THE CASE FOR LITERACY
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Dear friends and supporters,

In 2017, we launched ‘Give Your Word’ as part of the Project Literacy campaign, highlighting a group of brave individuals who learned to read and write as adults. Their stories brought attention and action to support the 750 million people globally who do not have basic literacy skills.

As these inspiring advocates propelled public change forward, we worked closely with our 120 partners to scale solutions and innovations - driven by our aim to close the literacy gap by 2030. We collaborated with Worldreader, the Clinton Foundation, and Jumpstart to better understand how parents can develop their children’s literacy skills; we worked with UNESCO to share inclusive technologies that allow low-skilled and low-literate youth and adults to improve their livelihoods; and we co-hosted the Project Literacy Lab with the Unreasonable Group to help high-growth entrepreneurs who are focused on literacy rapidly scale their companies. These are just a few examples of the collaboration we’ve seen enabled by Project Literacy in the last year.

Together, we’ve helped 7 million people around the world to improve their literacy, which we know underpins so many other sustainable development challenges.

A big thank you to all our Project Literacy partners and supporters. Solving a global humanitarian crisis like illiteracy by 2030 requires continued commitment from all of us.

Kate James
Chief Corporate Affairs and Global Marketing Officer, Pearson
Spokesperson, Project Literacy
Project Literacy is a global movement that aims to ensure that all people – regardless of geography, language, race, ability, class or gender – have the opportunity to fulfill their potential through the power of words. Founded and convened in 2015 by Pearson, the world’s learning company, Project Literacy brings together a diverse, forward-thinking set of people and organizations from all over the world. Today, as a community of over 120 partners, we’re working together towards ensuring that no child is born at risk of poor literacy by 2030.

**SOURCES**
3 ProLiteracy, 2018.
4 ProLiteracy, 2018.

**Women** make up 63% of adults who are unable to read and write.²

**Children** of parents with low literacy skills have a 72% chance of being at the lowest reading levels themselves.³

**Of adults with the lowest literacy levels,** 43% live in poverty.⁴

750,000,000 people can’t read this sentence.¹
Since we started in 2015, we’ve reached 3 billion people through awareness campaigns, and 7 million people have benefited from our programs and partnerships.

How we do it

- **RAISING AWARENESS AND MOBILIZING ACTION**
- **ADVANCING BEST PRACTICE**
- **INNOVATING FOR NEW SOLUTIONS**

**OUR IMPACT**

3 BILLION PEOPLE REACHED (online, print, and broadcast)

- 250,000 people in our online community
- 7 million program beneficiaries
- 120 partners
- 16 awards, including Cannes Lions Grand Prix
- £12 million total investment in the movement with an additional £8.8M matched
- 20,000 volunteer referrals
- £12 million total investment in the movement with an additional £8.8M matched

Image: Worldreader
Spotlight

In 2017, we reached the midpoint of Pearson’s five-year commitment to lead the roll out of the Project Literacy campaign. We brought in a third-party evaluation expert, Results for Development (R4D), to better understand our impact to date. This Qualitative Midline Evaluation highlights the key successes and challenges of the campaign as well as opportunities to enhance the campaign’s capacity for collective action in order to drive significant scalable change. The full evaluation is online at http://r4d.org/projectliteracy.

Taking action

Here’s how we’re taking action in 2018 to respond to the recommendations from the evaluation:

- Launching a community of practice to deepen partnerships
- Inviting in co-funders to invest in, and grow the campaign
- Co-creating and driving the movement toward collective goals and milestones
- Convening partners to share learnings and align the literacy field
- Strengthening our articulation of Project Literacy’s agenda and goals

“As the principal investigator on the Qualitative Midline Evaluation of Project Literacy, I observed an initiative that has accomplished a lot, and I learned that the campaign has opportunities through targeted partnerships and collective commitments to reach the ambitious targets it set out to achieve. We are heartened by Project Literacy’s commitment to generating evidence to better understand what is and isn’t working, and to adapt program implementation based on that evidence. This is a rare quality in an organization, and it is embraced from the Project Literacy leadership to their partners around the globe.”

Luke Heinkel

Senior Program Officer at Results for Development

“Books mean a better life, a brighter future.”

Project Literacy is building a movement to advocate for greater investment and attention to literacy. The prevalence of illiteracy and its far-reaching negative impacts require nothing less than a global, united force to close the literacy gap.
Have you ever heard the story of Pong-Pong the brave little chicken? You probably haven’t, because it’s a story that existed only in Wanda’s head.

Wanda Steward is a parent from Philadelphia. Her children used to ask her to read them books at bedtime, but what they didn’t know was that she couldn’t read. Instead, Wanda would pick a book at random, and then make up a new story to go with the illustrations. As her children began to learn to read, they realized the words didn’t match up, and Wanda was forced to admit to them that she didn’t know how to read and write.

Her children’s dismay inspired her to go back to school, and thanks to support from her tutor at Adults Can Learn to Read, a partner of the Philadelphia Office of Adult Education, Wanda achieved something truly amazing. Pong-Pong has made it out of Wanda’s head and onto the pages of her very own children’s book, The Little Chicken Named Pong-Pong, just a year and a half after she started working with her tutor.

Wanda’s success goes way further than publishing a children’s book. Being able to read and write has opened up a whole new world for her family – benefitting their education, their future prospects, and their health.

To give Wanda’s book the audience it deserves, Project Literacy asked a very special literacy advocate to read it - actor Idris Elba.

Idris Elba, an advocate for literacy and education, was enthralled by Wanda’s story and the opportunity to shine a light on this often overlooked issue. So much so, he lent his voice to help celebrate her accomplishment – and in the process reached out to his 6.5 million plus social media followers. Her book has been downloaded over 3,000 times.
UNESCO: SHOWCASING INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

The UNESCO-Pearson Initiative for Literacy produced case studies of programs that enable low-skilled and low-literate youths and adults to access inclusive digital technologies that strengthen literacy skills. The initiative received 130 applications from 60 countries. Fourteen case studies have been selected and they will inform forthcoming UNESCO guidelines – aimed at digital solution providers, implementation and donor agencies, development partners and governments – on how to create more inclusive digital solutions that develop the skills of users and improve their livelihoods in the 21st century. Winning case studies can be found at https://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy-all/pearson-initiative/case-studies.

READING PARTNERS: Reaching more learners

Reading Partners helps children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results. Pearson, as part of the Project Literacy campaign, made a three-year commitment to help expand and deepen Reading Partners programs across the United States. Since our partnership launched in 2015, we have helped the organization serve 26% more elementary school students in 73% more schools and reading centers, ultimately providing an increase of 30% more tutoring sessions.

CENTPEC: Digitizing successful interventions

In 2016, we partnered with Brazil's Center for Studies and Research in Education, Culture, and Community Action (CENTPEC) to scale a proven digital training platform for literacy and Portuguese-language teachers. The platform launched in 2016, and featured unique content and videos to support the professional development of teachers. During 2017, CENTPEC kicked-off a pilot in Varginha, state of Minas Gerais, to start testing the scalability of the platform to new provinces and inform the last development phase.

ROOM TO READ: Supporting research to move the field forward

With support from Pearson, Room to Read conducted research analysis and developed a new method for estimating reading fluency benchmarks alongside step-by-step guidance for practitioners and policymakers. This research will help policy makers assess the quality of their education system and track progress toward improving learning outcomes.

BUILDING THE NETWORK

We grew our community of partners to 120 non-profit organizations, companies, government bodies and multilateral institutions. We also worked with GOOD Corps to better understand who is part of our community and how best to serve them. As part of those activities, we also developed five new partner engagement opportunities which we plan to pilot in 2018.

Sharing best practice is a powerful way to increase both success and scale. Therefore, Project Literacy is partnering with organizations that are already implementing proven literacy interventions.
Project Literacy is partnering with companies and organizations to design, build, and rigorously test game-changing approaches. New solutions are needed to reach the most marginalized in our society and bring about change on the scale needed.

**INNOVATING FOR NEW SOLUTIONS**

Project Literacy Lab represents the first program of its kind: an international accelerator dedicated exclusively to scaling up ventures that are positioned to close the global literacy gap by 2030. The initiative was designed in partnership with the Unreasonable Group to support the fastest growing ventures worldwide that are already solving key challenges tied to illiteracy. The accelerator supports entrepreneurs with resources, mentorship, access to financing, and a global network of support to help them scale more rapidly across multiple regions and countries.

![“The thought of taking over a week away from my team gave me a ton of anxiety, but I can say without hesitation that Project Literacy Lab has had—and will continue to have—a huge return on investment. The program has both forced me to think bigger about the problems we are trying to solve while also giving me clear and tactical tools to make decisions. From deeply personal to highly strategic learnings, Project Literacy Lab has exceeded all my expectations.”](image)

Jeremy Rogoff
KickUP

**29 VENTURES**

$**121 MILLION IN COMBINED REVENUE & FINANCING**

20.6 **MILLION USER REACH**

120+ **COUNTRIES**

659 **EMPLOYEES**

All images: The Unreasonable Group, Left: Xiaohoa Michelle Ching, Founder & CEO, Literator
THE SOLUTION IN YOUR HAND
Since our launch in 2015, we've been partnering with organizations at the cutting edge of innovation. Research from pilots that concluded in 2017 builds upon a growing body of evidence in support of using the technology at hand to reach parents and caregivers to aid early childhood development.

READ TO KIDS
As part of the Project Literacy campaign, Worldreader and Pearson launched a multifaceted partnership in 2015 called Read to Kids – a model that combines behavior change with community-based services and a collection of over 500 locally relevant children's books curated in a free mobile app. The program reached over 203,000 households with nearly 7,000 becoming frequent readers, proving that digital reading is scalable and affordable.

MOBILE TEXTING RESEARCH TO SUPPORT PARENTS
Through support from Pearson, Too Small To Fail, an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, partnered with Univision and Text4Baby to conduct research into the best practices in mobile texting programs to engage parents and caregivers. The study found that text is the most effective method of informing parents and empowering parents and caregivers to take action, compared to other formats, such as email, voice message, and social media. What's more, it became apparent that parents like seeing activities modeled for them, videos that feature trustworthy messengers, and prompts and tips to help them navigate their children's early years.

Pearson, as part of Project Literacy, also supported research by Jumpstart on the value of texting as a low-cost, low-effort activity to promote family engagement. Jumpstart learned that families have a positive view of texting as a method of communication, seeing it as helpful, particularly for providing information about skills their children need. Initial reports are underway to offer a texting program to families in all of the states where Jumpstart operates.

Download the report at worldreader.org

DRIVING INNOVATION IN 2018 AND BEYOND

WORKFORCE ATLAS: CREATING PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYABILITY
In 2017 Project Literacy joined forces with ProLiteracy to embark on a project that combines adult basic education and workforce development. Workforce Atlas is an online careers pathway platform that assesses adult learners' literacy, numeracy, and workplace skills, before directing them to recommended occupations, online resources and local providers that can help them achieve their aspirations.

With assistance from Results for Development, ProLiteracy will pilot Workforce Atlas in 2018 in three US locations.

ALL CHILDREN READING: A Grand Challenge for Development
Established in 2011 by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), World Vision and the Australian Government, All Children Reading sources, tests, and disseminates scalable solutions that improve literacy skills of early grade learners in developing countries.

Pearson and All Children Reading have been working together on two strategic activities: EVOKE: Leaders for Literacy, and Book Boost: Access for All Challenge.

EVOKE: Leaders for Literacy takes a game-based learning platform originally developed by the World Bank and uses it to improve youth literacy in South Africa by leveraging young people as social innovators.

During 2017, a contextualization workshop was convened in Midrand and a community pilot was launched in Limpopo. During 2018, Pearson South Africa will run a school-based pilot that will inform the strategy to expand EVOKE: Leaders for Literacy more broadly in South Africa and beyond.

Around 250 million children of primary school age are unable to recognize basic letters and numbers. For the millions of children with disabilities that impact their use of traditionally printed material, the shortage of quality books in accessible formats is even worse.

To address these challenges, we launched Book Boost: Access for All Challenge to drive innovation in accessible publishing. The challenge seeks business models that can increase the number of accessible books through a more efficient and cost-effective publishing process. The winning models will be selected in 2018.
One third of Pearson funds – £1.99 million – was allocated to raising awareness, which leveraged additional in-kind donations valued at £6.3 million. The remaining funds supported programs to enhance best practices in the field of literacy and to identify effective new approaches to closing the literacy gap.

Project Literacy campaign support totaled £9,799,301 in 2017.

**FUNDING BY SOURCE**

As convener and founding partner of Project Literacy, Pearson contributed 36% of funds – £3.499.301 in 2017 – with additional support from non-profit, corporate, and individual sources.
WE ARE

WHO WE ARE

ADVISORY GROUP

The Project Literacy Advisory Group, which is comprised of diverse talent across global education policy, corporate social responsibility, business, and media, drives the campaign forward to reach our 2030 target. In 2017, they helped map the campaign to a sustainable future and set us on a course to independence by 2020. Project Literacy is grateful for the dedication and expertise of the Project Literacy Advisory Group, which is comprised of some of the world’s greatest innovators, practitioners and researchers. We know that literacy is key to unlocking talent and leadership to solve the world’s biggest challenges, and we’re proud to work with over 120 diverse organizations.

OUR PARTNERS

The Project Literacy movement is growing every day and now includes some of the world’s greatest innovators, practitioners and researchers. We know that literacy is key to unlocking talent and leadership to solve the world’s biggest challenges, and we’re proud to work with over 120 diverse organizations.

PROJECT LITERACY TEAM

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THE CASE FOR LITERACY

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Achievement for All
Action on Addiction
Afriqods
Angaza
Asia Foundation
Beeline Reader
The Big Issue
Foundation
Book Aid International
Book Trust
Books Beyond Words
Breakthrough
Collaborative
Bulverde Spring Branch
Library Foundation (BSBL)
Cell-Ed
CENPEC
Center for Literacy
Craddles to Crayons
Curious Learning
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
Doctors of the World UK
Edom
Edovo
Edute
Emote
EQTainment
Extreme Dialogue
Feed the Minds
Fight for Peace
First Book

Football Beyond Borders
Guru-g
Guten
Hockey Pirates
IGAUPM
Impact Network
Indy Reads
Iowa City Public Library
In’s Speaks
Jumpstart
Karadi Path
KickUp
Kingo
Kodable
Lanka Jathika
Learning Games Studios
Lessons for Life Foundation
Letus
Library for All
Lightsoil
Literacy Action
Literacy Inc.
Literacy Partners
Literator
LitWorld
Lixav
Mary Ward Center
Microsoft
Ministry of Stories
Minnesota Literacy Council
National Braille Press
National Literacy Trust
NEI Foundation

Office of Adult Education, City of Philadelphia
Parent-Child Home Program
Pearson
Pencils of Promise
Pramiah Books
Project Literacy of Bergen County
PRO Literacy
Raising a Reader
Reach Out and Read
READ Alliance
Read Easy UK
Reading is Fundamental
Reading Partners
Reading Rescue
Robbie AI
RocketLit
Room to Read
San Francisco Education Fund
Shannon Trust
SpeakMODalities
Stories2Milestones
SunCulture
TabLab
Tales2go
Team Read
The Beat Within
The Dream Center
The Hunger Project
The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (FLF)
The Literacy Lab

The Reading Agency
ThinkCerca
Too Small To Fail
True North
Ubongo
Un Millón de Niños Lectores
UNESCO
Unreasonable Group
USAID
Veern Institute
War Child UK
We Need Diverse Books
Western Cape Primary Science Programme
Wizenoze
Womankind Worldwide
World Literacy Foundation
World Literacy
World Vision
Worldreader

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Arabella Advisors
FCB Inferno
GOOD
NOW
Pledgeling
Results for Development
Weber Shandwick
Yes&Pepper
We envision a world in which all people have access to basic needs, and we believe that literacy is key to achieving this. In the lead up to 2030, we will continue to build a cross-sector coalition of global development experts, charities, researchers, government leaders, funders and companies to close the literacy gap for 750 million people around the world.

Join the movement at projectliteracy.com
OUR FOUNDING PARTNER

Pearson is the world’s learning company, with expertise in educational courseware and assessment, and a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology. Pearson products and services are used by millions of teachers and learners around the world every day.

Our mission is to help people make progress in their lives through learning — because we believe that learning opens up opportunities, creating fulfilling careers and better lives.