

LitWorld[®]

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

READING IS
AN EXERCISE
IN EMPATHY

LitClub

**LitWorld strengthens
kids & communities
through the
power of stories.**



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 Chair of the Board & Acting Co-Executive Directors

Dear Friends,

As we look back on 2021, **there is so much we have learned and so much we are proud of.** This was a year of transformations and transitions and we emerged stronger than ever, **ready to push our work and our impact even further than ever before.**

LitWorld has always been unique for our ability to grow, react, and change, and this past year has been no exception; we held our first virtual gala, evolved the ways that we support, communicate with, and celebrate our partners, and wished a heartfelt goodbye to our Executive Director Dorothy Lee whose hard work and dedication helped transform LitWorld into the organization that it is today.

This year, we were also hard at work supporting our partner communities through the continuing challenges of the pandemic and helping onboard them to more sustainable models of partnership. Despite an estimated 214 million kids out of school in 2021 due to COVID-19*, we were able to help nearly **3,000 LitKids experience the joy of LitClubs, train 191 teens** as burgeoning community leaders, and **strengthen 400 families** socially and economically through Moms LitClubs. In doing so, we are not only strengthening literacy skills and bringing communities together, but **creating a global culture of confident learners who know the power of their own voice.**

As we enter our 15th year and look back on all the lives our work has transformed, we are also looking forward to even greater impact in the years to come. We have seen every day how this work makes a difference for kids and communities everywhere, and we are so thankful to you for standing by our side as partners in this journey. **Together, we can keep LitWorld's story going strong through 2022 and beyond!**



Samantha Siegal, *Chair of the Board*



Amber Peterson, *Acting Co-Executive Director*



Anxhelina Prenika, *Acting Co-Executive Director*

*Gilbert, N. (2022, January 14). *90 education statistics for 2021/2022: Grade School & Higher Education Data*. Financesonline.com. [https://financesonline.com/education-statistics/#:~:text=The%20literacy%20rate%20of%20the,19%20\(UNESCO%2C%202021\).](https://financesonline.com/education-statistics/#:~:text=The%20literacy%20rate%20of%20the,19%20(UNESCO%2C%202021).)



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 kids and communities around the world. Our programs happen “outside 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. **Allison**, a 13 year old LitKid from Un Mundo in Honduras, shared: **“In my community, not all girls are studying. That worries me a lot because sometimes when they’re not studying, they become mothers at an early age. But today, I’m a part of LitWorld and I’m sure that I can help other girls raise their voices... I’m a dynamic girl capable of anything.”**

Our Hallmark Programs

LitClubs are a space for **joyful 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.





The LitWorld virtual WRAD hub



Live Events



Virtual Read-Alouds



Swag & Activities



The Virtual Bookshelf



Book Lists



More Resources

World Read Aloud Day Goes Virtual

World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) 2021 was our 12th global celebration of reading aloud, sharing stories, and advocating for literacy as a human right that belongs to us all. In light of the pandemic, this year's WRAD looked a bit different as we shifted to an all-virtual approach in order to ensure a safe and secure celebration for all.

To help accomplish this, the LitWorld WRAD webpage was entirely redesigned into the new WRAD Virtual Activity Hub. The hub featured resources such as book lists, activity guides, a virtual bookshelf, printables, and more, **garnering over 142k unique visitors throughout the week of WRAD**. Additionally, **we planned a full day of virtual events that were streamed live via our social media including conversations, read-alouds, and activity workshops** featuring authors and educators such as Kwame Alexander, Veera Hiranandani, Justin LaRocca Hansen, Cindy Simillen, Sihle Nontshokweni, and members of the LitWorld team. In partnership with Scholastic, LitWorld also hosted read-alouds through Storyvoice, **reaching over 100k kids across 32 countries**.

Once again, #WorldReadAloudDay trended on Twitter throughout the day, **earning an estimated 24.7M impressions and 53.8k engagements across social media**. Around the globe, our partners also enjoyed robust WRAD celebrations, reporting an estimated **16k participants in 2021 at both virtual and in-person events**. Activities included small group gatherings (held in accordance with COVID-19 protocol), delivering books and activities to homes, Zoom meetings with LitKids and their mentors, and even reading aloud to pets.



Continuing to Support Partners through COVID-19

COVID-19 continued to impact LitWorld's partner communities in different ways throughout 2021, with many experiencing numerous waves of the virus and remaining in strict lockdown. In response, **LitWorld continued to listen to our partners domestically and internationally**, pivoting budgets and programming to best support their needs.

Fabretto video calls in Nicaragua



After our partner organization Springboard to Opportunities, based in Mississippi, Maryland, and Alabama, halted in-person LitClubs for the majority of the year, we worked together closely to **send in-home packets filled with LitClub activities, books, and other supplies to LitKids in their communities**. Kids were encouraged to return the completed activities to their mentors, ensuring their continued access to social-emotional support and programming. Now, Springboard aims to fully reopen LitClubs and begin a round of Community Action Plans, encouraging **LitKids to think of their own ideas of how to help their communities heal**.

Project PEARLS LitMom outreach



LitWorld also similar support for partners in Nicaragua and the Philippines while they remained under lockdown. In Nicaragua, LitWorld partner Fabretto pivoted to **mentor training and support via WhatsApp, continued the distribution of PPE and at-home materials**, and taught mentors to support LitKids through video calls. In the wake of strict lockdowns in the Philippines, LitWorld partner Project PEARLS worked with **LitMoms to lead community outreach to others**, distributing necessary supplies and leading virtual check-in moments to focus on the mental health of children and adults.



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Developing Sustainable Program Models

Art of a Child, Uganda



Museo Rayo, Colombia



This year, LitWorld dove deeper into our new partnership model and began onboarding partners into a tiered system: **Innovation Partners** & **Network Partners**.



Innovation Partners are partners we invest in long-term and collaborate with to test new ideas, programs, and projects, as well as provide in-depth reporting on LitWorld program health. This year, our **ten Innovation Partners**—all of which have long-standing relationships with LitWorld—kicked off the planning of Innovation Projects for 2022. We worked closely with each partner to complete a community needs assessment and co-create **partner-led initiatives** that will support existing programming to further support sustainability in the communities LitWorld works in.

One such Innovation Project, led by our partners at Art of a Child in Kampala, Uganda, involves combining LitMoms, LitClub, and their own entrepreneurship curriculum to launch a chicken coop, educating mothers and LitKids together about small business. Through this project, they hope to ultimately **involve and begin businesses for 100 LitMoms in three years**.

In Colombia, our partners at Museo Rayo are launching an Innovation Project titled *Traveling Ray* to support the creation of “traveling suitcases”- i.e., **mobile libraries on foot**. This will enable LitClub mentors to reach extremely remote communities and families in the mountains who are unable to attend Museo Rayo’s regular LitClub meetings and programs in Roldanillo.

Developing Sustainable Program Models



Network Partners will continue collaborating with us to implement LitWorld programming in local settings while contributing to and benefiting from **LitWorld training, webinars, pedagogy, and curriculum**. Network Partners currently represent a large swath of past partners and continue to be an opportunity to build relationships and scale the LitWorld work.

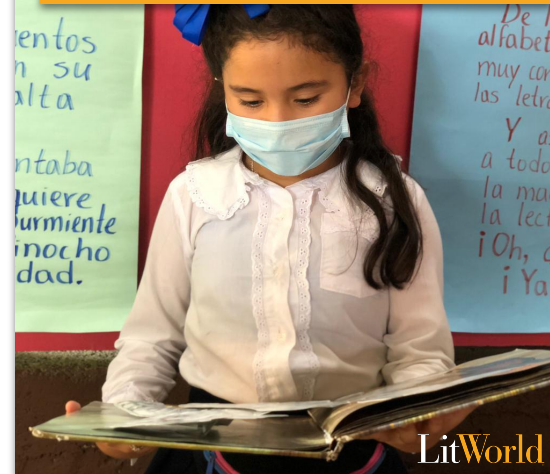
Network Partners are eligible for limited-term programmatic seed funding, can access the library of LitWorld programming (as well as LitWorld's training and professional development resources), and are regularly invited to **share and collaborate with LitWorld and other Network Partners**. These partners provide periodic updates on the status and evolution of LitWorld programming and annually submit metrics on participation and impact.

A key part of the Network model is the implementation of **regular webinars and training sessions for all members**. These sessions began in early 2021 with an onboarding of Network and Innovation Partners for community and relationship building, followed by trainings in August on mentor mental health and tips for managing mentee relationships. Sessions for 2022 will include Grant Writing and Finding Funding Sources, LitWorld Programming and Technology, Developing and Implementing Programming for Teens, Moms LitClubs and Entrepreneurship, Social Media Presence, and more, and will be led by LitWorld in collaboration with our Innovation Partners, select Network Partners, outside experts, and stakeholders.

Children of Haiti Project, Haiti



Hogar de Luceros Amener, Nicaragua



Where Our Work Happens

Our Locations

Colombia
Dominican Republic
Haiti
Honduras
India
Kenya
Liberia
Morocco
Nicaragua
Pakistan

The Philippines
Rwanda
Uganda
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
Dominican 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
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Seeds of Hope Foundation
Springboard to Opportunities
Un Mundo
Women's Organization in Rural Development

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Monica Sorenson Seeds of Hope Foundation, *Pakistan*
Peachy Abellon Project Pearls, *The Philippines*
Jean Marie Habimana Ready for Reading, *Rwanda*
Remmie Bishanga Art of a Child, *Uganda*
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*



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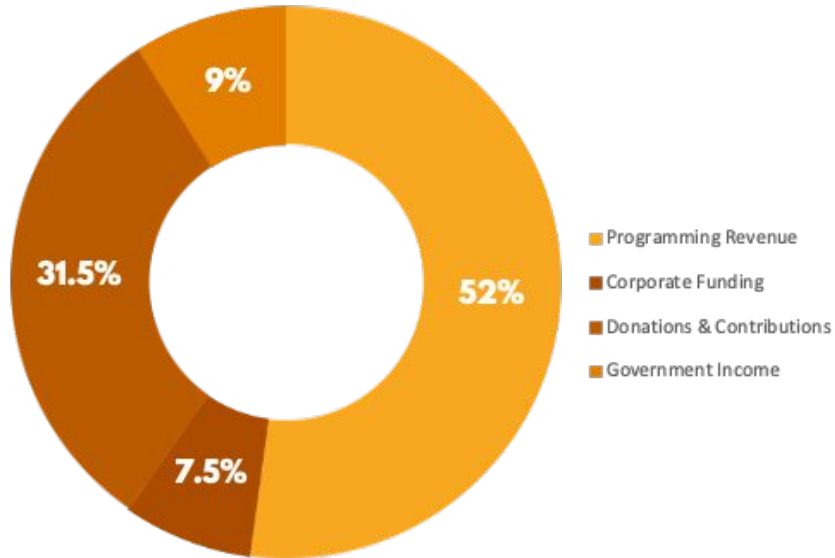
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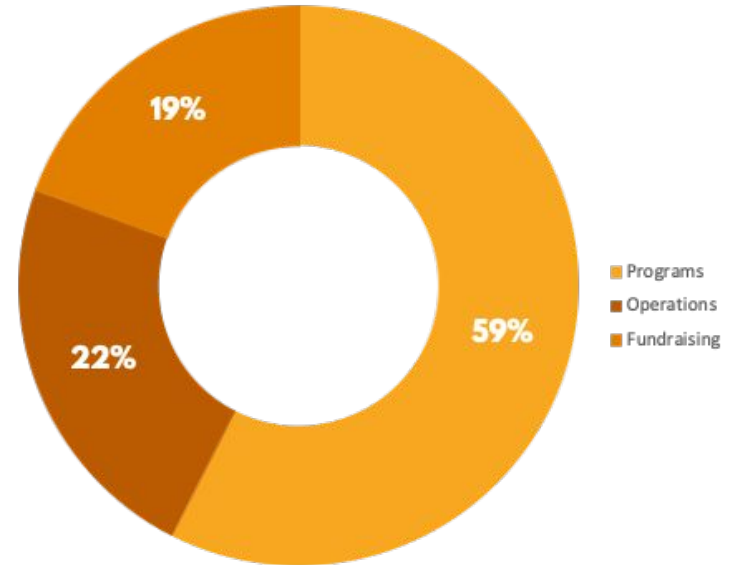
Financial Highlights

2021 Revenue Sources



2021 Revenue:
\$1,186,300

2021 Expenditure Allocations



2021 Expenditures:
\$878,133

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*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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