

# LitWorld

Annual Report 2020

Be the Story.





# LitWorld works to create a global movement of equity, opportunity, and joy.

We build opportunities for millions of people across the United States and around the world by listening and responding to children, **amplifying stories and voices that are going unheard**. Our approach focuses on universal inner strengths, leveraging literacy and storytelling tools to build empathy and resilience.

Since 2007, we have deepened and scaled our work by partnering side-by-side with more than 50 local organizations and global institutions, reaching hundreds of thousands of children and community leaders in over 30 countries through our in-depth LitClubs and LitCamps, and tens of millions with advocacy campaigns such as World Read Aloud Day.





# Letter from the Executive Director & Chair of the Board

Dear Friends,

As we look back at 2020, we keep returning to how proud we are of the work that the LitWorld family made possible this past year. Together, we continued to deepen the role of LitClubs and LitCamps for so many kids and families, and amplify young people's voices, stories, and hopes.





When COVID-19 began to spread around the globe, our LitKids, LitMoms, program partners, and team worked hard, setting up hand washing stations, sewing and distributing masks, providing information about how to keep communities safe, and building and sharing flexible, accessible versions of our programs. The whole LitWorld network was thoughtful, caring, and proactive, leading the way however possible.

We worked tirelessly to supply critical resources and programs to our 23 community-based partners across 16 countries. From urgently needed food for families in India and phones for LitKids living in remote communities in Zambia, to engaging online programs like Virtual LitClubs for children everywhere. We pivoted our programs to make them as accessible as possible, helping LitKids continue their learning and stay safe with virtual and socially-distanced LitClubs and LitCamps. We launched the Global Heart Map project, uniting people around the world. Together, we created a shared story of perseverance and hope.

This deep community work, and so much more, has been possible thanks to your support for LitWorld. Thank you for being a part of this mission with us - through 2020 and beyond.

Dorothy Lee, Executive Director Samantha Siegal, Chair of the Board



By focusing on universal inner strengths, we leverage literacy and storytelling tools to build empathy and resilience.



## The Secret to Our Success

LitWorld provides a powerful combination of resources, training, and support for families and mentors, in order to actively engage children in deep literacy exploration, helping them value their own stories: the stories of their lives, their communities, their cultures, their hopes, their dreams, and their imaginations. Our programming is based around LitWorld's 7 Strengths: Belonging, Curiosity, Friendship, Kindness, Confidence, Courage, and Hope. These principles provide a framework that allows our LitKids and their families to build solid academic and leadership skills from a strength and joy-based mindset.

LitWorld partners with grassroots and mission-driven organizations to bring our innovative programs and best practices to children and communities around the world. Our programs happen "outside of the system" to address the tragic learning loss that occurs when children are not in school and caregivers are not equipped to support them, and to help fill the gaps that exist within the school environment—a place where kids often feel lost and caregivers feel left out. **Paola**, a former LitClub member from Museo Rayo, shared:

"My experience with LitWorld really made a mark on me. It's shown me how to dream and how to reach my goals. To be able to fight for what I want and listen to other people. To listen to their stories so we can believe in them... LitWorld has become indispensable in my life and in my story."

# **Our Hallmark Programs**

**LitClubs** are a space for **joyf ul learning**, **self-expression**, and **creating social change.** Members and mentors meet weekly in small, after-school groups to share stories, build community, and develop as changemakers. Our two current LitClub models are for middle schoolers and for mothers, both built on our "7 Strengths" framework. LitClub sessions support members in exploring these strengths in themselves and their communities.

LitCamps redefine summer learning with social and emotional support as the gateway to literacy, turning the summer slide into the summer leap. LitCamp is an intensive program for Pre-K through middle school, running one to six weeks in full or half-days. LitWorld pilots LitCamp ideas with our community partners around the world and then scales our innovations with Scholastic, bringing LitCamp to thousands of classrooms across the U.S. every summer.

World Read Aloud Day, LitWorld's signature advocacy program, raises awareness for the power and importance of sharing stories. Celebrated by millions around the world who take action by reading aloud online and in-person, this day creates a global community of readers, listeners, and advocates. World Read Aloud Day is held annually on the first Wednesday of February.



Museo Rayo celebrating WRAD in Colombia



WR AD celebrations at BHC

# World Read Aloud Day 2020

World Read Aloud Day 2020, held on Wednesday, February 3, was our 11<sup>th</sup> year of sharing stories, reading aloud together, and advocating for **literacy as an essential human right that belongs to us all**. Thankfully, the day was celebrated before the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, allowing us to be together safely in person.

Once again, #WorldReadAloudDay was one of the day's **top 5 trending topics** on Twitter, garnering millions of views, impressions, and posts from figures such as Arianna Huffington, Kathy Bates, PBS Books, Goodreads, The Today Show, Peter Reynolds, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Foundation, Dav Pilkey, Christopher Denise, Daniel Pink, and more. It earned over 100 mentions in trade publications and other media, and was **celebrated by millions in 171 countries worldwide**, including 14,800 LitWorld program members.

In New York City, LitWorld started the week with events at the Union Square Barnes & Noble, broadcasting live over Facebook to ramp up excitement. On the day of, we hosted celebrations at P.S. 6X in the Bronx and P.S. 28 in Harlem with appearances from Clifford the Big Red Dog, author Sam Wedelich, and author/illustrator Justin LaRocca Hanson, which were covered by Bronx 12 News. The day ended at Broadway Housing Communities at Sugar Hill in Harlem, where families enjoyed fun projects, hot chocolate, snacks, and a read-aloud and drawing activity with Justin LaRocca Hanson.

# Step 1 Write your name on a piece of paper

#### An episode of Virtual LitClub



A #GlobalHeartMap submission



Food distribution in Pakistan

# Our Response to COVID-19

**Virtual Programming:** In response to the pandemic, LitWorld pivoted quickly to ensure **continuity** and **innovation** with our partners. This included developing new virtual programs such as **Virtual LitClub** and **Virtual LitClub: LitCamp Edition**, made available to all. Together with our publisher Scholastic, we also created **LitCamp at Home**, a version of our renowned summer program to bring the strengths of LitCamp right into children's homes across the U.S.

Through these programs, LitWorld was able to give children everywhere the academic and emotional tools they needed to thrive despite school and LitClub closures. We also worked closely with our partners to safely distribute LitClub materials through communities by **text**, **radio**, **email**, **at-home kits**, **and more**. In addition, LitWorld partnered with revolutionary new learning app **Zigazoo** to provide kids with engaging and educational prompts, and launched a wildly successful **#GlobalHeartMap social campaign** with hundreds of submissions to promote unity in times of hardship.

Emergency Relief: To best support LitKids and families throughout the pandemic, we worked tirelessly to supply critical resources for our partners in need. This included shifting funding to support the purchase of food, PPE, and other basic necessities for our partner communities around the world, from urgently needed food for over 900 families in India to phones for LitKids living in remote areas of Zambia.

LitMoms Safia and Anum



LitKids in Kenya raising awareness of COVID-19

# **2020 Impact Stories**

LitMom Community Action: LitWorld supported mothers around the globe as they united in LitClubs to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Jessica, a LitMom at Art of a Child in Uganda, began making her own face masks and selling them at a low cost to others in her community. At Seeds of Hope Foundation in Pakistan, LitMoms began a friendly sewing competition to create masks for their community. LitMoms Safia and Anum came in first and second, sewing 230 and 150 masks respectively.

LitClub Community Action: LitWorld worked individually with partners to ensure the safety of LitKids in every community. Here are just a few examples. In Honduras, mentors launched a "mailbox" system wherein they delivered LitClub activities to a communal mailbox that LitKids could visit while maintaining social distancing. In Kenya, our partners worked together to organize pandemic awareness campaigns, showing how to make DIY face coverings, putting up posters about hygiene and safety, and installing hand-washing stations throughout the neighborhood.

LitClub girls in India using tablets for remote learning



LitKids in Zambia receiving phones

# 2020 Impact Stories (Continued)

Supporting Families in India: At Centre for Development in India, we worked closely with our partners to keep LitKids and their families safe and engaged in their learning throughout the pandemic. This included distributing food kits to over 2,000 families in need and allocating funding to purchase 11 tablets for LitClub members, who were given a hands-on orientation about how to use the tablets for online sessions and remote learning amidst lockdown orders.

Connecting LitKids in Zambia: When schools closed in Zambia, LitWorld kept 120 LitKids at Go Ye Therefore connected through Virtual LitClubs and by helping provide phones for LitKids isolated at home. These phones served as a lifeline to the outside world and allowed LitKids and mentors to connect for regular read-alouds, check-ins, and activities. According to Partnership Coordinator Priscilla Mwambo, "We didn't know what to do when the pandemic began, but you did not give up on us... The Virtual LitClubs have made us so happy and helped us be hopeful... It keeps us looking forward."

# Where Our Work Happens

Morocco

Colombia

Dominican Republ

Dominican Republic Nicaragua Haiti Pakistan

Honduras The Philippines

India Rwanda

Kenya Uganda

Liberia Zambia

U.S. States:

Alabama

Maryland

Mississippi

New York





### Our Partners

Art of a Child

Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto

Broadway Housing Communities

Centre for Development

Children of Haiti Project

DREAM

Go Ye Therefore Zambia

Hogar Luceros del Amanecer

Kenya Education Fund

Kenya Connect

LEAD Monrovia Football Academy

LEAD Morocco

Museo Rayo

Project PEARLS

Ready for Reading

Rift Valley Reading Association

Seeds of Hope Foundation

Springboard to Opportunities

Un Mundo

Women's Organization in Rural Development

(WORD)



# On-the-Ground Team

Jhoanna Gomez Museo Rayo, Colombia

Anis Carracasco Lopez DREAM, Dominican Republic

Dominique Ade Children of Haiti Project, Haiti

Gerson Gonzales Un Mundo, Honduras

Prasad Chacko Centre for Development, India

Meera Rafi Centre for Development, India

James Musyoka Kenya Connect, Kenya

Geoffrey Ochieng Kenya Education Fund, Kenya

Prisca Mawia Kenya Education Fund, Kenya

Sona Traore LEAD - Monrovia Football Academy, Liberia

Zahra Benfares LEAD - Morocco, Morocco

Anina Hewey Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto, Nicaragua

Aleyda del Rosario Rios Herrera Hogar Luceros del Amanecer, Nicaragua

Faraz Javed Seeds of Hope Foundation, Pakistan

Monica Sorenson Seeds of Hope Foundation, Pakistan

Peachy Abellon Project Pearls, The Philippines

Jean Marie Habimana Ready for Reading, Rwanda

Susan Tusabe Art of a Child, Uganda

Sarah Stripp Springboard to Opportunities, Mississippi, USA

Jael Sanchez Broadway Housing Communities, New York, USA

Priscilla Mwambo Go Ye Therefore Zambia, Zambia



# LitWorld Leadership

#### **New York Staff**

**Dorothy Lee** 

Executive Director

Mariya Ohulchanska

Program & Partnership Associate

**Amber Peterson** 

Director of Program Innovation

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Anxhelina Prenika

Director of Operations & HR

Ilana Solomon

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Monica Valentin

Operations & Development Associate



# LitWorld Leadership (Continued)

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# LitWorld Leadership (Continued)

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# Young Professionals Network

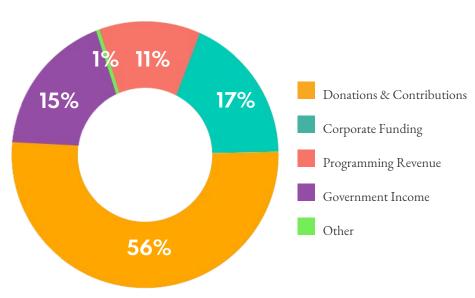
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# Financial Highlights

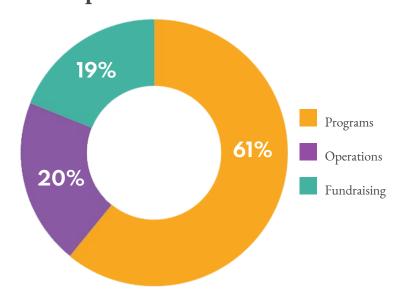
#### 2020 Revenue Sources



#### 2020 Revenue:

\$734,640

# 2020 Expenditure Allocations



2020 Expenditures:

\$874,040



We are beyond grateful to all of our generous and dedicated supporters who make our work possible every day. Thank you.

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Be the Story.

**LitWorld**