Cross-national Evaluation of the Girls’ Education Program

Request for Proposals to Design and Implement the Evaluation

January 2011

Room to Read® is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to design and implement a cross-national evaluation of our Girls’ Education program. The period of performance includes 2011 as a planning year as well as 2012-2014 for data collection, analysis, and reporting. The evaluation will take place in four countries that represent the geographical diversity of program implementation: Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Zambia. The primary goals of the evaluation are to examine the extent to which the program is being implemented as it has been envisioned in the Girls’ Education Program Strategy (2010) as well as the extent to which effective implementation (of individual activities as well as the comprehensive set of activities overall) is promoting the intended program outcomes.

This Request for Proposals describes the Girls’ Education program, expectations for the evaluation, and instructions for proposals. Attachments include summaries of Room to Read’s overall strategic plan (2010-2014), the related strategic plan for the Girls’ Education program (2010-2014), and the 2009 global monitoring report. Detailed copies of these documents will be made available to the organization selected to implement the evaluation.

Background

Women make up nearly two-thirds of the world’s illiterate population,¹ and girls make up a disproportionately low number of students enrolled in and completing secondary school in many parts of the world. The situation is unjust. Gender bias continues to disadvantage girls and inhibit their opportunities to exercise their right to education. Even where girls and boys are at school in roughly

---

equal numbers, gender bias against girls continues in many countries’ curricula, classroom dynamics, and teaching methods. Furthermore, girls must overcome a range of other hurdles to complete their schooling. Often they lack women teachers and other positive role models. Girls may face sexual harassment and even violence from men teachers and classmates. It may not be safe for them to walk to school. In some instances, families do not provide supportive learning environments at home, or force girls to drop out of school to get married, care for younger siblings, or work. In other instances, families choose not to send their girls to school when they do not think that the quality of education ensures that school is a better use of girls’ time. Such issues continue to restrict girls’ ability to benefit equally to boys from education.

Room to Read’s Girls’ Education program seeks to reduce these types of barriers so that economically disadvantaged girls can achieve their full potential in life. The program began in 2000 as a pure scholarship program by providing school tuition and fees to help economically disadvantaged girls in Nepal enroll and remain in school. Staff quickly realized, though, that many of the barriers to girls’ secondary school education cannot be overcome through financial support alone. That is why Room to Read has evolved a Girls’ Education program that includes the development of life skills and girl-friendly environments, along with its historical financial support of scholarships.

In recent years, for example, Room to Read has involved local women as mentors and advocates for the girls. In addition, there has been a focus on increasing parents’ and families’ awareness of the value of sending their daughters to school. The program continues to grow, with more than 10,000 girls currently participating in eight countries. These include Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Zambia. Room to Read is also planning to launch the program in Tanzania later this year. Statistics to date demonstrate substantial success. The most recent global data available indicate that 96 percent of Girls’ Education program scholars advanced to the next grade.\(^2\)

In 2009, Room to Read reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality in education as part of its new organizational strategic vision for the period 2010 to 2014. This included reflection about the overall strategy for the Girls’ Education program and debate about whether or not to change the overall program model to be more responsive to girls’ educational needs. The outcome was worldwide agreement that the core elements of the program (e.g., material support, academic support, life skills education, and mentoring) were necessary but that there was also a global need to strengthen support for girls’ education within schools and communities for larger numbers of girls to succeed in school.

As a result, the 2009 Room to Read Global Strategic Plan expanded the scope of the program to include a group of nine core activity sets that we believe, when implemented together, are intended to increase girls’ likely success in completing secondary school with the skills necessary to negotiate key life decisions.\(^3\) These include the following:

1. **Life skills education**: Life skills education activities include classes, camps, workshops, and extracurricular activities in which participants develop skills to negotiate key life decisions. The starting point is a government’s school-based life skills curriculum (as available) and Room to Read then builds supplementary activities to ensure that girls develop essential life skills competencies, which include

---


self-awareness and empathy; communication and interpersonal skills; decision-making, problem-solving, and goal-setting; critical thinking and creative thinking; and coping with emotions and stress.

2. **Mentoring**: Female mentors provide girls with a trustworthy adult or peer who can be an adviser, set an example, and be a positive influence on the girls’ lives. Typically, interactions between a mentor and girls occur frequently (for example, every two weeks) and are likely to create opportunities for them to discuss a wide range of topics, including pressing issues the girls face.

3. **Academic support**: Room to Read provides supplementary academic support to Girls’ Education program participants who need it. This can take the form of intensive remedial support, tutoring, and exam preparation.

4. **Material support**: Material support includes payments on behalf of Girls’ Education program participants to cover the direct costs of school as well as coverage of some other associated costs. Examples include direct costs, such as school and exam fees, textbooks, school supplies, and uniforms, as well as indirect costs in some instances, such as transportation, board, and medical exams. Room to Read provides material support on an as-needed basis to girls who cannot afford the costs of schooling.

5. **Gender-Responsive Teaching**: This activity involves teacher professional development that increases teachers’ awareness, knowledge, attitude, and behaviors in relation to gender parity, equity, and equality in education. The expectation is that providing teachers with training in gender-responsive teaching and active learning methods can foster a girl-friendly school environment.

6. **Infrastructure**: This activity will improve school infrastructure at target schools to promote a more child-friendly and girl-friendly environment.

7. **Stakeholder engagement**: This includes seeking input from parents, communities, school leaders, and governments during the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of program activities. Room to Read promotes stakeholder engagement by sharing information with stakeholders, encouraging their participation in activities, and using a challenge grant model to promote local ownership.

8. **Partnership with governments and other NGOs**: The Girls’ Education program partners with governments and other non-governmental organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the program. This includes partnerships for coordination and complementary programming as well as active collaboration and knowledge sharing. In addition, working within favorable political environments and with supportive local governments improves the flow and sustainability of implementation.

9. **Research, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation**: This activity includes efforts to study the effectiveness of the Girls’ Education program, use the results for program improvement, and share lessons learned with the global community of girls’ education practitioners.

The new program, or what we refer to as the “enhanced Girls’ Education program,” is more of an expansion of existing programming rather than a wholesale redesign. The change integrates school- and community-level activities and extends some program activities to all girls at targeted lower secondary schools (i.e., mentoring and life skills education) while maintaining more intensive material and academic support to girls who are economically disadvantaged or struggling with their coursework. The
future emphasis will be on deepening programmatic content as well as the strengthening and integration of activity sets into a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing approach.

**Conceptual Framework**

The illustration in Figure 1 (see next page) reflects the most recent conceptualization of Room to Read’s Girls’ Education program. Starting with the right-most boxes and moving left, the model identifies two clear outcomes for the program: 1) Completion of secondary school; and 2) Skills to negotiate key life decisions. The outcomes at the far right are based on Room to Read’s *Global Strategy for 2010-2014* (2009), and described in more detail in the *Girls’ Education Program Strategic Plan* (2010).

Each of the three large boxes to the left of the outcomes represents the social spheres that affect girls’ educational success. The box closest to the outcomes is the girls’ individual circumstances and experiences. These are linked closely to the school environment as well as the family and community environments in which the girls live. Ideally, the outcomes are also linked to the Room to Read activities attuned to each of these spheres.

The Girls’ Education program activity sets can be grouped into each of these boxes. The decision about activity sets to include in the Girls’ Education program is rooted in strategies that the research literature and country experience indicates are the best way to reduce the barriers to girls’ educational success.

**Operationalizing the Room to Read Strategic Plan**

Since January 2010, Girls’ Education program staff at Room to Read’s Global Office, Regional Offices, and Country Offices have been working together to clarify the ways in which countries teams will operationalize the enhanced Girls’ Education program during this 2010-2014 strategic planning period. This includes reflection about which parts of the enhanced program will be consistent across all countries as well as which parts of the enhanced program will have to be tailored to meet country-specific needs. Throughout this reflection period, the focus has been on documenting ways to build on existing program components that have proven successful historically, particularly in expanding life skills activities, to create a program that is even more responsive in helping girls to succeed in secondary school. The reflection process concluded with the finalization and organizational approval of an updated, worldwide Girls’ Education program strategy\(^5\) in July 2010.

Country teams are now in the process of using the worldwide *Girls’ Education Program Strategy* to develop their own four-year operational plans (2011-2014). Plans will include a rationale for the implementation of the Girls’ Education program in the country, processes for maintaining support for girls who are currently being served on the program, and steps for serving new girls who will join the program in 2011 under the new strategy.

It is important to highlight that we do not expect the new Girls’ Education program be implemented in exactly same way in every country. Although country teams are expected to develop their own plans within the parameters of the nine activity sets, they have substantial flexibility to determine which

\(^4\) Eight of nine Girls’ Education program activity sets are included in the framework. The last—research, monitoring, and evaluation—is an essential part of the program’s success but is linked to the expected program outcomes in more of an indirect way.

Intermediate Outcomes (IOs)

1. Increased years of schooling for girls;
2. Increased girls’ self-awareness, and decision-making and problem-solving skills.
3. Increased girl-friendliness of school environments;
4. Increased family, peer, and community awareness and support of girls’ education; and
5. Increase collaboration with government to support policies and programs to promote girls’ education.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Room to Read’s Girls’ Education Program
program activities to emphasize and the ways in which to implement the activities. Country programs have evolved somewhat in parallel historically based on local circumstances and needs, and we assume that new country operational plans (2011-2014) will include a similar level of diversity.

For example, life skills education is one of the most important activity sets in the Girls’ Education program. We believe that strong life skills education is essential to help economically disadvantaged girls stay in school and complete secondary school with the skills to negotiate key life decisions. Room to Read has developed a global framework of 30 competencies that every girl is expected to be able to demonstrate by the time she graduates from secondary school (see Annex A). We are also developing a global portfolio assessment tool to help program staff monitor girls’ progress in mastering core competencies over time. This competency framework and assessment tool will be used by all country teams. At the same time, each country has developed its own curriculum for life skills education. And while some country teams have negotiated with district education officers to add life skills education to the normal school day, others have organized life skills education as an extracurricular after-school activity or summer camp activity.

Global Indicators

Since 2008 Room to Read has collected a set of cross-nationally consistent indicators for each of its programs. These Global Indicators are designed to inform broad organizational activities related to program inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Indicators for the Girls’ Education program indicate substantial success to date in keeping girls in school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Indicator</th>
<th>2008 GI</th>
<th>2009 GI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Number of girls who are receiving Girls’ Education program scholarships</td>
<td>6,491</td>
<td>8,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Percentage of scholars who dropped the program</td>
<td>3 percent</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Percentage of scholars who advanced to the next grade</td>
<td>98 percent</td>
<td>96 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Percentage of scholars who transitioned school levels</td>
<td>98 percent</td>
<td>94 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Number of scholars who received tutoring</td>
<td>2,725</td>
<td>5,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Number of scholars who attended life skills training</td>
<td>2,451</td>
<td>4,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Percentage of scholars whose guardian(s) participated in GEP meetings</td>
<td>90 percent</td>
<td>91 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Number of scholars who completed the final year of secondary school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these data provide important information about large-scale trends, they are not sufficient for helping Room to Read understand how program activities, individually and collectively, are affecting girls’ educational opportunities. Additional research is necessary to help Room to Read learn about the fidelity, targeting, and consequences of its programming. We are therefore proposing to conduct a cross-national evaluation to examine the efficacy of the program design and its expected outcomes at a deeper level.

Cross-national Evaluation

With financial contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other generous donors, Room to Read is proposing to launch an external cross-national, multi-year evaluation of the Girls’ Education program to coincide with the start of the newly updated program in 2011. Findings from the
evaluation will be used to strengthen the program design and implementation strategies further. Specifically, Room to Read is seeking to answer the following questions:

1. How well are program staff and partners implementing the intended program activities under the enhanced Girls’ Education program, both overall and within the cultural contexts in which they are working?

2. To what extent is effective implementation of the enhanced Girls’ Education program leading to the intended program outcomes (per the conceptual framework)? How and why?

3. To what extent is program implementation of the enhanced Girls’ Education program leading to broader social outcomes, such as more gender equity and equality in school and communities? How and why?

We are seeking a consultant or consulting organization (hereafter referred to as “consultant”) that can design and implement an appropriate research methodology to help answer these evaluation questions.

Evaluation Considerations and Requirements

Room to Read intends to enter into a contract with a consultant to design and implement a cross-national Girls’ Education program evaluation that informs the three key evaluation questions listed above. The consultant selected for this evaluation will be responsible for implementing all aspects of the evaluation and should plan to include all related costs in its proposed budget.

The evaluation is planned to begin in April 2011 and conclude in December 2014, with the remainder of 2011 as a planning year and 2012-2014 as the period for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This includes an expectation of three intervals of data collection in each country (one data collection effort per country per year). The evaluation will take place in four of the eight countries that are implementing the Girls’ Education program: Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Zambia. These countries were selected to represent the geographical diversity of current program implementation. Background information about the Girls’ Education program in each of these countries is included in Annex B.

The consultant is asked to identify a project manager for this evaluation who will be the primary organizational liaison with Room to Read for this evaluation. That person may also be named as the principal investigator. The project manager will be expected to communicate regularly with Room to Read’s evaluation manager, based in Room to Read’s Global Office in San Francisco, California, as well as Regional and Country liaisons, regarding the technical implementation of the evaluation. Regional and Country liaisons from Room to Read will be available to assist the project manager with logistics related to data collection, including coordination with schools and scholars. In addition, the project manager will be expected to communicate regularly with Room to Read’s contract specialist regarding financial aspects of the evaluation. The Room to Read contract specialist will also be located in Room to Read’s Global Office, in San Francisco, California.

The contract between Room to Read and the consultant selected for this evaluation will either be a fixed price or cost plus fixed fee type contract, to be determined by mutual agreement of both organizations. The total value of the contract will not exceed $1.5 million USD. An organization entering into a contract with Room to Read must ensure that the entire scope of work can be completed with the available resources.
Additional Considerations

1. The evaluation will be limited to the enhanced Girls’ Education program. The consultant will not be expected to evaluate the existing program and should only expect to review the current program for its historical value in informing the enhanced program. Part of the reason that Room to Read has decided to make 2011 a planning period for the evaluation is to give country teams time to prepare for the updated elements of the enhanced program. The expectation is that baseline data collection, in early 2012, will include the new cohort of scholars who enter lower secondary schools at that time. The evaluation will target those schools that are newly selected for Girls’ Education program activities for the 2012 school year.

2. Part of the evaluation design should detail how the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 will be tested to determine the relative importance of individual components (both the circumstances and supports at each level as well as the enhanced activity sets) as well as activities overall in achieving the expected program outcomes. At the same time, though, the evaluation design must be couched within the realities of the program approach (e.g., that implementation of program activities varies between countries within a set of parameters; that not all enhanced program activities will be fully implemented in all countries at the time of baseline data collection).

3. Room to Read will allow some flexibility in contextualizing data collection instruments and processes across countries rather than promoting an absolutely consistent cross-national study design. It is more important that the consultant identify the best data to collect and best methods in each country rather than ensure pure cross-national consistency.

4. Room to Read recognizes that the time period for the evaluation may not allow for a direct evaluation of one of the two key outcomes: completion of secondary school. We are receptive to the use of intermediary outcome indicators, such as retention in school, as a short-term proxy for school completion. In addition, Room to Read will share its life skills portfolio assessment tool (in development), which is linked to the life skills education competency framework (see Annex A), to

---

6 Dr. Luis Crouch, Research Vice President at RTI International and Room to Read Advisory Board member, describes this challenge as follows:

Your [program] design seems already pretty fixed and is based on a lot of consensus but it does not seem to encourage an “impact” focus. For one thing, you do not have ONE intervention, so you cannot make a statement such as “the Room to Read model does or does not have impact,” because in fact you do not have a [single] Room to Read model, the model contains some 70 potential mixes of sub-interventions and they are applied differentially. Second, the purpose of saying “bed nets have impact” is that bed nets (and such simple things) are highly replicable bureaucratically. The entire Girls’ Education program approach is not; but PARTS of it are (e.g., “Please do a better job with life skills teaching”). Thirdly, your selection process tends to discourage randomization—you have requirements [for program targeting]. Finally, anyway, randomization, when there is no placebo, still has major problems, particularly if the intervention is complex and even marginally controversial, because the provider (you) is self-selecting into the treatment, and may be providing all kinds of managerial inputs that are NOT likely to be provided upon scale-up. So you are very far from the ideal conditions for true randomization anyway (or even propensity matching or regression discontinuity and so on). So I’d advise to take advantage of the natural variation in your implementation to try to get rigor about “relative impact.” Note this is not process; you can measure outcomes. But it is relative impact of the various interventions. This requires that you do get very rigorous about how you classify the interventions that DO happen (you have to have a rigorous menu or dictionary of interventions so you can classify them) and that you measure their intensity of application.
determine if it can be adapted and applied to help measure the second expected program outcome variable, girls having the skills to negotiate key life decisions.

5. Room to Read is willing to work with the evaluator to consider ways to build at least some random selection into the evaluation design. Given that the target of baseline data collection will be girls and schools that begin the program in 2012, for example, we have the possibility of working with the Room to Read country teams that make final school selection decisions to build some oversampling of schools into the selection process.

**Evaluation Partner**

Room to Read is pleased that Oliver Wyman Group (OWG) has offered to contribute a substantial in-kind contribution to this evaluation. OWG’s team will be led by senior economists from NERA Economic Consulting. NERA is a global firm that applies econometric and statistical analysis to business solutions. David Monk, Vice President of NERA, is a longstanding member of Room to Read’s Advisory Board and serves on Oliver Wyman Group’s Pro Bono Committee. OWG has pledged to assist with the design and data analysis of this evaluation to the extent that OWG, the selected consultant, and Room to Read can identify a substantive and mutually agreeable role on this project. The expectation is that OWG staff assigned to support the evaluation would work directly with the selected consultant. Discussions about OWG’s role in the evaluation will take place during the initial planning period.

**Instructions for Proposals**

Room to Read will award the contract for this evaluation through a competitive bidding process. We request proposals from qualified consultants to design and implement this cross-national evaluation of the Girls’ Education program. Proposals should be clear and concise, yet include enough detail for Room to Read to understand the consultant’s approach to informing the key evaluation issues. We request that proposals be submitted in two parts, technical and cost components, as described below.

**Technical Proposal**

Please be sure that the technical proposal addresses the following questions:

1. What will be the consultant’s approach to achieving the evaluation goals? Please include a description of at least the following activities:

   a. Overall approach to the evaluation, including but not limited to

      i. Summary of the evaluation design
      ii. The effective use of different kinds of data for answering the evaluation questions (e.g., the possible use of extant administrative and monitoring data, primary data collection, surveys, interviews, case studies)
      iii. Appropriate treatment and comparison groups
      iv. Sampling issues at the school and girl levels
      v. Multi-level data issues (i.e., accounting for girls being nested in schools)
      vi. Relative emphasis on cross-country consistency in data collection while at the same time allowing for country-specific variability
vii. Strategies to reduce Type I and Type II errors (i.e., false positives and false negatives in analytical findings)

viii. The relative value of longitudinal data collection (at the girl or school level) over time (including the potential challenges and mitigation of selective attention bias in a longitudinal design)

b. Design and testing of data collection instruments
c. Data collection methods
d. Procedures to protect human subjects in data collection and analysis
e. Analysis and reporting on data (including effective and timely ways to report findings to ensure that information is available to improve program implementation in the field)
f. Outlines of analytical reports

2. What will be the main evaluation activities and the timeline for implementation? At a minimum, please describe the following:

a. Work plan and deliverables schedule
b. Literature review
c. Final design and analysis reports
d. Identification and training of data collection enumerators
e. Oversight and quality control of data collection
f. Creation and maintenance of annotated, cleaned, and complete data sets

g. Periodic progress reports
h. Intermediate analytical reports
i. Final reports

3. Who do you propose to implement the evaluation?

a. Key team members (at least including the project manager and principal investigator)
   
   i. Names
   ii. Proposed roles
   iii. Experience
   iv. Approximate amount of time committed to the project
   v. Letters of commitment from proposed key team members

b. Other team members
   
   i. Proposed roles
   ii. Approximate amount of time committed to the project

---

7 Please note that all work products, including but not limited to data collection instruments, data sets, photos, and reports, will become the property of Room to Read.

8 Please note that all quantitative data sets must be produced in a format that can be accessible to Room to Read staff. Examples include raw US-ASCII text files, linked Microsoft Excel worksheets, linked SPSS data files, or a Microsoft Access database.
4. What management systems does the organization have in place to facilitate the successful implementation of the evaluation?

   a. Coordinating and communicating with Room to Read
   b. Ensuring quality and tracking performance
   c. Reporting on progress
   d. Coordinating simultaneous data collection and analysis activities in multiple countries (including country-level leadership and coordination for the evaluation)
   e. Responding to unanticipated situations in the field
   f. Invoicing and financial oversight
   g. Ensuring the scope of work can be implemented within the project budget

5. What other experience does the organization have that are relevant to this evaluation?

   a. Name of project(s)
   b. Dates of implementation
   c. Scope of work
   d. Lessons learned
   e. Client satisfaction and contact information

Cost Proposal

Please also submit a proposed budget for this evaluation. This should include costs per major budget category per year and should not exceed the total value for the evaluation. We also request a budget narrative to explain any proposed costs that are not self-evident in the budget summary. Please ensure that proposals include all costs related to this evaluation and consider data collection, analysis, and reporting for Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Zambia.

Question and Answer Period

Room to Read requests that prospective bidders send questions about the evaluation in writing to Room to Read (evaluation@roomtoread.org) no later than 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on Friday, January 28, 2011. We will respond to questions as quickly as possible. In addition, we will conduct a two-hour question and answer session via conference call on Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at 12:00pm Pacific Standard Time. Organizations interested in participating in the call should express interest in writing (also to evaluation@roomtoread.org) prior to the call to receive call-in information. All organizations that express interest in the evaluation in writing, irrespective of their participation in the question and answer session, will receive written responses to questions.

Proposal Deadline

Please submit one copy of the technical and cost proposals in electronic form to Room to Read (evaluation@roomtoread.org) no later than 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on February 15, 2011. We request that bidders not submit electronic files larger than 5MB per technical proposal or 5MB per cost proposal.
Annex B: Room to Read Life Skills Competency Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills§</th>
<th>Content areas (core competencies for skills are listed in the column below each content area)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can describe my most and least favorite parts of each day.</td>
<td>I can explain how completing secondary school will improve my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and interpersonal skills</td>
<td>I feel confident in speaking with adults inside and outside my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making and problem-solving</td>
<td>I can choose my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>I can make a daily schedule and keep to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with emotions and stress</td>
<td>I can explain what I am feeling and why.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§ Skills in this framework are based on the World Health Organization’s list of five basic skill areas that are relevant across cultures. See, for example, Department of Mental Health (1999), Partners in Life Skills Education. World Health Organization (WHO/MNH/MHP/99.2): Geneva.
Annex B: Country Information

Cambodia

Program Background

Room to Read launched the Girls’ Education program in Cambodia in 2003. Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in Asia, with approximately 34 percent of its people surviving on less than one U.S. dollar per day. More than half of Cambodia’s 13 million people are under the age of 18, thus an extreme need for access to quality education exists throughout the country. While gender parity has increased girls’ enrollment to 96 percent in primary schools, only 22 percent of girls are enrolled in secondary school. Major barriers within girls’ education in Cambodia are the opportunity costs of further study, parental attitudes about education and its relevance to everyday life, and security concerns due to the distance to schools from most homes. Since higher grade schools are often located too far away, girls generally stop going to school after completing primary school grade 6. The Girls’ Education program activities are conducted in the Khmer language.

A Local Scholarship Management Committee (LSMC) is formed at each school where the Girls’ Education program operates. LSMCs are established to select girls and manage and monitor the program. The LSMC consists of the school director, a teacher who assists with administration and the Social Mobilizer (SM). The SM works closely with the girls on the program by conducting regular meetings with them, organizing workshops and providing mentorship. The number of people in the LSMC structure varies from school to school depending on the number of girls on the program at each school. It will be important for evaluators to work closely with the relevant LSMCs in carrying out their work.

The school year in Cambodia begins in October and concludes in July of the following year. Room to Read Cambodia has historically targeted girls in grade seven to encourage them to make the transition from primary school to lower secondary as there is a high dropout rate at this time.

Table 1: Detail on Existing Girls’ Education Program in Cambodia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year of operation</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls currently supported (Q3, 2010)</td>
<td>1,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels of girls currently supported</td>
<td>Grades 7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographies where girls are supported</td>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>Batheay, Cheung Prey, Ponhea Krek, Prey Chor, Tbaung Khumum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siem Reap</td>
<td>Angkor Chum, Angkor Thom, Pouk, Prasat Bakong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Growth Rate of Existing Girls’ Education Program in Cambodia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Girls Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Plans

In 2011, the Girls’ Education program in Cambodia will begin operations using the enhanced approach outlined in the *Girls’ Education Program Strategy* (2010). The current plan is for the enhanced program Activities to be phased-in over the coming two years in the following chronology:

1. Life skills education (2011)
2. Academic support (2011)
3. Material support (2011)
4. Partnership with government and other NGOs (2011)
5. Research, assessment, monitoring and evaluation (2011)
7. Gender responsive teaching (2012)
8. Infrastructure (2012)

Baseline information will be collected in 2012 and although the targets for this year are not yet set, information about 2011 plans (below) is useful because new 2012 intake of girls will be added at the participating 2011 schools. Additional schools added in 2012 will most likely be in geographic proximity to 2011 schools. The 2011 plans are as follows:

- Begin implementing the enhanced program in three provinces
  - Kampong Cham
  - Siem Reap
  - Kampong Thom

- Launch the enhanced program in three new schools—none of which will have existing Girls’ Education program activities

---

12 Kampong Thom is a new province for the Girls’ Education program; however, other Room to Read programs are operating there.
• Target grade for initial Girls’ Education program activities is grade seven at participating schools
• An estimated 375 new girls will be served in 2011
• An estimated eight new social mobilizers (mentors) will be hired and trained to work directly with the approximately 375 new girls

The point of contact for the evaluation at Room to Read Cambodia will be the M&E Officer, based in the Phnom Penh office. There are Girls’ Education program staff members based in the Kampong Cham and Siem Reap field offices.

Sri Lanka

Program Background

Room to Read launched the Girls’ Education program in Sri Lanka in 2006. This is because, despite high rates of literacy in Sri Lanka, there are communities that remain largely neglected and lag far behind the rest of the population in terms of education. In some areas, the literacy rate of girls falls behind the literacy rate of boys by 16 percent.\(^{13}\) In these communities, consisting mostly of Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin, poverty is high, there are very few schools and those that do exist are of very poor quality. Therefore, rather than attending school, girls commonly work long hours for low wages. Political conflict in Sri Lanka between Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups has made security precarious for over 25 years, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the country, which greatly contributes to a lack of enrolment in school, inconsistent attendance, and low achievement. The Girls’ Education program supports girls in both Sinhalese and Tamil communities and program activities are conducted in both languages.

Room to Read Sri Lanka designs and implements the Girls’ Education program in partnership with non-governmental organizations. These partners plan and manage many program activities, participate in selection of girls to support, source and distribute materials, monitor, mentor, report on the girls, and participate in program activities such as trainings and workshops. It will be important for evaluators to work closely with the relevant NGO partners in carrying out their work.

The school year in Sri Lanka begins in January and concludes in November of the same year. Room to Read Sri Lanka has historically started working with girls as they enter grade six. This is the transition between primary level and junior secondary level and is a time when dropout rates are high.

Table 1: Detail on Existing Girls’ Education Program in Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year of operation</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls currently supported (Q3, 2010)</td>
<td>1,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels of girls currently supported</td>
<td>Grades 6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographies where girls are supported</td>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Ambalagamuwa, Hatton, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Wilgamuwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Province</td>
<td>Puttalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVA Province</td>
<td>Monaragala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Growth Rate of Existing Girls’ Education Program in Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual Growth of Girls Supported in Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Plans

In 2011, the Girls’ Education program in Sri Lanka will begin operations using the enhanced approach outlined in the *Girls’ Education Program Strategy* (2010). The current plan is for the enhanced program activities to be phased-in over the coming three years in the following order:

1. Life skills education (2011)
2. Academic support (2011)
3. Material support (2011)
4. Partnership with government and other NGOs (2011)
5. Mentoring (2012)
7. Gender responsive teaching (2013)
8. Infrastructure (2013)

Baseline information will be collected in 2012 and although the targets for this year are not yet set, information about 2011 plans (below) is useful because new 2012 intake of girls will be added at the participating 2011 schools. Additional schools added in 2012 will most likely be in geographic proximity to 2011 schools. The 2011 plans are as follows:

- Begin administering the enhanced program in at least three zones in two provinces:
  - Central province: Galewala zone and Haguranketha zone
  - UVA province: Siyabalanduwa zone
- The enhanced program may also be launched in the conflict affected district of Mannar, Northern province. This is still to be determined.
- Launch the enhanced program in approximately 13 new schools—none of which will have existing Girls’ Education program activities
• Target grades for Girls’ Education program activities are grades six to eight at participating schools
• An estimated 660 new girls will be served in 2011
• An estimated ten new social mobilizers (mentors) will be hired and trained to work directly with the approximately 660 new girls

The point of contact for the evaluation at Room to Read Sri Lanka will be the M&E Officer, based in the Colombo office. There is at least one Girls’ Education program staff person based in field office in Central province.

Vietnam

Program Background

Room to Read launched the Girls’ Education program in Vietnam in 2002. Thirty-three percent of Vietnam’s population is under the age of 15, thus an extreme need for access to quality education exists throughout the country.14 The enrolment rate in primary school is 96 percent, but it drops to a striking 38 percent by upper secondary school.15 Pronounced gender disparities in education exist, particularly in remote areas of Vietnam where the majority of the population lives. Changing economic and social standards in the country over the past decade have led to increased migration and pressures on family finances, which contribute to an environment where sexual and economic exploitation, trafficking, violence, and vulnerability to HIV are increasing for young people, especially girls. In urban areas where gender parity is more common in schools, inequalities in subject areas and gender stereotypes in textbooks greatly persist.16 The Girls’ Education program supports girls in both Vietnam and ethnically Khmer communities and program activities are conducted in both languages.

The school year in Vietnam begins in September and concludes in May of the following year. Room to Read Vietnam has historically selected girls in a variety of different grades for program participation. In recent years, the program has started working with girls as they enter grade six. This is the transition between primary school and lower secondary school and is a time when dropout rates are high.

Table 1: Detail on Existing Girls’ Education Program in Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year of operation</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls currently supported (Q3, 2010)</td>
<td>995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels of girls currently supported</td>
<td>Grades 5-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographies where girls are supported</td>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh</td>
<td>Can Gio, Hoc Mon, Nha Be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long An</td>
<td>Can Giuoc, Thu Thua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tra Vinh</td>
<td>Tra Cu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Ibid.
Table 2: Growth Rate of Existing Girls’ Education Program in Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Girls Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Plans

In 2011, the Girls’ Education program Vietnam will begin operations using the enhanced approach outlined in the Girls’ Education Program Strategy (2010). The current plan is for the enhanced program Activities to be phased-in over the coming years in the following chronological order:

1. Life skills education (2011)
2. Academic support (2011)
3. Material support (2011)
4. Partnership with government and other NGOs (2011)
5. Mentoring (2011)
6. Research, assessment, monitoring and evaluation (2011)
7. Gender responsive teaching (2011)
8. Stakeholder engagement (2011)
9. Infrastructure (TBD)

Baseline information will be collected in 2012 and although the targets for this year are not yet set, information on 2011 plans (below) is useful because new 2012 intake of girls will be added at the participating 2011 schools. Additional schools added in 2012 will most likely be in geographic proximity to 2011 schools. The 2011 plans are as follows:

- Begin implementing the enhanced program in at least one district in one province (Tra Vinh province/Tra Cu district)
- The enhanced program may also be launched in another province, but this is still to be determined
- Launch the enhanced program in at least three schools where there are current, existing Girls’ Education program activities. Other schools may be added, but this is still to be determined.
- Target grade for initial Girls’ Education program activities is grade six at participating schools.
• An estimated 300 new girls will be served in 2011
• An estimated four new social mobilizers (mentors) will be hired and trained to work directly with the approximately 300 new girls

The point of contact for the evaluation at Room to Read Vietnam will be the M&E Officer, based in the Ho Chi Minh City office. There is at least one Girls’ Education program staff person based in field office in Tra Vinh province.

Zambia

Program Background

Room to Read launched the Girls’ Education program in Zambia in 2008 in response to persistent gender disparity in education. The need to provide targeted support for girls’ education in Zambia was articulated in the mid 1990s with the launch of the Ministry of Education’s Programme for the Advancement of Girls’ Education (PAGE). The efforts of the Ministry and non-governmental organizations since that time have made significant progress on the issue at the lower primary level. However, girls continue to have less access to education at higher grades and dropout of school in larger numbers than boys. Completion rates of basic school (grades 1-9) continue to show marked differences for girls and boys. In 2009, the grade 9 completion rate for girls was 48 percent compared to 57 percent for boys. In the high school (grades 10-12) girls were three times more likely to dropout than boys (1.8 percent and 0.6 percent respectively) in the same year. Child marriages and early pregnancies continue to disrupt girls’ education or end their opportunities altogether. In fact, the number of pregnancies among girls in basic schools rose 10 percent between 2008 and 2009. Other major barriers to girls’ education in Zambia include gender stereotypes and cultural constraints, long distances from most homes to schools, health and sanitation issues, violence and discrimination, and an absence of role models.

The Girls’ Education program activities are conducted in English and Chinyanja languages. The school year in Zambia begins in January and concludes in December of the same year.

Table 1: Detail on Existing Girls’ Education Program in Zambia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First year of operation</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of girls currently supported (Q3, 2010)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels of girls currently supported</td>
<td>Grades 9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographies where girls are supported</td>
<td>Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lusaka</td>
<td>Chongwe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Program Plans

In 2011, the Girls’ Education program in Zambia will begin operations using the enhanced approach outlined in the Girls’ Education Program Strategy (2010). The current plan is for the enhanced program Activities to be phased-in over the coming two years in the following chronological order:

1. Life skills education (2011)
2. Academic support (2011)
3. Mentoring (2011)
4. Stakeholder engagement (2011)
5. Gender responsive teaching (2011)
6. Research, assessment, monitoring and evaluation (2011)
7. Material support (2012)
8. Partnership with government and other NGOs (2012)
9. Infrastructure (TBD)

Baseline information will be collected in 2012 and although the targets for this year are not yet set, information on 2011 plans (below) is useful because new 2012 intake of girls will be added at the participating 2011 schools. Additional schools added in 2012 will most likely be in geographic proximity to 2011 schools. The 2011 plans are as follows:

- Begin implementing the enhanced program in one district of Lusaka province (district will either be Chongwe or Kafue)
- Launch the enhanced program in approximately two schools. It is still to be determined whether they will be schools with current, existing Girls’ Education program activities.
- Target grades for Girls’ Education program activities are grades five (and possibly six) at participating schools
- An estimated 400 new girls will be served in 2011
- An estimated four new social mobilizers (mentors) will be hired and trained to work directly with the approximately 400 new girls

The point of contact for the evaluation at Room to Read Zambia will be the M&E Officer, based in the Lusaka office. There may be a Girls’ Education program staff person based in the field office in Kafue district.