Worldreader to Expand Early Childhood Reading Program to Jordan

Global Nonprofit Will Bring Literacy Tools to Refugee Children and Families

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA — February 14, 2017 — Worldreader today announced plans to expand its successful Read to Kids Program to serve Syrian refugee and host communities in Jordan. The program supports parents and caregivers to become their children’s first teachers, enabling and encouraging them to read to their young children using their mobile phones.

The Read to Kids mobile reading program in India cultivated more than 60,000 readers over nine months through generous support from Pearson. Worldreader is now committing to expanding into Jordan to help Syrian and Jordanian children become lifelong readers. The organization will work with Arabic publishers and partners to digitize and disseminate high quality Arabic children’s reading books to 50,000 households across the country. The program will also work with educators and publishers to curate a psychosocial collection of books and activities that encourages stories and reading as a safe way to explore emotions and generate healing.

“Encouraging parents to get engaged in their children’s learning through reading books has been outlined as a key priority of Jordan in 2016. The research is clear on the importance of reading for brain development and long-term success in children’s lives. We are pleased to work with Worldreader be able to offer this innovative program to the people of Jordan as well as the Syrian nationals who have sought refuge within our country” said His Excellency Dr. Omar Razzaz, Jordan’s Minister of Education.

Parents and caregivers will be able to access this program from an internet browser on their mobile phone or download the Read to Kids app from the Google Play Store. The books are curated to match children’s interests and developmental readiness from birth through age twelve.

Worldreader plans to launch Read to Kids Jordan in late 2017. The program will be made possible through a $1 million grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), with additional support from Jordanian social and education entities. The organization is seeking additional funding and support from organizations wishing to help promote reading and education to refugees in Jordan.

“Worldreader is an exemplary organization providing critical literary resources to enhance children’s learning and educational development,” said Andreas Dracopoulos, Co-President of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. “SNF is proud to partner with Worldreader on Read to Kids Jordan, a critical initiative that aims to support early literacy programs for 50,000 Syrian and Jordanian children, and as a Foundation to continue to respond to the devastating crisis and its impact on refugee and host community children.”

“At a time when world leaders are closing their doors to refugees, conflict-affected families need every tool to ensure bright futures for their children,” said David Risher, CEO and Co-founder of Worldreader. “We have seen firsthand the impact that digital reading has on children and families in India and we are proud to bring this same
opportunity to all children in Jordan—including those who have been affected by the worst humanitarian crisis of our time—through the Read to Kids program. Every child should be able to benefit from the magic of reading."

About Worldreader
Worldreader is a global nonprofit that believes everyone can be a reader. The nonprofit provides children, students, and their families free access to its vast digital library via e-readers and mobile phones. Since 2010, over 5 million people across 52 countries have read from a digital library of over 40,000 local and international e-books on Worldreader platforms. Worldreader works with device manufacturers, local and international publishers, government agencies, education officials, and local communities to support readers everywhere. To read free books on your mobile phone, visit read.worldreader.org. For more information on Worldreader, please visit www.worldreader.org.

About the Stavros Niarchos Foundation
The Stavros Niarchos Foundation (www.SNF.org) is one of the world’s leading private international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. The Foundation funds organizations and projects that are expected to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact for society at large, focusing on vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, and also exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also seeks actively to support projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare. In 2012, the Foundation, in addition to its standard grant-making activities, embarked on three major grant initiatives totaling $378mil (€300 mil) aiming to provide relief support against the severe effects of the deepening socioeconomic crisis in Greece, and to help address the critical issue of youth unemployment. Since 1996, the SNF has made grant commitments of $1.9 billion / €1.6 billion, through 3,685 grants to nonprofit organizations in 111 nations around the world. 2016 marked the twentieth year of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s global philanthropic activity.

The Foundation’s largest single gift is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC), in Athens. The project's total budget of $867mil (€630mil) includes two grants of $6 mil (€5mil) each to the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera respectively, aiming to support the organizations' transition to their new facilities. The project, designed by the architectural firm Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW), includes the new facilities of the National Library of Greece, and of the Greek National Opera, as well as the Stavros Niarchos Park. The SNFCC is a testament and a commitment to the country’s future. It is also an engine of short- to mid-term economic stimulus.

Contact:
Caitlin Scott | Dan Cohen
Full Court Press Communications
caitlin@fcpcommunications.com | dan@fcpcommunications.com | 510.550.8176

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