Annual Report
2021
We believe

That education brings opportunity, and we’ve made it our mission to make knowledge accessible to all, equally.

We aspire

To be global experts, leveraging our growing collection of culturally diverse content and innovative education technology so 20 million children around the world are learning by 2030.

Cover photo: Susan, from a remote village in Papua New Guinea, explores her newfound joy for reading with a Library For All tablet.

Photo: In partnership with ChildFund students in Laos using their digital tablets to read Library For All books.
2021: TOGETHER WE CAN TACKLE LEARNING LOSS

At the peak of the global pandemic statistics show 1.6 billion children around the world were not going to school. But for many children, like my own here in Brisbane, Australia, the power of digital meant that not going to school didn’t mean an end to learning. My boys could open reading and maths apps on their iPads and log in to Zoom sessions with their teacher on a laptop. My highspeed internet plan comes with no data limit, and our electricity hasn’t gone out once during the pandemic. I know they’ve suffered some learning loss, but I am also confident that with support from their teachers, and by harnessing the many learning tools available to us, they will be back on track in no time.

This confidence and adaptability is only true for those of us relatively privileged families.

In poorer communities around the world, many children have barely stepped foot in a classroom in the past two years. At home, they don’t have reliable access to a digital device, internet or even electricity. Ongoing learning is further impeded by a lack of books and resources at home, not to mention potentially not having running water or enough food for the day. For these children, school is not only about getting an education – it provides security, continuity, and hope for the future.

With rolling lockdowns straining family budgets, children are being put to work often in dangerous jobs for low pay. No longer safe at school, many of these children are now at greater risk of child trafficking. Teen pregnancies are rising. The evidence shows the longer a child spends out of school, the less likely they are to ever return.

The global community is hopeful that in time we will move on from the lockdowns and economic impact of COVID-19 to rebuild our communities and once again thrive. But this learning crisis is not going away. These children are our future, and education is the key to building productive, peaceful and prosperous societies.

I founded Library For All over a decade ago because I passionately believe in harnessing the power of digital to let any child, anywhere, learn. The global pandemic has made that mission even more urgent, as more and more of the most vulnerable children face a future without education. But the pandemic has also created new opportunities. Attitudes to digital learning have shifted significantly with previously hesitant communities eager to learn how technology can empower their children. The global community is less likely to question my vision of bringing digital learning to the most remote communities.

Our digital learning tools have evolved to meet the challenges too. Now, our Spark Kits can come equipped with both our digital library of culturally relevant books in languages children understand and with Elevate, our independent learning software for foundational literacy and numeracy. In 2021 we built Elevate Pacific, Elevate Vietnamese and Elevate Swahili.

We’re so grateful to our donors and project partners who have made this a reality, and we’re looking ahead to the opportunities to reach even more children in even more places in 2022 and beyond.

Rebecca McDonald
Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Since founding Library For All, Rebecca has dedicated the past decade to realising her simple yet powerful dream: let the world learn. Volunteering in Haiti, Rebecca saw classroom after classroom full of students eager to learn but with no books. She was struck by the injustice – an avid e-reader, she could access limitless books instantly.
The Problem

An increasing number of children around the world do not have access to the educational resources they need to learn basic literacy and numeracy.

The World Bank measure learning poverty as the proportion of 10-year-olds who can’t read even a basic text.

The latest data shows 7 in 10 children outside of high-income countries are experiencing learning poverty – up from 5 in 10 before the global pandemic\(^1\). For too many children living in poverty, disruptions to learning can lead to never returning to school. In the most dire cases this leaves them at risk of recruitment into child labour or child marriage.

We know that education is a child’s best opportunity to break the cycle of poverty, but ongoing school closures, lockdowns and outbreaks are stripping this basic human right from the next generation.

Photo: Gazily on her journey to school where she will learn with Library For All, Solomon Islands.

\(^1\) World Bank 2021
Our Solution

Library For All's fun learning tools equip children to make up for lost time and build the foundation they need to progress their education.

Our integrated hardware and software solutions mean every child, anywhere, can learn – even in the face of lockdowns, no internet or emergency situations.

Spark Kits: our ‘classroom in a box’
Fully offline and off-grid, each Spark Kit contains 40 Android tablets, with our customised learning platform installed. This means children can access quality learning, either independently or with a teacher monitoring their progress. And all of this can happen in a safe location if going to school is not an option.

Creating digital libraries
Our Library app delivers culturally diverse, age-appropriate reading books in relevant languages. Research shows children with access to books like these, that mirror their lived experience, read more and gain higher levels of literacy. To deliver this tailored content, we partner with communities to facilitate writers’ workshops, turning their original stories into published books.

Books in classrooms
We believe in the power of digital to break down barriers to learning, but we also know that physical books are valuable learning tools. We offer printed books in different formats to support teachers engage their students in classroom learning, and low-cost publications for children to take home.

Delivered by our cross-sector teams
We uniquely bring together a publishing house, technology experts and development practitioners to deliver interventions that disrupt traditional activities in each of these sectors. And because our team members are experts in their fields, we deliver to the highest standards, at scale.
In 2021 Library For All expanded our reach through the Pacific, South-East Asia and Africa. We’ve been tackling learning loss caused by the global pandemic, and now reach an additional 142,000 children.

We’ve taken learning to some of the most challenging communities across the globe, where they’re not just battling the impacts of COVID-19 but war, natural disasters and other education-limiting emergencies.
Like 26 million other children in Ethiopia, Mahadiya, 13, has been out of school because of the pandemic.

In the Somali region of Ethiopia, camels are traditionally used to transport goods across the hot deserts. Each camel carries 200 paper books in wooden boxes strapped to its back. These amazing animals travel vast distances to deliver their precious cargo to over 22,000 children in 33 otherwise inaccessible villages.

With frequent use in a harsh climate, paper books disintegrate all too quickly. But Library For All’s Spark Kits are a rugged, weatherproof solution that puts books in children’s hands through digital tablets. And the endless sun in the vast desert is perfect for charging the tablets through solar panels as the camels travel between villages.

“When I grow up, I dream about becoming an engineer. Even at this time, I do not want to lose my hope of becoming an engineer.”

Mahadiya
Elevate is the next chapter in Library For All’s mission to make knowledge accessible to all. Gamified learning engages children from one activity to the next, growing their skills step by step. Learning starts from the beginning with basic phonics, script and arithmetic. Lessons progress to reading full children’s books and completing primary level maths problems. Children also gain crucial digital literacy skills, vital for successful futures harnessing technology in all areas of life and work.

So far we’ve developed localised versions of Elevate for children in the Pacific, Vietnam and East Africa in Swahili.

Using Elevate, students are able to learn the equivalent of one full year of school on an average of one hour a day.

Learn more and watch a video of Elevate in action at www.libraryforall.org/elevate/
Our Yarning will be a free, digital library of culturally relevant education resources created by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Partnering with communities, we will publish 500 books, written by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal children, putting learning in their hands.

Delivered with our offline and off-grid technology, together we can pave the path of literacy attainment across Australia to unlock educational opportunities for the next generation.

“Being an illustrator who understands what it feels like to be out on Country, to understand the importance of family connections and our culture means the illustrations I create can help kids relate even more to the words on the page.”

Introducing Dr Julie Owen
Leading this vital work is Dr Julie Owen, a proud Aboriginal woman from the Nurrunga/Ngarrindjeri Nations in South Australia. She brings extensive experience improving health and education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

Created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for their children
Jason Lee is a self-taught artist who was born and raised in Darwin, Northern Territory. Having grown up next to saltwater and learning his Gulumerrrdjin (Larrakia) culture from his mother, Uncles, Aunties and brothers and sisters this sparked an interest in art that was cultivated during his teenage years and further developed when he started learning the Larrakia language. Jason began illustrating books for the Our Yarning collection, and then joined a Writers’ Workshop with two stories now in the publishing process.
Pictured is a page from *junior Ranger Work*, illustrated by Jason Lee. This book was written by Jedda Lynch from Derby, Western Australia for the Our Yarning collection about her son who loves being a junior ranger.
Learning: For impact

We’re building an evidence base to ensure we’re implementing proven solutions to educate children. We’re gathering data through ongoing program monitoring and evaluation. We’re also analysing the research to share knowledge across the sector through our series of Working Papers.

Read the papers in full at www.libraryforall.org/research/

From analysing the research, we know:

• Resource limitations are a significant barrier to learning, but quality and relevance of materials is also crucial.
• Over 40% of learners access education in a language they do not speak at home, adversely impacting their literacy development.
• Children read more when they have ‘mirror’ books to engage with. Our curatorial strategy aims for 70% mirrors and 30% windows.
• This matters, because the evidence shows the more time a child spends reading, the better their literacy scores will be.
• Even in Australia, less than 10% of children’s picture books contain culturally diverse main characters, highlighting the importance of our focus on representation.

Early findings from a recent independent evaluation of our work in Laos and Timor-Leste include:

• Overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from children in target schools
• The 70/30 balance of mirrors/windows is successful in engaging children in reading
• Children are motivated to improve their learning independently using our resources
• Overall, classroom behaviour and school attendance have improved since Spark Kits were introduced
• >99% of tablets are still in working order after 2 years.
When an emergency strikes, our digital education solutions can deliver Education in Emergencies. In 2021 we began delivering programs in Myanmar and the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

Kenya’s Dadaab Refugee Complex is home to over 220,000 people. Most families have come here fleeing civil war in Somalia or displaced by drought across East Africa. Library For All is working with our partner, Save the Children International, to deliver Spark Kits so children in the camp can learn basic literacy and numeracy.

Education is the biggest priority for mums like Zeitun because she knows that is her children’s best opportunity in life. Her son, Mohammed, hopes to be a doctor when he grows up. Given the option to return to Somalia where education is limited, Zeitun chose to stay in Kenya, despite the crowded and challenging conditions.

"I am happy that my parents listened to me when I told them I can’t go to Somalia. I want to stay and learn."

Mohammed
Meet the Team

Leadership Team

Rebecca McDonald
Founder and Chief Executive Officer

Bradley Gaylard
Head of Content

Daniel Belzer
Head of Business Development

Daniel Dawson
Head of Engineering

Polly Banks
Head of Program Services

Board of Directors

Andrew Tyndale (Chair)
Alice Hill
Connie Ridley
Denise Nichols
Luke Philips
Mat Tinkler
Paul Ronalds
Sandy Pitcher

“Insert a quote from Andrew about something, maybe around investing now for the social impact on the next generation.”

Andrew Tyndale
Chair & Director

Following 26-years of investment banking, Andrew has spent the last 12 years focused on developing impact investment opportunities for the social sector and advising Foundations and Governments on aligning strategic investment with values.
We also wish to thank the other partners and supporters who make our impact possible.

Library For All is a not for profit enterprise of Save the Children Australia
2021 Financials

Thanks to the financial contributions we receive from our generous donors, philanthropic supporters and international development partners we’ve been able to grow our digital library and education software to reach more children, in more places, than ever before.

Growing revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$861,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$1,711,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020*</td>
<td>$3,453,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$3,088,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures marked 2020 are for the period July 2019 through December 2020, the 18-month period is to align with Save the Children Australia’s financial reporting.

View our full financial report for 2021 at [libraryforall.org](http://libraryforall.org)
Our impact directly contributes to achieving the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Photo: Eliana reads books on the free Library For All app with her mother, Solomon Islands.
We won't stop until every child can learn, does learn and enjoys learning.

Photo: Students in Salamaua, Papua New Guinea reading Library For All books.