

# PLANET READ



**Location:** India

**Issue Areas:** Extreme Poverty, Universal Education

**Points of Interest:** Literacy, Contact with PlanetRead

## The Organization

PlanetRead is an Indian based organization dedicated to literacy development in India and around the world. PlanetRead was originally created around the idea of Same Language Subtitling (SLS), and now is globally recognized as an innovation for mass literacy and reading development on TV.

SLS for literacy was first conceived and researched in 1996. PlanetRead pioneered the concept of “Same-Language Subtitling” (SLS) for mass literacy, by suggesting its implementation on the immensely popular Bollywood film songs on TV in India. SLS are subtitles that are in the “same” language as the program. Hindi programs are subtitled in Hindi, Tamil programs in Tamil, and so on in every language. The basic idea is, what you see (text) is what you hear (audio), and the two reinforce each other. PlanetRead uses popular Bollywood movies and songs. Emerging readers, people who have very basic reading skills, can follow the words as they listen to the song and watch the movie, much like karaoke.

## Why the Need?

While the literacy rate in India is 61% according to the 2001 census, there is a marked gap between both urban and rural (80% versus 59%) and male and females (73.4% versus 47.8%). There is a decline in the quality of education in rural areas and half of students in these areas drop out of school before they turn twelve. It was with this in mind that the government of India launched the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988. This initiative is aimed at achieving functional literacy for 80,000,000 illiterates, aged 15 to 35 years. Since women account for an overwhelming percentage of the total number of illiterates, the NLM is for all practical purposes a mission imparting literacy predominately to the women of India. Eradication of illiteracy from a nation that is set to become the most populated in the world in another 10 years time is by no means an easy task. Even though the Indian government is doing its best, it is left to socially motivated organizations, such as PlanetRead to make India 100 percent literate by developing new solutions.

## How Team Efforts Translate to Impact

Every dollar donated to PlanetRead pays for 30 minutes of weekly reading practice for 10,000 people for a whole year. Funds NGC teams raise will go towards giving reading practice to thousands of people across India.

## The Partner

PlanetRead has the simple vision of a reading planet – a planet where everyone can read and have access to interesting and affordable reading opportunities in both his/her native or other language(s). They contribute to literacy worldwide by innovating and implementing simple, scalable, and cost-effective solutions, especially using mass media and information technologies. They already used SLS on several song-based TV programs on Doordarshan, India's national broadcaster. PlanetRead's main target group is the early-literates, people who are officially "literate" but who cannot read, for example, the headlines of a newspaper.

## NGC's Approach to Sustainable Global Change

NGC and our Global Partners believe that people in communities all over the world are the real experts and know their community and solutions to their problems. We want to advocate and educate others on behalf of this model of sustainable global change. Additionally, we seek to empower our grassroots Global Projects with the financial resources to create change at the grassroots level. 100% of funds your team raises are sent to PlanetRead.

By sending your team's funds directly, your project organization has the power to decide the best way to use the money. Since money will be spent in the community, your funds will also support the local economy.

With one of the largest population on earth, India also has one of the highest rates of people living in poverty. PlanetRead understands that literacy is a crucial stepping stone in bringing people out from living in poverty and opening doors for further education and community empowerment.

## Additional Resources

Project Website: <http://www.planetread.org>

CIA World Factbook (India): <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/IN.html>

Embassy of India : <http://www.indianembassy.org/>

PlanetRead Documentary: <http://in.youtube.com/watch?v=lkpPRpiTl8M>

**See your team binder for more ways to educate your team about your project.**