THE CHALLENGE

Globally, between 93 million and 150 million children are estimated to live with disabilities, though actual numbers are likely higher. This means approximately 1 in every 10 children has a disability and 80% of these children live in developing countries. Less than three percent are in school and the proportion that completes primary education is ten percent lower than children who do not have a disability. Fewer girls with disabilities attend school than boys.

Education systems often do not accommodate these children's needs. A lack of suitable transport and infrastructure, inadequate teacher training, insufficient learning support or a dearth of high quality learning resources prevent children with disabilities from attending school or fully participating in it.

OUR COMMITMENT

All Children Reading identifies and brings to scale the most promising technology-based solutions that address barriers that prevent children with disabilities from learning to read. The All Children Reading Partners—USAID, World Vision and the Australian Government—are committed to sourcing these solutions through grant and prize competitions, research and partnerships. Ensuring that development cooperation is disability inclusive enhances aid effectiveness and contributes to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

SOURCING SOLUTIONS

GRANT COMPETITION

Benetech (2015 - ongoing)
India: Accessible, grade-level books to children who are blind/low vision by adding Marathi human-narrated audio capabilities to stories that can be read on low-cost audio devices in conjunction with Bharati braille.

Catholic Relief Services (2015 – ongoing)

Morocco: Assistive technology that enables users—especially educators—to easily create and publish Moroccan Sign Language supported educational materials for children who are deaf/hard of hearing.

Perkins International (2011 - 2013)
Ghana: Inclusive education teacher training, family and community engagement, assistive technology literacy kits, and a local Brailler repair system.

Resources for the Blind, Inc. (2015 - ongoing)
Philippines: Training and technology for the Department of Education to create and upload accessible versions of materials and to students and parents of children who are blind/low vision.

RESEARCH

ADAPTING THE EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT (EGRA)

EGRA adaptation for blind/low vision
In India, Lesotho, and the Philippines, All Children Reading conducted several of the first EGRA-Braille adaptations in the world. Our approach included:

1. Key personnel from Disabled People’s Organizations and teachers with knowledge of the braille used by children supported the adaptation process.
2. Children who are blind/low vision pre-tested the instrument to provide feedback on the tool’s appropriateness, including braille size, spacing on the page and contractions.
3. Based on the experiences of the children and teachers, the EGRA was revised to better capture the target population’s ability range.
4. The tool was piloted with a new, larger sample prior to validation and finalization.

Assessors were trained to administer the braille EGRA on paper and on tablets. Scores were captured using the Tangerine® app and results are included in each EGRA baseline report, available on our website.

Reading assessment for deaf/hard of hearing
In Morocco, All Children Reading is developing an approach to measure reading abilities for children who are deaf/hard of hearing and use Moroccan Sign Language (MSL). A technical design team will adapt existing reading assessment tools to enable MSL-translated administration and MSL responses from the students.

PRIZE COMPETITIONS

Enabling Writers
SIL International’s release of Bloom 3.5, an easy book writing software, includes an EPUB output for e-books and a “Talking Book” function that enables authors to record audio.

Assistive Technology-focused Prize
All Children Reading anticipates launching a prize competition in 2016 focused on the needs of children with disabilities.