Dear Moontrekker,

I am so pleased to share the following library completion report with you! The library at vijaya Maha viduhala, which is just one of the 152 libraries we established in Sri Lanka in 2013, is already deeply cherished by the school’s students and teachers. I wish I could bottle and send you the joy that exudes from the children whenever they open a new book or recognize a new word for the first time. They are on their way to becoming avid, independent readers, and I cannot wait to watch as class after class of students learns to read using the books and materials you have helped us provide. Thank you for supporting our efforts to promote literacy and bring this wonderful new resource to this community!

Our team has been very busy ensuring all of the libraries we established in 2013 are functioning well and educators have the skills they need to best leverage library resources. We have been working with teachers and librarians to create book checkout systems, make the libraries comfortable and welcoming for students, and organize reading materials so they are easy to access and find. We regularly visit each school to see how our libraries are doing and provide coaching and support to help school staff improve their library management and resource utilization skills.

Room to Read Sri Lanka and our government partners will continue to support these libraries over the next three years to ensure activities are running smoothly and provide additional assistance to educators as needed. Ongoing support for our libraries over the next three years will consist of:

- Refresher trainings for teachers and librarians
- Continued support and monitoring visits
- Delivery of materials designed to maintain student interest and build teacher and librarian capacity
- Activities to engage communities and promote library sustainability

In addition to these support efforts, we have also started work on another 80 new libraries this year. With every new library we create, and every student we reach, we get one step closer to a world where every child is guaranteed access to a quality education. I want to thank you again for believing and investing in Room to Read and our partner communities. Because of people like you, the children in our programs now have the opportunity to pursue a better future filled with all of the possibilities literacy provides. For that, I and my staff are forever grateful.

Sincerely,

Shevanthi Jayasuriya
Country Director, Room to Read Sri Lanka
With your help, Room to Read established a Separate library in Sri Lanka!

**Project Location**

vijaya Maha viduhala is located in Anuradhapura, which is a district in the North Central province of Sri Lanka. Anuradhapura, the first capital of Sri Lanka, sustains a population of more than 800,000 people belonging to the Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups. The district maintains a temperate climate throughout the year, making it ideal for agriculture and fish farming. Many villages have electricity, but potable water is scarce, forcing villagers to depend on many of the natural lakes in the area. The majority of the population relies on farming to earn a living. The main crops include rice, maize and kurakkan which can only be harvested once a year during the rainy season. During the dry season, farmers often travel to other villages looking for work to perform for a daily wage.

While 87 percent of the district’s population is literate, significant challenges remain including teacher shortages, the inability to train teachers adequately, deteriorating school buildings, and weak government oversight of the education system. The district also faces high rates of child absenteeism, especially in cities with significant numbers of internally displaced communities. Room to Read anticipates making a significant impact on both the quality and availability of district-wide education in this region.

**Library Details**

Separate libraries are established in a designated room of the school. This is often an unused storage room or a former teacher’s office. This important type of library is designed to create a print rich environment that enables and supports the creation of a habit of reading in students. The room is stocked with books in addition to shelving, furniture, games, posters, and library stationery. The furniture is designed in a way to ensure that children can easily see and access the books. The walls are covered in maps and literary posters and students feel at ease and welcome to read books freely. Students may come to the library to use the books and resources during break time, before and after school, or when teachers bring students to use the library during the library period.
Resources Provided

The School Libraries team works hard to select the most appropriate and engaging reading materials to stock the libraries. The Room to Read Book Publishing program in Sri Lanka works closely with the School Libraries team to provide culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate books for our libraries in Sri Lanka. In addition, the Sri Lanka team purchases books from local language retailers and publishers in Sri Lanka. The books selected play a vital role in supplying students with relevant and engaging learning materials. Room to Read has provided the following books and other resources to this library:

- 149 local language books published by Room to Read
- 626 non-Room to Read local language books
- Stationery
- Chair - Students; Cupboard; Tables

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the libraries, Room to Read aims to increase the participation of families and communities around our schools. Our goal is that by engaging families and communities, there will be increased awareness and support of literacy both in school and at home, resulting in the sustainability of our programs and program outcomes—children’s reading skills and habits.

Our strategy to engage communities involves:

- Meeting and collaborating with the local community before the library is established;
- Creating a literacy committee that coordinates community activities to promote reading such as parent meetings and literacy events;
- Developing a plan with the literacy committee to continue engaging the community and sustain the literacy program even after Room to Read’s support ends;
- Supporting the school to identify a community mobilizer to liaise between the school and community; and
- Providing regular support and capacity building to school principals and teachers to engage families and communities in reading.

Trainings

In Sri Lanka, all librarians and teachers involved in libraries receive eight days of trainings in year one and three days of trainings in year two and three of Room to Read support. These trainings build on each other and serve as refresher courses and venues for working through problems that have arisen during the year.

The Sri Lanka School Libraries program also supports educators by providing coaching and program implementation feedback during support visits that take place an average of once per month over the three years of Room to Read support. During these visits, the School Libraries team oversees the establishment of the library, provides tailored assistance on training topics, encourages school management to involve teachers in daily library operations, and promotes family and community engagement in reading. The team also assesses library quality by using a rating tool, which evaluates the library’s functionality across 19 indicators. Room to Read staff use these ratings to determine the frequency and type of support they provide to each school, and to assign extra support time for schools with greater needs.
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<thead>
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<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Length of Training</th>
<th>Training Topic*</th>
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<td>3.0 days</td>
<td>Book leveling; Creating a child-friendly environment; Library management; Library period and reading activities; Sustainability</td>
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<td>2/28/2014</td>
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*Some trainings are provided for various groups of stakeholders (teachers, librarians, field facilitators, etc.) at different times. Because of this, the same training may be listed more than once.*

vijaya Maha viduhala library will receive three full years of additional support from Room to Read, which will include books, additional training for the school teachers and librarians, support for family and community engagement, and regular support and monitoring visits.
Photos

A teacher engaging students in a reading activity.

A student enjoying one of the new books.
A student enjoying one of the new books.

Students enjoying the resources now available in the school library.
Furniture and other resources provided by Room to Read.

Exterior view of the school building where the new library is located.