

LitWorld

Annual Report 2015



Be the Story.

LitWorld
empowers children
to author lives of
independence,
hope, and joy.



About LitWorld

LitWorld is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization cultivating a new generation of academic achievers and powerful leaders as storytellers and story makers, effecting change for themselves, their communities, and their world. We harness the power of authentic literature and children's own stories as the building blocks for literacy and resilience. We partner with grassroots community organizations around the world to empower young people everywhere to use literacy as a lifelong tool for personal and community empowerment.



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Letter from the Executive Director & the Chair of the Board

Dear Friends,

LitWorld is a global force for change. We create sustainable literacy communities by focusing on the most abundant and powerful resource that every child and every community has: their own stories. These stories and life experiences fuel literacy, and build strength and resilience. We respond to literacy gaps by uniting community-based organizations, families and schools to wrap children in a 24/7 literacy community.

The most powerful testament of LitWorld's work this year came from Nepal. In a country where only forty-five percent of women are literate, we are amplifying girls' voices and supporting their life stories through our LitClub program. In April 2015, Nepal was struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake. As stories from Nepal faded from front-page news in the months that followed, LitWorld was expanding and deepening our work, side-by-side with community leaders. We expanded LitClubs, holding them in temporary bamboo shelters to keep girls engaged in learning and connected to the comfort of their LitClub community to recover joy through reading and writing. We opened a community library and began working with a new local partner in Nepal.

The stories of LitClub members following the earthquake shine with resilience. While drawing the "path of her life," Jasmina represented the earthquake as a snowy hill with a peace sign in the sky in place of a sun. "I drew snow instead of rain because some good things came out of the earthquake," she said. "We all took care of one another and our neighbors." The peace sign represents that she is a reader, and through reading she has discovered that sharing stories is the only way to find peace.

LitKids in Nepal and around the world talk about becoming doctors and civil engineers, nurses, artists and performers. By supporting their life stories, we are empowering a generation who will build up their communities stronger than ever.

Onward,

Pam + Ellen

Why?

LitWorld is responding to a global crisis. Right now, catastrophically large numbers of young people are denied their human right to literacy because of gender and racial inequities, poverty or conflict. Globally, at least 124 million children between the ages of six and fifteen have never started school, or have dropped out. The most recent National Assessment of Education Progress revealed that nationwide, 66 percent of all fourth graders, and 80 percent of fourth graders from low-income households are not proficient at reading.

LitWorld believes in the power of children's own stories to change the world and creates spaces for these voices to join the global discourse on education and equity. We advocate for literacy as a human right and the key to social and economic empowerment. Our programs mobilize a global network of dedicated literacy leaders and mentors to change the world for children and their communities.

How?

The LitWorld model is based on best practices for social and emotional development. We design our programs around the LitWorld 7 Strengths: Belonging, Curiosity, Kindness, Friendship, Confidence, Courage, and Hope. This strength-based approach helps young people and families connect to literature and literacy in the deepest possible ways through innovations that blend diverse books, home-school connections, and technology enhancements.

We create year-round education experiences with local partners to impact whole communities. We focus on the out of school time that makes up the majority of children's lives to provide 365 days of literacy support for every child.

What are LitWorld's Results?

- A dramatic increase in children's reading and writing capacities, civic engagement, future outlook and sense of personal value
- A positive change in overall literacy levels, reading and writing, habits of all community members
- Inclusive literacy communities where every child has access to supportive network of mentors and peers to accompany them through life's journeys and transitions

LitWorld's Core Programs



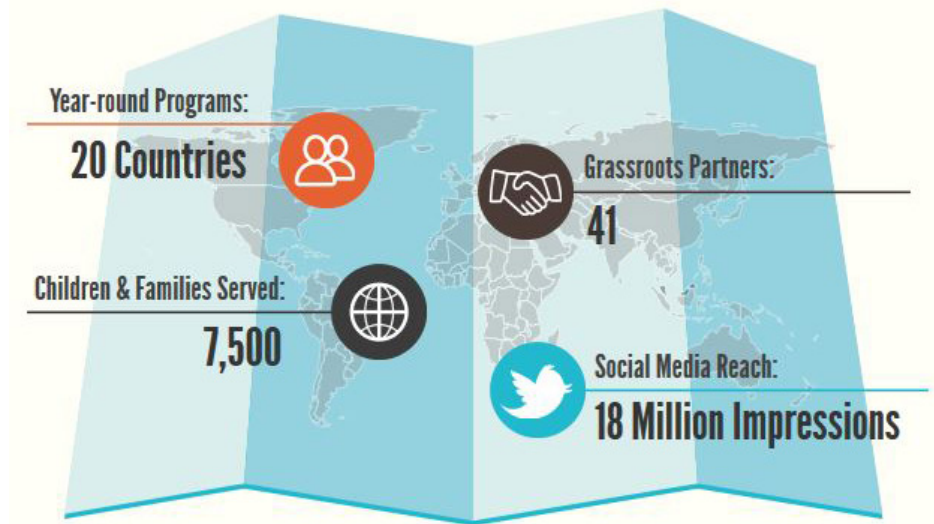
LitClubs & LitCamps make use of essential out-of-school time for learning and literacy growth. Trained mentors engage children as they learn to value their own and others' stories and use their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to work towards their dreams and a self-defined future. LitClubs meet weekly during the school year and LitCamps run during the summer months and school breaks for full-day literacy enrichment and community-building.

LitWorld's community programs create a thriving, sustainable literacy culture that enrolls whole families and all generations. Programs include lending libraries, technology labs, and family LitClubs to cultivate sustainable community growth through the power of story.

The HerStory Campaign is a joint venture with our non-profit partner Global G.L.O.W. HerStory is dedicated to supporting girls and their advocates in overcoming barriers to their freedom. The Campaign centers on inspiring girls to share their stories, strengthening girls' voices, and supporting their education advancement through mentorship.

World Read Aloud Day is our annual advocacy event that enrolls a network of literacy champions in over 100 countries to share the immediacy, power and benefits of reading aloud to children of all ages.

2015 LitWorld Highlights



2015 highlighted the scalability of LitWorld programs, as well as the urgent demand across the country and around the world for our renowned model that focuses on the inherent strengths of every child and community. LitWorld expanded to 20 countries, a 33 percent increase from 2014. We work with 41 community-based partners around the globe. We reached over 7,500 children and families through our regular programming and over 1 million people through World Read Aloud Day.



LitClub & LitCamp Highlights

The most important place to strengthen children's literacy is where it is currently the least supported: the out-of-school time that makes up the majority of children's lives. LitClubs and LitCamps make use of this essential time for literacy development. LitClubs bring children together weekly in single gender, similar age groups while LitCamps bring children of a wide range of grade levels together during school breaks to form thriving and joyful literacy communities.

LitWorld remained fiercely committed to filling learning gaps and providing a first literacy response for communities recovering from crisis, conflict and disaster. We work in the Za'atari camp for Syrian refugees to train young women mentors to run LitClubs to provide urgently needed literacy education and comfort for the children of the camp. In response to the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, LitWorld piloted a radio version of LitClubs that ran across the country to support survivors. After an earthquake struck our partner communities in Nepal we launched additional LitClubs and a community library to provide a safe space for recovery.

At the end of 2015, LitWorld was partnering with 41 community-based organizations in 20 countries to serve over 5,000 children with year-round programs. We launched our signature programs in many new locations this year including: Afghanistan, Armenia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. New locations within the United States include: Jackson, Mississippi and Atlanta, Georgia. In 2015, our multi-age LitCamp program served over 1,500 children in the United States and more than 500 children internationally.

To spread the impact of the LitCamp program, we formed a strategic partnership with Scholastic to create a school-based version of the program leveled for grades K-5. Teachers can now run LitCamps with students during the summer break to transform learning outcomes for students and build their own skills to support striving readers in the classroom year-round. Scholastic LitCamps ran as a pilot in select locations around the country in summer 2015 and the full program has already been sold to hundreds of classrooms for summer 2016.





The HerStory Campaign

LitWorld focuses two-thirds of its work on empowering women and girls because two-thirds of the world's illiterate people are women and girls, and illiteracy equals profound vulnerability. The HerStory Campaign (formerly the 10,000 Global Girls Initiative), is a joint effort between LitWorld, Global G.L.O.W. and community-based organizations to improve the lives of girls through storytelling, creative expression, literacy and mentorship.

The HerStory Campaign provides extended literacy support and mentorship to girls ages 10 and up, intervening at a crucial time of transition in their personal and learning lives. To empower and cultivate young women as leaders and create a sustainable mentorship cycle within communities, we developed an extensive mentorship and training program in 2015 to support the growth of the HerStory Campaign.

The campaign greatly scales up the year-round LitClub support offered to girls in the communities where we are working around the world, and also layers in access to day-long mentorship retreats called Story Summits, and the Story Exchange, a platform for virtual mentorship. The Story Exchange is an online library of stories written by women and girls from HerStory communities around the world using prompts based on the 7 Strengths. Putting the stories and experiences of girls from around the world on record cultivates long-distance mentorship relationships and leads to intercultural understanding and networking among young people and community leaders.

In 2015 we ran HerStory programs in 19 countries including 7 new locations. We piloted the Story Exchange with 10 girls and mentors. Story Summits were held in 15 countries reaching more than 3,000 girls.

Community & Family Program Highlights



The programs that we have developed and incubated over the years to reach and enroll all generations of a community in building a sustainable literacy culture are now being replicated across many more locations where we work.

In 2015, we expanded the Story21 family LitClub to multiple locations in Harlem and are poised to launch in new US and international locations in 2016. Story21 integrates the power of narrative, high-quality literature, and storytelling and creative apps to merge print and digital literacies, helping families gain equitable access to literacy in its many forms.

We continue to deepen and expand the Moms LitClub program that began as a pilot in Kibera, Kenya. In 2015, we reached over 150 women through our LitClubs for mothers, which combine literacy empowerment and social support with life skills development, including technology training, sewing lessons, and nutrition workshops.

In the fall of 2015, LitWorld launched a family text messaging program with partners in the US to send literacy text message “nudges” to increase family literacy and strengthen the connection between home and school. The program supports families with children at any grade level and is accessible to caregivers who may have lower reading levels. At the end of 2015, all families in the K-8 Detroit Public School system were enrolled in this new initiative.

World Read Aloud Day Highlights

World Read Aloud Day sparks a big-picture conversation about the importance of literacy and enrolls communities in adopting year-round routines that will have a profound and lasting impact on their children’s academic, health and social success. World Read Aloud Day 2015 was celebrated by over one million people in all 50 states and at least 100 countries. LitWorld’s World Read Aloud Day and year-round social media created 18 million impressions this year, allowing us to share our core values and literacy best practices with the world.

Our global network of WRADvocates, made up of over 150 influential individuals, organizations and corporations, rallied their communities and online friends and followers to join the World Read Aloud Day movement and to spread LitWorld’s key messages year-round.



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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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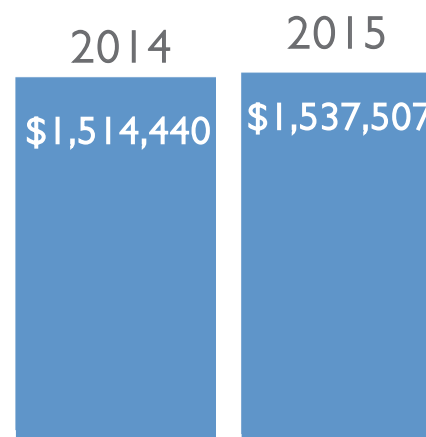
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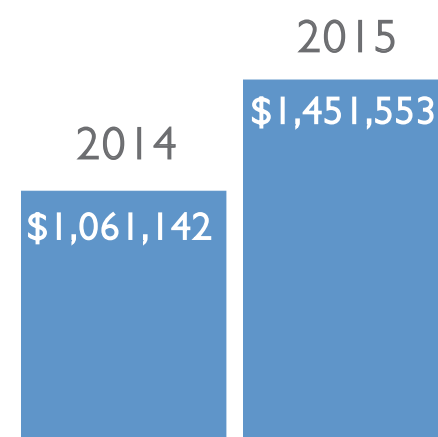


2015 Financial Highlights

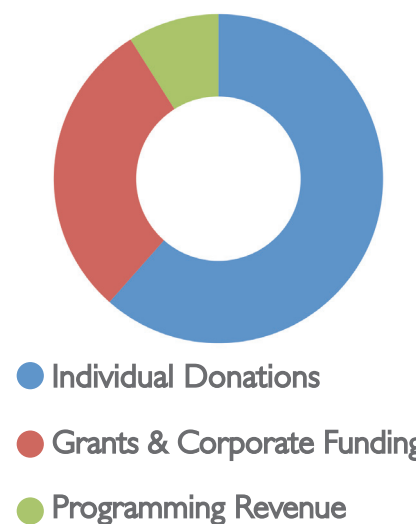
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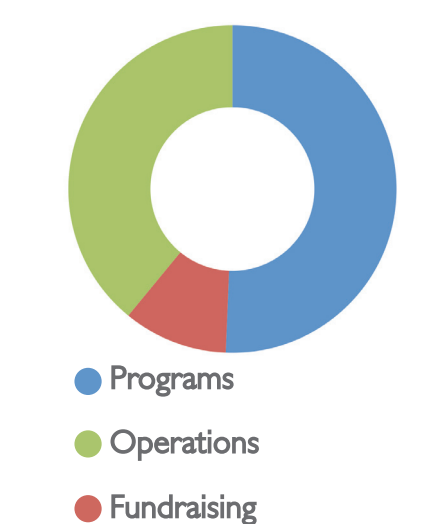
Expenditure Growth



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2015 Expenditure Allocations





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