



67%

of people in South Asia live on less than \$2 a day.



70% of people in South Asia live in rural communities, and a majority live below the poverty line. Few livelihood opportunities exist beyond subsistence farming, especially for the illiterate.

As a result, rural villagers can't prioritize their family's education or health, or save for the future. Generation after generation of the rural poor leave their villages to look for work in nearby cities. But without an education or the required skills for urban jobs, the cycle of poverty continues.

COMBATting RURAL POVERTY

READ Global aims to provide rural villagers with livelihood skills that enable them to earn a living within their own communities. This allows them to invest in their families and the development of their communities.

READ Centers not only provide access to information, but also actively support the economic development of rural villages through training programs focused on creating livelihoods and building financial literacy:

- **Livelihood skills trainings:** Skills trainings are provided at READ Centers based on the resources and job market available in each community. Some examples include sewing or weaving, fish and poultry farming, off-season vegetable farming, and hospitality and tourism training.

Next, we offer trainings to help villagers enhance these newly-acquired skills, to improve crop yields or quality, increase profit margins, and more. These new skills allow villagers to start micro-enterprises, earn an income, and save for the future.
- **Small business skills training:** Training in financial literacy, marketing, market linkages, and cooperative management help villagers successfully run their own micro-enterprises and manage their finances.
- **Savings cooperatives and self-help groups:** In Nepal and India, many READ Centers operate savings cooperatives that enable women to deposit savings for the first time, and apply for loans to start their own businesses.



“After attending the handloom training at the Center, I started earning an income. Now I am able to support my children’s education as well as provide income for my family. I can travel outside to sell my products to the market, and my monthly income and savings have increased.”

READ Center user, India



of villagers surveyed in India and 76% in Nepal increased their income after taking livelihood skills trainings at their Center. **They spent this new income on healthcare, their children’s education, and food for their families.**

OUR IMPACT

Our monitoring and evaluation metrics show that READ Centers and their programs significantly improve the economic opportunities available to rural villagers in Nepal and India. Bhutan’s READ Centers are just beginning to offer economic empowerment programs.

- **A majority of villagers** surveyed (76% in Nepal and 86% in India) said their **income has increased** since participating in a livelihood skills training at a READ Center.
- Economic empowerment activities have a community-wide effect: **97% of people** who completed **economic skills trainings** in India and 85% in Nepal referred members of their family or community to the trainings they had completed.
- **63% of women members of savings cooperatives** surveyed have **increased their savings** or income, and 20% have started their own income-generating business.

FEATURED PARTNERS



The **National Mission for Empowerment of Women of the Government of India** is partnering with READ to provide livelihood training programs and educational workshops to 400 women and 200 children in India. Topics include vocational skills, technology, health, literacy, gender rights, and early childhood care.



Together, **Practical Action** and READ are implementing the *Practical Answers* program to solicit and respond to thousands of commonly-asked questions from rural villagers on livelihoods, health, livestock, and more. We respond to the questions by producing and distributing educational pamphlets, videos, and radio programs, and bringing field experts to READ Centers to lead skills trainings.



READ is partnering with the **Chuzagang Agriculture Farmer’s Cooperative (CAFCO)** in rural Bhutan to provide training in organic agriculture and small-scale business development to more than one thousand villagers. The tractor rental sustaining enterprise of the Chuzagang Center is also managed by CAFCO, which saves villagers time plowing their fields and helps them bring their goods to market.