

**Closing the children's book gap**  
**2018 – 2020 Strategy**



The Global Book Alliance has been established to ensure the world's children have access to quality books in a language that they understand so that they can learn to read, read to learn and develop a love of reading.

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# Foreword

Literacy is a basic right which empowers individuals and benefits society. In recognition of its centrality to development the international community made a commitment to achieve universal literacy for the world's young people by 2030.

On current projects we are a very long way from achieving that goal. In fact new data show that a staggering 387 million children of primary school age will not achieve minimum proficiency levels in reading. Alarmingly two-thirds of the children who are not learning to read, some 262 million, are in school.

There are a number of challenges to reversing the learning crisis. A critical, albeit until now largely neglected one, is the children's book gap: the fact that books in children's first language and at the right level, are either not available or accessible to children in many countries.

It is hard to imagine learning to read without access to books but that is in fact what we expect of millions of children around the world.

Thankfully growing recognition of the challenge posed by a lack of quality reading material to literacy acquisition has reached a tipping point.

Building on research and design work begun in 2015 a coalition of donors, multilateral agencies and non-government organisations have created the Global Book Alliance.

Our vision is a world in which all children are achieving literacy and have access to quality books that they can use to learn to read, read to learn and develop a love of reading.

This is an ambitious vision which demands a transformation in book development, procurement, distribution and use. We know that achieving the goal of universal youth literacy will require nothing less.

'Closing the children's book gap' the Alliance's first strategic plan sets out this vision along with our mission and goal, together with our priorities for our first operating period 2018 – 2020.

It is also an invitation to join us. We undoubtedly and urgently need new partners and to forge new alliances.

I commend our strategy to you and look forward to working with you to ensure the world's children have access to high-quality, local language books at the right reading level, as well as the teaching and support they need to use them effectively to develop and sustain their literacy skills.

**Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly**  
Chair, Global Book Alliance

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# Executive summary

The world has made an ambitious commitment to universal literacy, with the goal that all children and youth will be able to read by 2030. Appropriate reading materials are key to achieving this goal, but the global book gap means that millions of the world's children lack access to these essential tools. Ending illiteracy without books – whether digital or print – is akin to attempting to eradicate a disease without access to a vaccine. Without reading materials in languages that children use and understand, they struggle to master basic literacy.

A coalition of donor governments, multilateral agencies and non-government organisations<sup>1</sup> have come together to form the Global Book Alliance to ensure that the world's children have access to quality books with which they can learn to read, read to learn and ultimately develop a lifelong love of reading.

Our ambitious goal is that by 2030 all children have access to high-quality, local language books at the right reading level, as well as the support they need to use them effectively.

The Alliance recognizes that the long-term solution to the global children's book gap is in establishing robust local markets for books. To help those markets develop, the Alliance will address challenges across the entire book chain, from title development, publication, procurement, distribution, and use. The Alliance will identify innovative ideas, test them, and replicate successful approaches within and across countries.

The Alliance will engage actors across the education sector to gather the most effective interventions to support coordinated action worldwide using two principal modalities:

- identifying and scaling best practices around the world and
- developing flagship initiatives that catalyse change and demonstrate the potential of coordinated action at scale.

The Alliance's first four flagships – the Global Digital Library, the Global Book Campaign, Publishing Collaboratives and country pilots – promote the development and translation of new titles in languages children use and understand along with increased access to those books by children, teachers and parents.

Taking our inspiration from the commitment in the Sustainable Development Goals we will prioritise the interests of children who are furthest behind, who have least opportunity and who are the most excluded.

Across all its flagships, the Alliance will reinforce principles of sustainability and accessibility for children with varying circumstances and abilities.

The Alliance now seeks partners willing to commit to best practices and invest in and work with us to implement flagship initiatives. This is a unique moment, when the global commitment to education in general and literacy in particular, together with new technology should be able to combine to allow us to close the global book gap.

The Alliance envisions a future in which a robust local publishing industry supports the needs of even the most underserved children. By providing all children with high-quality books, as well as the support they need to effectively use them, the Alliance will help the world deliver on its commitment to literacy.



Two refugee boys from Syria read books outside a newly built library at Filipadia refugee camp on the Greek mainland. The Alliance will prioritize the most marginalized and excluded children including those affected by conflict and caught up in crises.

The Alliance is committed to supporting the creation of at least 50 culturally and linguistically appropriate children's book titles for each year of literacy development in 500 languages.

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# Global Book Alliance Strategy at a glance

## VISION

A world in which all children are achieving literacy and have access to quality books in a language that they understand with which they can learn to read, read to learn and develop a love of reading.

## MISSION

To transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by working with partners to identify, promote and support innovations, best practice and policies that will change the way books are created, procured and provided.

## 2030 GOAL

By 2030 all children have access to high-quality, local language books at the right reading level, as well as the teaching and support they need to use them effectively to develop and sustain their literacy skills.

## OBJECTIVES

To deliver our 2030 goal, the Alliance has identified three objectives which encapsulate what must be done to deliver our 2030 goal.

1. Increased availability of quality children's book titles in local languages in both print and digital formats.
2. Improved access by children at school, in the community and at home to quality books in languages which they understand.
3. Enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence in the use of books in support of literacy and learning.

## INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

To assess the progress the Alliance is making, we aim to ensure that in 2024 – the half way point to delivering our 2030 goal – we will have achieved the following outcomes:

### Increased availability

A canon of 50 culturally and linguistically appropriate children's book titles will be available for each year of literacy development (ages 3-11) for speakers of 500 languages (approximately 80 percent of the population).<sup>2</sup>

### Improved Access

Fifty percent of children who do not speak the language of instruction in their school (140 million) will have access at school, in their communities or at home to books in a language that they understand.

### Enhanced use

Best practices in supporting the attainment of skills, knowledge and understanding related to effective book use for literacy and learning will be identified, documented and shared, contributing to policy and practical change.

## HOW

The Alliance will achieve its objectives by

1. Identifying, documenting and supporting the wide-spread adoption and implementation of best practice
2. Designing and launching flagship initiatives

During our first strategy period we will implement four flagship initiatives

**The Global Digital Library**

**A Global Book Campaign**

**Regional and national Publishing Collaboratives**

**Country level pilots implementing a comprehensive set of activities across the book chain to close national book gaps**

## MOBILIZING POLITICAL WILL, RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE TO DELIVER OUR VISION

We will mobilize partners globally to support developing country governments to maximize impact locally. In partnership, internationally and at the country level, we will increase political commitment and resources and harness the expertise necessary to deliver our shared vision.

# The scope of the challenge

## AN AMBITIOUS LITERACY GOAL FACES A TROUBLING REALITY

The international community has committed to achieve universal youth literacy by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goal for Quality Education calls for all children to master basic literacy and numeracy.<sup>3</sup> And yet this goal, without a significant change to business as usual, is far from attainable today. The world is not on track – we are failing millions of children.

All told, approximately 387 million primary-school-aged children worldwide are not learning basic reading.<sup>4</sup> Low-income households in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are disproportionately affected by this learning crisis.<sup>5</sup> The magnitude of this shortfall demonstrates just how ambitious the international community's goal is.

The good news is that a relatively straightforward change can make a significant difference: a robust body of research has established that books in languages children use and understand are essential to literacy acquisition.<sup>6</sup> UNESCO, the World Bank, and the International Commission for Financing Global Educational Opportunity have all called for the increased provision of books to improve learning.<sup>7</sup> The World Bank has deemed textbooks one of the most cost-effective learning inputs, particularly when in the local language students understand, and in a class with an effective teacher.<sup>8</sup>

Books are a necessary and low-cost input to literacy, and a robust canon of storybooks can open a child's world to new ideas and opportunities that are otherwise out of reach.

## BOOKS ARE ESSENTIAL BUT TOO OFTEN UNAVAILABLE

Many of us idealize our early memories of learning to read – on a loved one's knee with a childhood favourite in hand. But for tens of millions of children around the world, learning to read is a challenging experience. Without books at home, their first experience of written words is in a classroom and, for two of every five children, in a language they do not speak at home.<sup>9</sup> The books they use may include pictures and concepts completely unfamiliar to them. And if a child has any disability, there is often little or no support or alternative. The challenge of learning to read first in an unfamiliar language can set back a child's education by years.<sup>10</sup>

The reasons for the "book gap" – the lack of level-appropriate books in languages children use and understand – are various and interrelated. In low- and middle-income countries, there is an inadequate supply of titles. Not only are there not enough physical books, but not enough authors and publishers are producing stories in underserved languages. For example, in Malawi, there are approximately 2.2 million native speakers of Tumbuka and another 2.2 million speakers of Yao. There are fewer than 20 reading book titles available in either language, leaving nearly 25 percent of Malawi's population without the materials to support literacy.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in many of these countries, the relatively few speakers of minority languages and predominantly low incomes of the regions where these languages are spoken mean that markets for books simply will not develop without public subsidy.

Inefficient and ineffective supply chains, as well as insufficient or inappropriate use of financing for procurement, further constrain the supply of books and increase the costs of provision. Across sub-Saharan Africa, book loss and damage is also a significant challenge. In Guinea, Niger, and Chad, research indicates that over 50 percent of books are lost in warehousing and transportation due to inadequate storage, insufficient transportation funding, and lack of overall planning.

The goal of universal youth literacy is held back again and again by the failure to provide an essential and maddeningly rare commodity: a reading book. Reading must start at early age to lay the foundation for later learning.

The path to universal youth literacy starts by providing an adequate supply of – and cultivating robust demand for – appropriate books for young readers.



**Tens of millions of children are expected to learn to read without adequate access to books and print.**

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# The promise of the Alliance

## COMBINING EFFORTS TO DELIVER A BREAKTHROUGH

The Global Book Alliance is a collaboration between governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-profits, and private companies that are committed to ensuring that all children have the books they need to achieve literacy. By changing the way books are published and distributed, the Alliance can reduce their cost and increase demand.

Not only can the Alliance reduce the cost of books, but it has the potential to open the world of reading to children who are currently struggling to learn to read in a language they do not speak at home. Approximately 40 percent of students globally, or 280 million primary-school children, do not speak the language of instruction at their school.<sup>12</sup> There are nearly 7,000 languages globally, but creating books in only a few hundred can dramatically increase the number of children who have books in a language they use and understand.

To be on track for its 2030 goal, the Alliance will ensure that by 2024 the world achieves three outcomes:

- **Increased availability:** A canon of 50 culturally appropriate children's titles will be available for publishing for each year of literacy development (ages 3–11) for speakers of 500 languages (approximately 80 percent of the population).<sup>13</sup>
- **Improved access:** Fifty percent of children who do not speak the language of instruction in their school (140 million) will have access at school, in their communities or at home to books in a language that they understand.<sup>14</sup>
- **Enhanced use:** Best practices in supporting the attainment of skills, knowledge and understanding related to effective book use for literacy and learning will be identified, documented and shared, contributing to policy and practical change.

The Alliance will identify innovative ideas and best practices from throughout the book chain and across nations, and it will shepherd them from conception to testing to national and global scale. By coordinating efforts, sharing knowledge, and using data to guide investments, the Alliance will help the world make good on its promise of universal literacy.

## STRENGTHENING THE ENTIRE BOOK CHAIN

Harnessing the full potential of books to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal for Quality Education requires both a strong supply of and demand for books. The Alliance will build a robust ecosystem in which organizations, governments, and publishers efficiently provide high-quality books to the communities, schools, and children that need and want them.

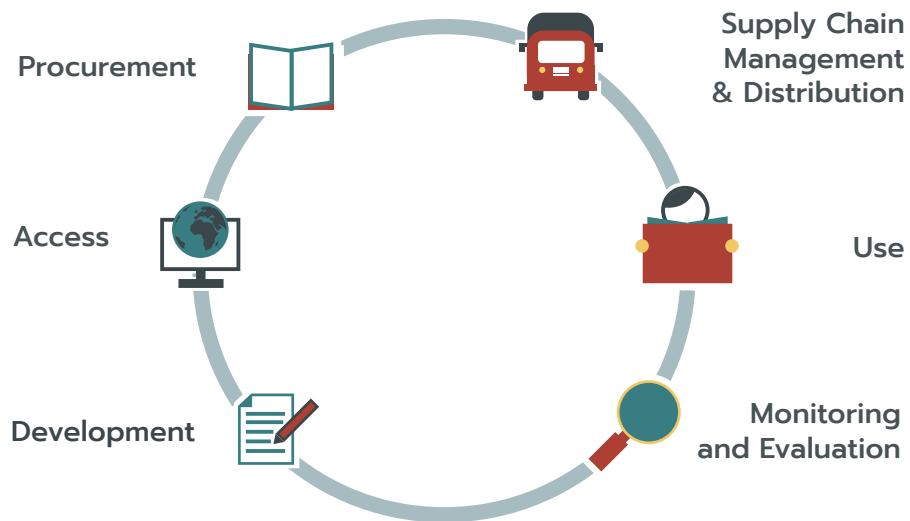
No single intervention can address all the elements of a functioning market. A holistic approach is required to address barriers across the book chain and support a self-sustaining market. An effective supply of books requires high-quality title development, access to those titles by printers and publishers and a functioning supply chain to deliver books to their potential readers (Figure 2). These books must be appealing, relevant, in the right language and at the right reading level.

And teachers and parents must be able to use books effectively to support learning and ensure improved educational outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

Sustaining a sufficient supply of books will also require spurring a healthy demand for books, including through public purchasing. Rigorous procurement practices and interventions to support effective book use can support the market for books across countries and regions that will sustain an emerging market. The Alliance will support work across the entire book chain, building supply and demand for books simultaneously and reinforcing each link in the supply chain until it is strong enough to support itself.

The Alliance will improve book **development** by fostering the creation of new book titles for early learners in neglected languages, and will provide **access** in many formats, licensed for translation, and readable by children of all abilities. We will improve **supply chains** to reduce loss and waste and coordinate **procurement** to increase efficiency and target books to those who need them most.<sup>16</sup> Finally, we will ensure that teachers, families, and community members have the tools they need to **use** books effectively to support literacy development, wider learning and ultimately a love of reading.

## THE BOOK CHAIN



## Changing the story through coordinated action

The broken links in the book chain can be repaired through coordination by a diverse set of actors – donors, governments, publishers, distributors, schools, teachers, and parents – spread around the world. While all may be committed to the goal of universal literacy, none has the means to solve the problem alone. Procurement processes are ad hoc and unaligned, page sizes and paper quality differs, and in almost all cases new titles are created from scratch rather than licensed and translated using existing culturally appropriate books.<sup>17</sup> There is also insufficient investment in shared resources – like repositories of titles, book authoring tools, or the application of research results and lessons learnt.

In response to this, the Alliance will address these issues with two activities, both intended to drive collective action at scale:

- 1. Identify, document and encourage the widespread adoption and implementation of best practices** by donors, national governments, the private sector and civil society. These best practices will include those that can be put in place independently, like the implementation of data systems to track and trace book delivery or support for teachers to use books effectively in the classroom, and practices that themselves enable coordination, like joint procurement of titles by donors and governments.

Best practices can have a substantial impact if widely adopted.

- 2. Design and launch of flagship initiatives** that deliver system-wide innovation and are made possible by support from multiple organizations. These initiatives will produce infrastructure, knowledge, or other benefits with global impact. Often, they will be initiatives that are too expensive or complex for just one institution to take on or that may have been tried in one country and region but could have even larger benefits if delivered at scale elsewhere or even globally. They may also include concerted advocacy and communications efforts on key policies on which the Alliance's members can speak with one voice in order to maximise the opportunity to achieve key reforms.

In pursuing these activities, the Alliance brings together the public and private sectors, because we believe that together we can close the book gap. The public sector generates most of the demand for children's books in many low-income countries. By drawing together the largest public-sector investors, the Alliance can ensure that every dollar of public funds is well invested for today – in low-cost, high-quality books – and for tomorrow, by strengthening publishers and local book chains which will sustain the supply of books. The rest of this strategy describes how the Alliance will spread best practices and support flagship initiatives.

# Best practices to deliver global scale

The Alliance will serve as a forum for partners and experts to share knowledge regarding best practices from their own work. Organizations and governments around the world are testing, refining, and launching highly effective interventions at the local and country levels. So far, no one institution has collected all relevant best practices.<sup>18</sup> But together, the Alliance institutions can identify the most impactful practices and catalyze implementation at a regional and global scale.

These best practices can range from tools and systems to track inventory to licensing regimes for new books so that they are free to translate and adapt. By implementing these practices, each partner contributes to a stronger book chain. And by providing a global forum, the Alliance will facilitate the transfer and implementation of best practices around the world.

These best practices also benefit Alliance members by reducing the costs of title development and book provision and increasing their impact. Participating in the Alliance provides access to knowledge and technical assistance from others in implementing best practices.

The Alliance will crowdsource recommendations and curate a set of high-impact best practices. Then it can advocate for adoption of those practices among its members and beyond. The reach and influence of the Steering Committee can help organizations and governments across the world benefit from the Alliance's leadership and guidance. The Alliance will develop materials that justify high-impact practices and use those resources to promote broad adoption of practices that can reduce cost, increase quality, and maximize resources to serve the greatest number of children.

A set of technical groups, led by experts from nongovernmental organizations, academia, and the private sector, is already leading best practice identification and development for the Alliance. Technical groups focus on each link in the book chain, identifying successful interventions, gaps in current research, and opportunities to scale the best ideas that are being developed around the world.

The four technical groups that convened in 2017<sup>19</sup> have already produced the first round of recommendations for the Alliance. These recommendations were integral to the selection of the first flagship initiatives and early strategic decisions for the Alliance.

Two additional technical groups focussed on accessible content for children with disabilities and procurement are planned for 2018, with the potential to launch additional groups as needed. These groups are designed to identify solutions to the most pressing challenges in the book chain.

We will be delivering our objective related to enhanced use and management of books by identifying, documenting and disseminating good practice in this area.

## Books for and with disabled children

In 2018 the Alliance will launch a technical group that will provide strategic direction and technical guidance to the Alliance aimed at ensuring that reading materials and practices are accessible for children with disabilities and that book content is inclusive of positive narratives about children of all abilities.

The group's work is intended to achieve two outcomes

- providing guiding principles and technical standards to ensure digital and printed content is accessible for children with disabilities and
- developing a writer's guide on disability-positive language and the incorporation of children of all abilities into content in a positive way.



**A lack of books in formats suitable for children with disabilities means that they face enormous challenges in acquiring literacy skills.**

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# Flagship initiatives designed to close the global book gap

Best practices improve the book chain as they are adopted independently – perhaps with the aid of technical assistance – by institutions around the world. But there are some improvements to the book chain that can be produced only by concerted collaboration and pooled resources.

The Alliance will launch flagship initiatives to seize those opportunities.

Alliance flagship initiatives have three characteristics:

- **They deliver substantial improvements only possible through collaboration and pooled resources** by donor institutions, private sector actors, and national governments.
- **They rally new allies, inspiring action and commitment**, contributing not only to achieving the Alliance's goals but also to increasing momentum in support of our shared vision.
- **They are based on programs and interventions that have proven successful** and would benefit from concerted support in order to achieve scale.

During this strategy period the the Alliance will focus its support on four flagship initiatives: the Global Digital Library (GDL), the Global Book Campaign (GBC), Regional and National Publishing Collaboratives (PCs) and Country level pilots implementing a comprehensive set of activities across the book chain to close national book gaps.

The selection of these four flagships reflects both their complementarity (the GDL hosts materials, the GBC fills key gaps, and the PCs prepare publishers to access and print the materials) and their positioning at the start of the book value chain: they help solve problems in title development and access. By starting its work at the beginning of the book chain, the Alliance will lay the groundwork for future initiatives targeting the supply chain, procurement, and use.

The Alliance's early focus will be on the GDL, followed by the GBC and PCs as flagship initiatives. Future activities are already being considered including scaling inventory management systems to increase supply chain efficiency and supporting adoption of technical standards to reduce printing costs and encourage bundled procurement.



A student chooses a book from a cabinet filled with illustrated Kinyarwanda children's books in a second grade classroom at a school in the Burera District of Rwanda.

© Colin Crowley/Save the Children

## Flagship 1

### A Global Digital Library

The Alliance will help the GDL increase access by promoting open licensing and online access to books. Founded by All Children Reading: A Grand Challenge for Development (ACR:GCD) and with leadership from Norad, the GDL will provide an open source repository for the materials these publishers create, providing key supports for the publishers to deliver materials to children. GDL materials can be read on mobile devices in households or can be printed and sold in local markets to build demand and generate local profits. Alliance members will support the GDL by providing titles that can be translated and adapted across programs and countries and mobilizing in-country initiatives to promote use of the platform.

The GDL is guided by an Advisory group that includes some members of the Alliance Steering Committee as well as Benetech, Storyweaver, Creative Commons, and the GSMA. The GDL will source content from a variety of organizations, including the African Storybook Project, BookDash, Benetech, members of the Alliance Steering Committee, and numerous other organizations committed to providing high-quality resources. To enable the continued development of the GDL, Alliance members will, where relevant, adopt policies to ensure that the content they fund is openly licensed and posted on the GDL, avoiding duplicative payment for title origination and enabling ongoing reuse and adaptation of content.

The GDL has an ambitious goal of making at least 50,000 titles in 100 languages available on the platform by 2020, and the Alliance stands ready to support the initiative – providing titles, expertise, and resources to help the GDL realize its promise. With effective collaboration across institutions, the GDL could provide resources in as many as 400 languages by 2020.

The GDL launches in February 2018 with a pilot in Ethiopia. The Alliance will support communications for that pilot, as well as expansion to new markets and countries.



Throughout 2018, the Alliance will nurture three additional flagships that complement the Global Digital Library. The Global Book Campaign and Publishing Collaboratives both support title development and can increase the number and quality of locally developed books. Country pilots will test the impact of the Alliance's activities when implemented together and at scale.

## Flagship 2 A Global Book Campaign

All Children Reading's Global Book Campaign will use lessons and tactics from early childhood development and community health efforts – partnering with social and digital media providers to boost community and household engagement in early-grade reading efforts. The GBC will accelerate replication of promising activities including digital title development, easy-to-use authoring tools, and crowdsourcing of translation. It will also catalyse local language book development. In addition to expanding existing local language efforts, stakeholders will identify new activities that support the collective GBC.



## Flagship 3 Publishing Collaboratives

Publishing collaboratives will seed the collection of storybooks in neglected languages and improve book development by working with the publishing industry to improve both the quantity and quality of supplementary reading materials. Regional and national publishing collaboratives will support local publishers as the cornerstone of local book development, creating the culturally appropriate titles that will one day populate classrooms.

The collaboratives may support writers' forums and book fairs, websites to match talent with publishers, and/or training on quality standards and technology to support book development and adaptation across contexts and languages. Early efforts to expand regional collaboratives in sub-Saharan Africa are in progress under the leadership of ADEA, with funding from USAID.



## Flagship 4 Country pilots

The Global Book Alliance will launch 2-3 country-level pilots to test the impact of the Alliance's activities and demonstrate the impact of best practices and flagship initiatives when implemented together at scale. A successful pilot will validate the Alliance's approach, attract new partners, and have a positive impact on the availability of books and early grade reading achievement in the pilot country. The Global Book Alliance secretariat will collaborate with GBA partner institutions and with host country governments to identify and implement supportive interventions, taking into account feasibility, impact and cost. The end result of a pilot intervention should be a book chain that performs more efficiently and effectively from title development through procurement and provision, all the way to the end user, providing a steady supply of high quality materials to children, parents and teachers in the languages they speak and understand.



# Aligning resources to achieve a breakthrough

The Alliance is working closely with two international mechanisms that support global literacy: Results in Education for All Children (REACH) for Reading and the All Children Reading: Grand Challenge for Development.

## SUPPORTING NEW INTERVENTIONS WITH RESULTS-BASED FINANCING

Through REACH for Reading, the World Bank and the Alliance will work together to transform the quality, availability, and utilization of textbooks and reading books. REACH for Reading uses grants and results-based financing models to fund high-quality, cost-effective experiments, designed to transform book procurement, supply chains, quality assurance, and utilization.

REACH for Reading is focused on books for reading instruction and practice in underserved languages (from pre-primary through basic education). Interventions that are applicable to other types of textbooks and supplementary books are also encouraged if they address the underlying barriers to improving book development, procurement, and production system-wide to the measurable benefit of children. Successful proposals demonstrate in-country impact and are equitably applied across populations.

The Alliance will work with REACH for Reading to identify opportunities aligned to the Alliance's strategy and fund innovative interventions throughout the development pipeline. This includes ideas that are still in the proof of concept phase through to proven interventions that are in the process of scaling.

## GRANT AND PRIZE COMPETITIONS TO SOURCE SCALABLE SOLUTIONS

All Children Reading: Grand Challenge for Development (ACR:GCD) was launched in 2011 by USAID, World Vision, and the Australian government. ACR:GCD is one of USAID's Grand Challenges for Development, which are rooted in two fundamental beliefs about international development:

- Science and technology, when applied appropriately, can have transformational effects.
- Engaging the world in the quest for solutions is critical to instigating breakthrough progress.

ACR:GCD funded 32 early-grade literacy innovators in its first round and has funded 12 grant competition innovators in its second round. The list of second-round prize competition winners is forthcoming.

ACR:GCD's mission is closely aligned with that of the Alliance, and two of the flagship initiatives the Alliance will support have grown out of ACR:GCD's pioneering competitions: the GDL and the GBC. Aligning high-impact interventions identified through ACR:GCD with the Alliance's commitment to the adoption of best practices and support for collaborative solutions across the book chain is a clear path to successfully scaling the most impactful interventions being developed around the world.

# Working together

Partners can support Alliance flagships in three ways.

- **Flagship-specific financial support** to implementing institutions
- **Direct implementation support for flagship initiatives** via programs or policies (e.g., sharing books via the GDL)
- **Support for the Secretariat as it manages flagship initiatives**

The Alliance is only as strong and effective as the partnerships that comprise it. Therefore, a key long-term goal of the Alliance is to identify partners to support engagement and ownership of additional activities across the book chain. Each new partner brings unique expertise and perspectives to the Alliance.

To effectively identify and implement impactful work, the Alliance relies on three partnership structures overseen by a Secretariat.

## The Global Book Alliances's partnership structures

### The Secretariat facilitates the Alliance's activities

#### Steering Committee

- Guides Alliance priorities
- Aligns Alliance work to current needs
- Approves best practises for sharing and implementation
- Launches flagship initiatives

#### Technical Groups

- Synthesize latest research and findings in the field
- Recommend flagship activities and best practices to the SC
- Provide ad hoc advice on implementation of best practices and execution of flagships

#### Alliance members

- Explore and implement best practices
- Evaluate and participate in flagship activities
- Propose new flagship activities and best practices to the SC

- **The Steering Committee will set the vision and allocate shared resources.** The Alliance’s Steering Committee is made up of its most significant contributors – those who have made the largest investments in the organization and its success.
- **Technical groups deliver expert insight to identify and share best practices.** Technical groups, assembled from the world’s leading experts, will spot best practices and flagship opportunities..
- **Alliance members will meet annually and collaborate year-round.** Alliance members will commit to exploring and implementing best practices to improve the book chain. They can also evaluate and participate in flagship initiatives that are in line with their strategies and contribute to and use the Alliance’s knowledge resources to implement best practices and flagship initiatives.

## THE GLOBAL BOOK ALLIANCE SECRETARIAT

To coordinate these activities, a Secretariat will manage the Alliance’s core functions. The Alliance relies on the Secretariat to unify, energize, and organize efforts to maintain momentum. The Secretariat will:

1. **Nurture best practice development and sharing** by convening experts, commissioning research, launching pilots, and identifying opportunities to strengthen the book chain at global, regional, national, and local levels
2. **Support flagship initiatives through design, planning, monitoring, or coordinating supplementary investment.** In many cases, Alliance members will spearhead and fund flagships with their own resources. The Secretariat will rally support around flagships and help them succeed. The Secretariat will also cultivate a pipeline of new flagships by screening opportunities presented by Alliance members, helping to raise resources for implementation, organizing collective action by Alliance members, and communicating with the field.

The Secretariat is currently being incubated by USAID with support and oversight provided by the Steering Committee Chair.

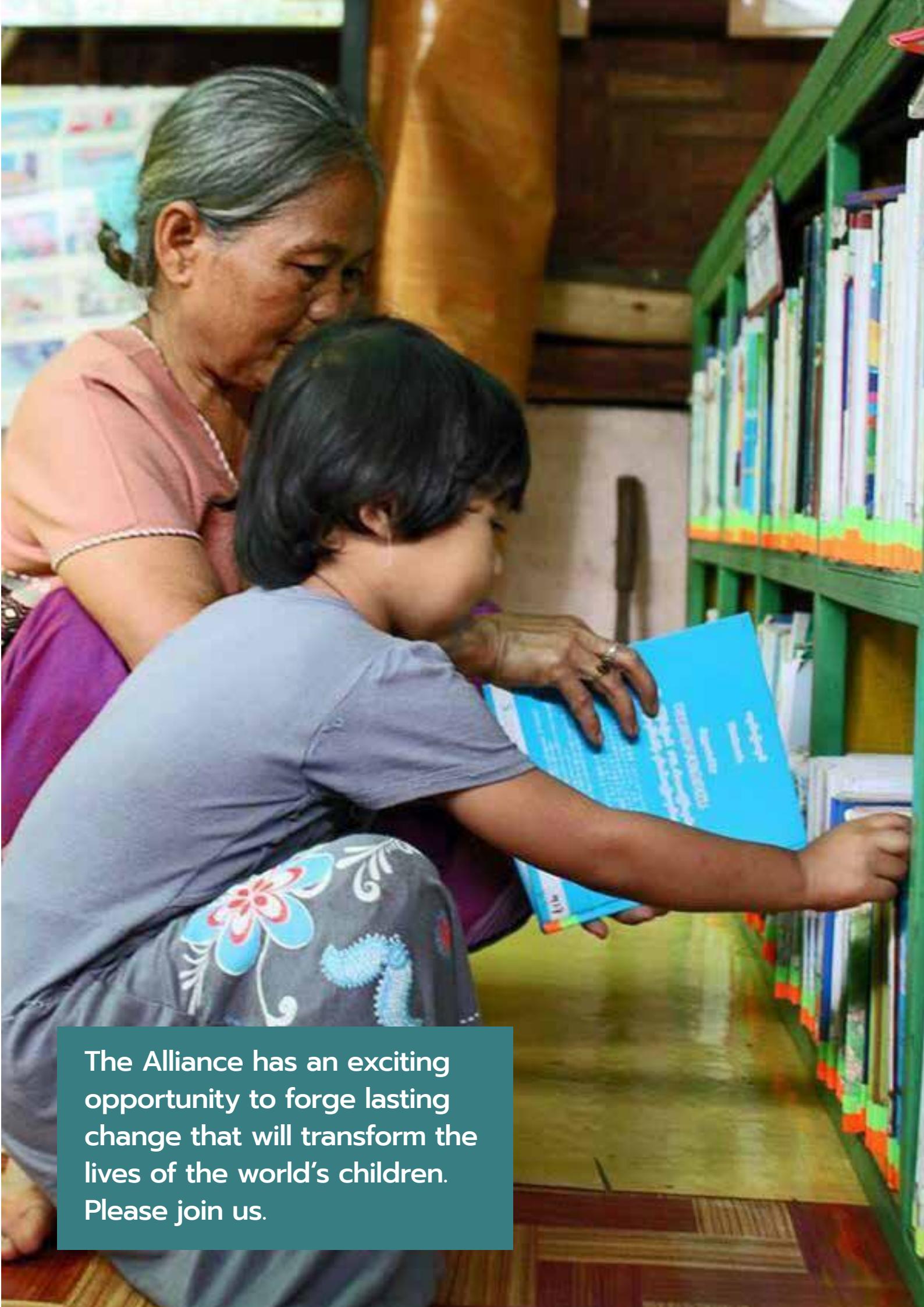
## An invitation

The Alliance has an exciting opportunity to forge lasting change that will impact children today and for years to come. By 2024, it may be possible to walk into any classroom in West Africa and see shelves populated by reading books in local languages like Bambara and Fulfulde. Stories reflective of community cultures and traditions will fill the pages. Teachers will draw on thoughtfully designed materials throughout the day, encouraging their guided use and integrating them seamlessly into their classrooms. Eager young learners will have at their fingertips the materials they need to learn to read in a language they use and understand, enabling more success in the language of instruction and a lifetime of joyful reading.

The tools exist to put the right books into the hands of at least half the children who do not speak the language of instruction in their school by 2024, allowing those children, and others around the world to use those books to learn to read by 2030. As the global community unites around this mission, we hope that they are continually reminded of the power of books to transform the lives of today's children as well as those of future generations. Success depends on the collective efforts of partners, communities, and leaders around the world. The Alliance stands ready to shepherd those efforts by giving them direction, focus, and vision.

# References

- <sup>1</sup> The founding members of the Alliance are The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children and World Vision.
- <sup>2</sup> Approximately 7% of the global population speaks a first language that likely lacks a standardized form for literature. Initially, the Alliance will focus on languages with an EGIDS rating of 0-4.
- <sup>3</sup> Sustainable Development Goals (UN), 2017.
- <sup>4</sup> "More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide" (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) Fact Sheet No. 46, September 2017.
- <sup>5</sup> Sustainable Development Goals (UN), 2017.
- <sup>6</sup> Throughout this document, "language" includes any spoken communication with a distinct written orthography.
- <sup>7</sup> Achieving a Learning Generation (The Education Commission), 2016.
- <sup>8</sup> Crabbe, Richard A.B. and Mary Nyiringi, with Helen Abadzi, "Textbook Development in Low Income Countries: A Guide for Policy and Practice" (World Bank), 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> "If You Don't Understand, How Can You Learn?" (Global Education Monitoring Report), February 2016.
- <sup>10</sup> "If You Don't Understand, How Can You Learn?" (Global Education Monitoring Report), February 2016.
- <sup>11</sup> Feasibility Study for a Global Book Fund (Results for Development), 2016.
- <sup>12</sup> "If You Don't Understand, How Can You Learn?" (Global Education Monitoring Report), February 2016. Numerical estimate developed through assessment of UNESCO Institute for Statistics primary-school population data and the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report
- <sup>13</sup> Approximately 7% of the global population speaks a first language that likely lacks a standardized form for literature. Initially, the Alliance will focus on languages with an EGIDS rating of 0-4.
- <sup>14</sup> This goal and all numeric targets will be refined through additional research and analysis in the coming months. The long-term goal of the Alliance is to ensure that learners have access to all the books they need to accomplish their learning aims. This includes both reading and textbooks for early and advanced learning. Due to the substantial gap in resources and attention that early-grade reading books face and the essential role they play in literacy, the Alliance will prioritize early-grade reading books during the incubation period. That said, the expectation is that Alliance policies and practices will ultimately support reading and textbooks across the learning spectrum.
- <sup>15</sup> Feasibility Study for a Global Book Fund (Results for Development), 2016.
- <sup>16</sup> This document does not address book procurement or financing, but the Alliance will develop a set of activities and outcomes related to these aspects of the book chain. While this document focuses on the supply side of the book market, procurement and financing will address the demand for books.
- <sup>17</sup> Feasibility Study for a Global Book Fund (Results for Development), 2016.
- <sup>18</sup> Feasibility Study for a Global Book Fund (Results for Development), 2016.
- <sup>19</sup> The four groups were Title Development; Title Access, Book Supply Chains and Book Use.



The Alliance has an exciting opportunity to forge lasting change that will transform the lives of the world's children. Please join us.

The Global Book Alliance is a newly established coalition of governments, multilateral agencies and non-government organisations working to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, local language books at the right reading level, as well as the teaching and support they need to use them to develop and sustain their literacy skills.

'Closing the children's book gap' is our first strategy and sets out our vision, mission and goal along with our priorities for the period 2018 – 2020.

It is also an invitation to join us.

Find out more at [www.globalbookalliance.org](http://www.globalbookalliance.org)

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**The founding members of the Global Book Alliance are:**

