of Rock the Musical supported World Read Aloud Day, donating a portion of ticket sales to LitWorld and hosting a special live read aloud with members of the cast!

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We work together with the following partners so that we can operate locally to create change globally.

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- Milele
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- Newark Gals, Inc.
- NEWI
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- Nigeria Reads
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Jennifer Estrada HerStory Campaign Director

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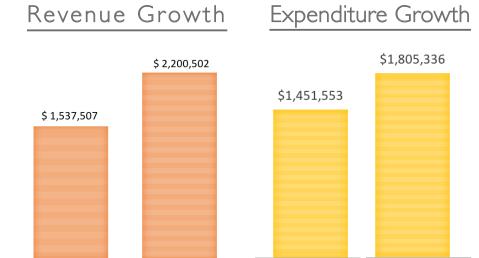
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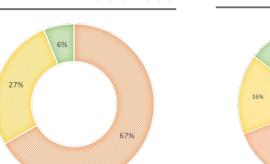


## 2016 Financial Highlights



2016 Revenue Sources

2015

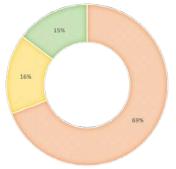


2016

- Donations & Contributions
- Grants & Corporate Funding
- Programming Revenue

2016 Expenditure Allocations

2016



- Programs
- Operations
- Fundraising



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## LitCircle

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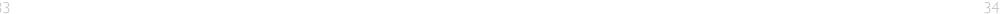
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