

Keeping learning open when schools were closed

Annual Report 2020-2021



NOTE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

17 years ago, we articulated the bravest, most audacious literacy mission we could think of: A book in every child's hand. Since then, Pratham Books has been creating joyful, inclusive children's books and helping them reach every last child.

It is that last child who is at the heart of what we do, and over the years, we have strived to serve her better.

The books she reads are now in several languages, Indian and international, and include Braille and DAISY formats. They are open licensed, so they can be read, adapted, and shared at will. They are picture books, as much as they are videos, audio narrations, and animated books. They are inclusive, diverse, and explore different perspectives. They are often her first experience of the joy of reading – a joy that will lead her ever onward, unveiling new adventures, and introducing new ideas and concepts.

As the world hurtles towards 2030, we need to pick up the pace on making the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals a reality. The pandemic has only served to intensify the challenge.

Building on our understanding of children, and our facility with technology, we believe the way forward is to promote the creation and use of books as Digital Public Goods that enable the access and scale required to reach the



Sustainable Development Goal of inclusive and equitable, quality education for all. Our digital content platform, StoryWeaver is one such example which provides access to 32,000 books in 289 languages which have been read over 26 million times by children across the world.

Our mission was always an audacious one, but what makes it possible is the large community of people who have joined us in making it a reality – our authors, illustrators, translators, educators, Ministries of Education, civil society partners, and Reading Champions. As Pratham Books grows, so does our community, and consequently, our collective impact on children who need it the most.

Our unambiguous commitment to open licensing has allowed us to share award-winning storybooks with children the world over. A real understanding of the problem of access has enabled us to wield technology as the ultimate connector. And an abiding faith in the relevance of our mission drives us to take our books, and those of others, to more children, in more languages, every single day.

Coming out of a year which has seen more learning journeys disrupted than ever before, I have never been more convinced of the power of Pratham Books' StoryWeaver as a Digital Public Good. Today, we are a part of a rich and thriving ecosystem that is helping children read and learn – on mobiles and laptops and TV screens and, yes, in print, as well.

Other not-for-profits and education technology organisations are using the platform to serve the children with whom they work. Teachers and librarians are implementing reading programmes that engage their circle of learners and readers. State education departments of the government are using programmes on StoryWeaver for their schools to deploy.

Most of all, our books are in the hands of the children we committed to serve all those years ago. Children like Manisha, from the Muria tribe in Chhattisgarh, who read a book in Gondi, her mother tongue, for the first time in her life. Or schoolchildren living in the village of Badole, in Solapur, Maharashtra, who listened to stories narrated over the temple loudspeaker

every Saturday evening at 7 pm during the lockdown. Or even elementary and middle schoolchildren in Cieneguilla and Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, Mexico, who discovered books in Chatino, Chocholteco and Mixe, mother tongues they only spoke at home, and had never before read in print.

As I write this last note as the organisation's Chairperson, I do it with pride, joy and immense gratitude. I'm inspired, daily, by the people using Pratham Books to engage with children, and spark their curiosity about reading. And am deeply, deeply curious to see what new innovations and ideas will spring forth in the years to come.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

While Covid-19 has dominated the news since the beginning of 2020, we are only now realising its true disruption of children's learning journeys. With schools closed indefinitely, the inequity of access to education and learning was thrown sharply into focus.

Our open digital content platform, StoryWeaver, was already the world's largest open digital library for children. So we were uniquely positioned to respond quickly and intelligently to what the educator community needed when schools, libraries, and other community learning spaces were closed indefinitely. StoryWeaver saw a 300% increase in users, crossing 10 million reads online and over 16 million offline.

We leaned into the curve to make the platform even more useful to teachers, and engaging for children – with books that would help them deal with a changed world, reading programmes that would hone their reading skills, and learn-at-home resources to keep them learning while away from school.

Statewide programmes like *Goshticha Shaniwar* (A Saturday of Stories) helped schoolchildren in Maharashtra read and learn with a new story every Saturday, while translation marathons created more books in children's mother tongues.

Campaigns like *Missed Call Do*, *Kahaani Suno!* did away with the need for smartphones or internet access. All a child had to do was give a missed call, using a simple feature phone, and they could continue to discover words, meanings, and stories.

Organisations and individuals came to the aid of libraries and reading programmes through Donate-a-Book, and while our flagship One Day, One Story event was all-virtual, the joy of the thousands of children who listened to the stories remained, like every year, 100% real.





In recognition of our work during the pandemic, Pratham Books received the 2020 Library of Congress Literacy Special Response Award. UNESCO and the World Bank named StoryWeaver a recommended open distance learning resource for children during the pandemic, even as the Digital Public Goods Alliance recognised it as a Digital Public Good for foundational literacy and early grade reading.

The pandemic has deepened the gap between the global South and the rest of the world, and it makes our mission – a book in every child's hand – even more critical. It falls upon all of us to heighten our response, strengthen our resolve, and amplify our efforts to reach every last child.

As always, thank you for being a part of our journey

Ard

Suzanne Singh Chairperson

R Sriram

Managing Trustee



School closures and national lockdowns saw over 1.3 billion children and young people at home, away from friends, classmates, and their familiar surroundings. How could we explain this situation to them in a way that would help them understand and process this massive disruption? Over ten days, sixteen different writers, illustrators, and experts collaborated to create *The Novel Coronavirus: We Can Stay Safe*, where much-loved Pratham Books characters talked about staying safe, smart, and supportive of each other. Children across the world are reading – and learning from – this story in 24 languages.



At Home, written by Shweta Ganesh Kumar and illustrated by Annada Menon, offered a glimpse into the lives of two siblings stuck at home for months and how they coped. Everyday Superheroes turned the spotlight on frontline workers who took enormous personal risks to keep others safe. The wordless My Street, written by Sadaf Siddique and illustrated by Habib Ali brought neighbourhood stories to life. While I Wish captured the hopes and dreams of India's children – from community libraries in Delhi, Wardha, and Haryana; rural schools in Rajasthan, Jammu, and Bihar; a neighbourhood school in Mumbai; our partners in Villupuram, Tamil Nadu; and a special school in Chennai. In many languages, in many voices, we saw what children wished for, in this unique bilingual book, art directed by Priya Kuriyan, with forewords by Rukmini Banerji, CEO, Pratham Education Foundation, and Nobel Prize Laureate Esther Duflo.





Another special book was *PS What's up with the climate?*, written by Bijal Vachharajani and illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan, which introduced children to climate change through a series of letters from animals to our planet. The book holds a postcard, encouraging children to write letters of their own, and send them to WWF-India, who endorsed the book.

The Little Plant, written by Radha Rangarajan and illustrated by Aindri C, invited children to look closely at plants around them, while On Mondays I want to Hide and A Very Busy Year, written by Shabnam Minwalla and illustrated by Upasana Mehndiratta introduced them to simple concepts like the days of the week and the months of the year.

Pratham Books participated virtually in panel discussions on children's literature hosted by the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), the Belongg Literature Festival, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), while our books were recognised at the Big Little Book Award (BLBA), and PublishingNext.

The ability of languages to unite.



The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends early schooling in a child's mother tongue to improve learning, increase participation, and reduce dropout rates. The pandemic brought with it the pressing need for more content in more languages, not just in India but around the world. We are proud to add that this year saw Pratham Books achieve its highest number of translations ever - 644 - in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Gujarati, Telugu, Malayalam, Urdu, and the tribal languages of Kui, Munda, Jaunga, and Saura.

We also accelerated the translation and localisation of content on StoryWeaver and made the Reading Programme, as well as themed Book Lists and Readalongs available in more languages. We hosted virtual translation sprints through StoryWeaver, where translation partners translated storybooks into nearly a hundred languages, including underserved and vulnerable languages like Assamese, Arabic, Frisian,





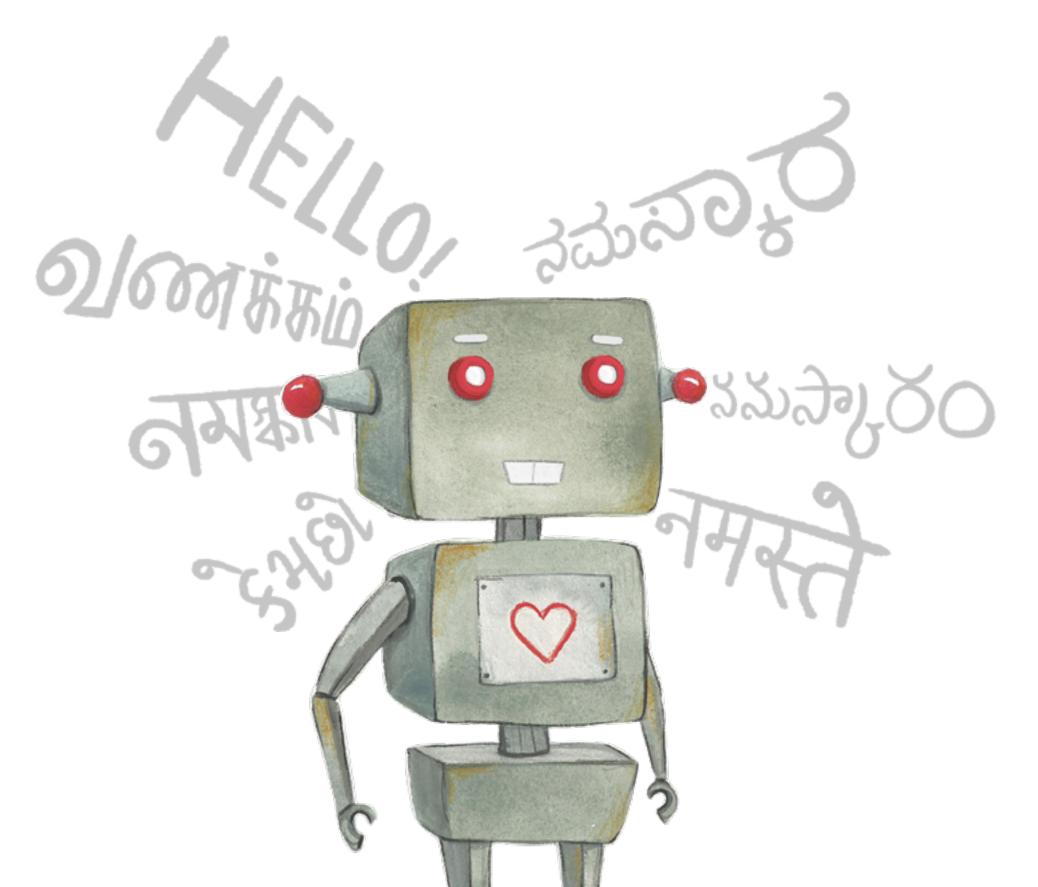
Malvi, Pashto, Limburgish, Surjapuri, Konda, Kumaoni and Occitan. We collaborated with organisations like the Sauramandala Foundation to create local language storybooks for remote, marginalised communities in Assam, Kashmir, Manipur and Meghalaya. And finally, we joined hands with UNICEF and the Tribal Regional Development Department, Rajasthan to build local language libraries in Vagadi and Sehariya.

As we continued to work in more languages, particularly underserved ones, we felt the need to ensure that our core message and values translate and reflect in every language. We launched an easy-to-use translation manual for our community of translators and partners, with tips on translating children's books, while staying true to style and language, grammar, nuance, and most importantly, cultural context.

¹Why Early Learning In Mother Tongue Is More Effective: IndiaSpend

We also translated it into Hindi, so we could realign ourselves to a shared sensibility and style, particularly while addressing more nuanced aspects of translation like names, and selecting which parts of the story to localise, and which not to.

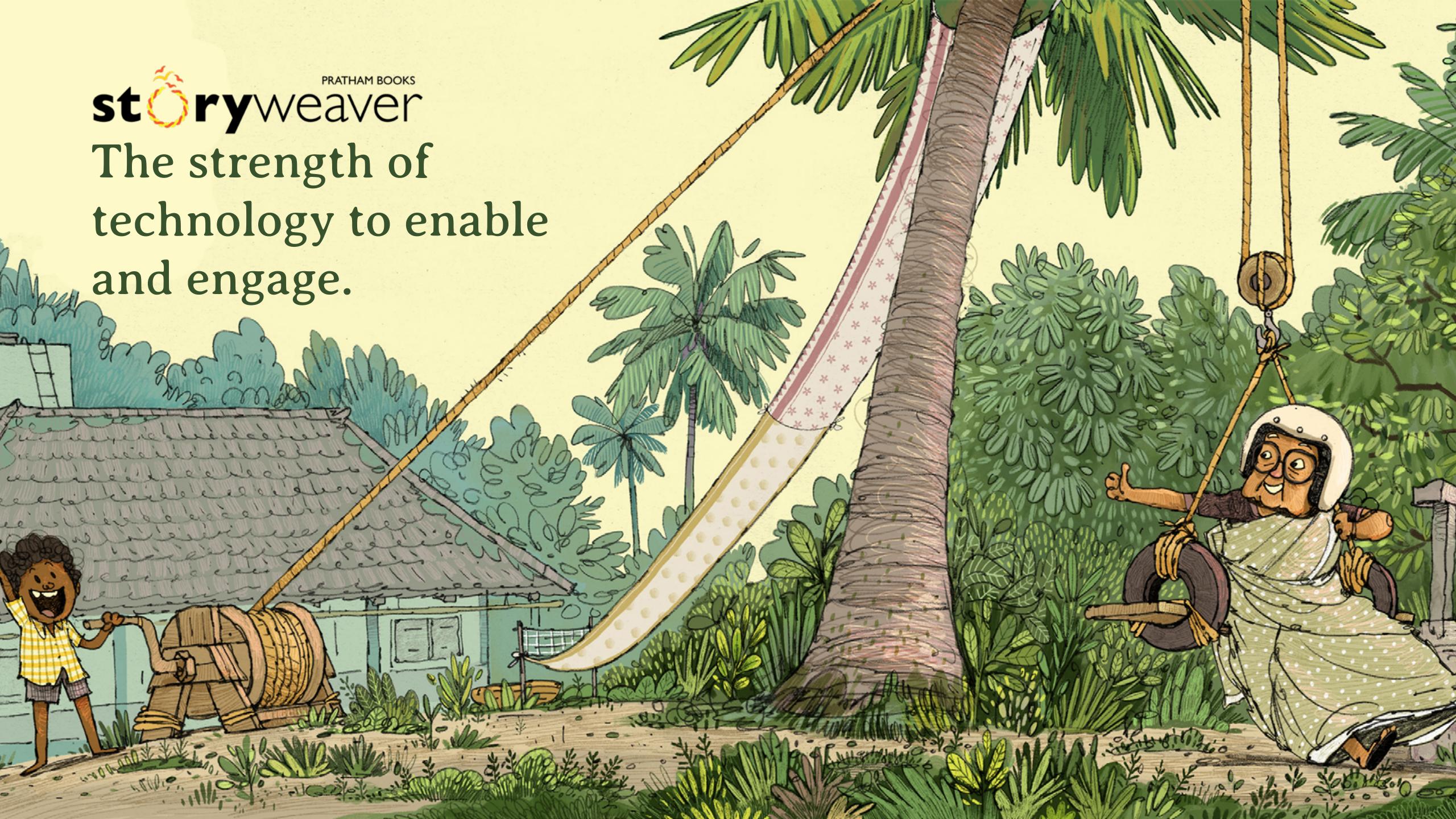
All this came together on September 30, International Translation Day, with a digital awareness campaign *Celebrating Languages* featuring multilingual blogs, Q&As with renowned translators, and video interviews, all designed to highlight the depth of our language resources and our language champions.



"मेरी ज़िंदगी का सबसे ख़ुशी का दिन था जब मैंने अपना नाम अनुवादक के रूप में देखा। किसी किताब को वागड़ी भाषा में अनुवाद करने का यह मेरे जीवन का पहला अनुभव है। कई नए अनुभव सीखने को मिले। मैं प्रथम बुक्स की टीम के सभी सदस्यों को बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देना चाहूंगा कि आपके प्रयासों से हजारों बच्चों का भविष्य सुधरेगा तथा बच्चों को अपनी मातृभाषा में आनंददायक पुस्तकें पढ़ने का मौका मिलेगा।" - Mangi Lal - Vagadi translator

"मैं मानता हूँ कि वागड़ी भाषा की शब्दावली से यहाँ के बच्चों को बहुत कुछ सीखने- सिखाने के अवसर प्राप्त होंगे। ड्रॉप आउट होने जैसी समस्या का समाधान भी मिल सकता है। बच्चे अपनी भाषा की शब्दावली का उपयोग करके दूसरी भाषा आसानी से सीख या समझ पाएँगे।"

Mohanlal Hadat, Dungarpur, Rajasthan



With school closures affecting millions of children around the world, governments, schools, educators, parents and caregivers have been grappling with the challenge of mitigating learning losses, especially among the underserved. In India alone, an estimated 300 million children have been affected² (UNESCO, 2020).

As remote learning became the norm, there was an increased demand for digital reading resources, and StoryWeaver witnessed a huge global uptake in usage. Our open digital materials were integrated into online classes and reading routines. And partnerships with government education departments helped create large-scale impact for children and educators.



In Maharashtra, StoryWeaver joined hands with the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and UNICEF to co-create *Goshticha Shaniwar*, the Saturday of Stories, a five-month-long Reading Programme encouraging learning through stories. Every Saturday, storybooks and activities in Marathi, Urdu and English were shared via Whatsapp through a tiered dissemination model with teachers of *anganwadis* and government schools, who would, in turn, bring them alive for groups of their students. Impacting 260,000 teachers and *anganwadi* workers, and 2.5 million children in 100,000 schools and *anganwadis* across all 36 districts of the state, the Programme kept the learning journey unbroken for millions of children in Maharashtra.

In Chhattisgarh, Samagra Shiksha Chhattisgarh and StoryWeaver came together to train over 5,000 teachers across the state to access storybooks on the platform for a statewide reading programme, and to create and translate storybooks in indigenous languages like Halbi, Kurukh and Sadri, so that children could read in their mother tongue. DIKSHA, India's foremost digital teacher resource platform anchored by the Ministry of Education, featured over 350 books from the StoryWeaver platform that earned over 1,00,000 teacher views.

With no access to schools and infrastructure, the need for structured modules of graded reading resources became apparent. We created Learn At Home, a set of learning resources built around grade-relevant books and themes that teachers and parents could use with ease at home.

"StoryWeaver has helped me a lot during this tough time. Every alternate day, I share the link to a storybook connected to the topic in class to the parents. For example, if we are discussing the letter 't', I send books related to the letter, like stories with a 'tiger', 'tomato', etc. The children really love the stories - they are colourful, and relatable to their everyday life." - Anusha Bekkari, preschool teacher, Bangalore

"Thanks to StoryWeaver, we created a virtual community library called 'Duniya Sabki' on WhatsApp. We hit 2,000 members within just a few weeks, and the easy access to storybooks helped keep the joy of reading alive during a very stressful time."

- The Community Library Project, Delhi





The ability of crowdfunding to help.



53 crowdfunding campaigns
16,000+ books
40+ Library-in-a-Classroom Kits
51 beneficiary organisations and schools
20 states

This year, 2,000 English and Tamil storybooks reached children in the Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu through a one-of-a-kind travelling library initiative, called Rickshaw Story Time, where an autorickshaw travelled to villages through the district carrying printed storybooks for children. These books were crowdfunded to support Communities Rising, a non-profit that provides educational opportunities to children from marginalised communities in the state. Similarly, girls from socially and economically disadvantaged communities were able to improve their reading and language skills at home with storybooks from Pratham Books, through a crowdfunding campaign for IIMPACT.

Cipla's Joy of Caring, our very first employee-giving initiative, helped storybooks reach children in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. And finally, Gram Panchayat libraries all across Karnataka now have 1,00,000 books in English, Kannada, and Braille, thanks to a campaign benefitting the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Government of Karnataka.





One Day, One Story

2 stories
2000+ Reading Champions
3,400+ Reading Sessions
30,000 children across India

This year's One Day, One Story had celebrities like Saif Ali Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Janhvi Kapoor, Tillotama Shome, Chitrangada Singh and Athiya Shetty, as well as hundreds of Reading Champions celebrating International Literacy Day by reading out two delightful stories – *Angry Akku*, written and illustrated by Vinayak Varma, and *The Girl Who Could Not Stop Laughing*, written by Meera Ganapathi and illustrated by ROSH – on Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. T Sundari's uncontrollable laughter had the children in splits, while Akku's angry outbursts were a reaction they completely understood.

The sessions were carried out in 18 languages, and V-Shesh, a Chennai-based organisation working with hearing impaired children, made sign language storytelling videos of the two books. One Day, One Story regulars from Oracle participated in this year's sessions, and one of them, a volunteer named Mitali Sengupta, even made it to Doordarshan Bihar, where her storytelling session reached nearly 20 lakh viewers.

Missed Call Do, Kahaani Suno!

300 stories
4 languages
3,50,000+ children
8,65,000 stories listened to

Missed Call Do, Kahaani Suno! was first launched in 2017, to give every child access to delightful stories in many languages for free, by just dialling a toll-free number. We revived the campaign to feature hundreds of audio stories in English, Hindi, Kannada, and Marathi, that children could enjoy.





11,00,000+ printed storybooks
1,500+ Library-in-a-Classroom kits
16 languages
200 partnerships



90,000+ books distributed in 200 government schools in Hardoi district, Uttar Pradesh through **HCL Foundation**

650 Library-in-a-Classroom kits distributed across UP, Assam, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar, Haryana, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, New Delhi through World Vision India



100,000+ books distributed in English, Kannada and Braille to 1,600 Gram Panchayat libraries in 9 districts across Karnataka through **Azim Premji Foundation**



100,000 books distributed in Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada in Delhi, Maharashtra, Hyderabad and Karnataka through Room to Read





30 Library-in-a-Classroom kits distributed to government schools in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka through Nisarga

50,000 Hindi books distributed in 500 government schools through the District Education office, Raigarh district, Chattisgarh



Awards



Big Little Book Award

Subhadra Sen Gupta and Rajiv Eipe have created many joyful Pratham Books titles.

The Big Little Book Award recognises their immense talent and contribution to children's literature in India, and we could not be prouder to have them as collaborators in our journey to put 'a book in every child's hand'.



Canato Jimo's *Snip*, a wordless storybook filled with mischief and chaos won the Children's Book of the Year award at the Publishing Next Industry Awards 2020.



Library of Congress Literacy Award

In 2020 Pratham Books won the prestigious
Library of Congress Literacy Award, recognising
our responsiveness to the unique needs faced
by children, and our efforts to spread the joy
of reading to children everywhere through the
Covid-19 pandemic.

Donors FY 2020-21



































P.A.N.I. FOUNDATION





GIVING FOUNDATION





Financial Reports



Pratham Books Balance sheet as at March 31, 2021

(Amount in Rupees)

Particulars	Sch No.	As at March 31, 2021 Amount	As at March 31, 2020 Amount
Liabilities			
Corpus Fund	1	5,68,30,909	4,50,88,183
Specified Fund	2	7,15,18,870	13,43,13,725
Current Liabilities	3	1,62,00,582	1,78,02,356
Provisions	4	29,04,485	22,51,356
Other advances	5	3,42,938	1,68,644
Total		14,77,97,785	19,96,24,263
Assets			
Fixed Assets	6	26,23,147	33,45,748
Deposits	7	9,37,20,123	16,24,94,168
Debtors	8	72,74,523	51,04,265
Loans and advances	9	17,82,329	22,15,716
Stock of Books		45,94,430	66,32,116
Cash in Hand		12,859	29,238
Cash at Bank	10	3,23,86,168	1,54,46,287
Specified Fund Receivable	11	3,21,750	-
Other Current Assets	12	50,82,454	43,56,725
Total		14,77,97,785	19,96,24,263

Significant Accounting Policies and notes 30 to accounts





As per our report of even date for Singhvi Dev & Unni LLP Chartered Accountants
Firm Reg No 003867S/ 05200358

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Shashi Kumar H D GALUS

Membership No.: 235431 UDIN: 21235431 AAAABS3545

Bengaluru October 7, 2021

Pratham Books Income & Expenditure for the year ended March 31, 2021

(Amount in Rupees)

(Amount in Rupees)				
Particulars	Sch No.	As at March 31, 2021 Amount	As at March 31, 2020 Amount	
Income Sale of Books	13	3,93,82,061	5,10,36,412	
Donations received	14	59,90,872	58,32,420	
Other Income	15	78,29,899	1,08,09,194	
Income from Funds	16	2,93,32,030	17,08,14,348	
Total (A)		8,25,34,863	23,84,92,373	
Erra on diturno				
Expenditure Book Development Expenses	17	1,44,76,813	2,07,26,822	
Selling & Administrative Expenses	18	88,93,952	1,52,22,793	
Staff Expenses	19	1,64,59,560	1,66,11,333	
Promotional Expenses	20	3,13,239	9,75,234	
Research & Evaluation Expenses		5,36,440	5,95,830	
Depreciation	6	7,80,101	10,67,426	
Fund Expenditure	21	9,24,48,635	10,40,70,534	
Total (B)		13,39,08,741	15,92,69,972	
Excess of Income over expenditure (A-B)		(5,13,73,878)	7,92,22,400	
Add:				
Opening Balance in Funds				
Opening Balance in Corpus Fund		4,50,88,183	3,26,09,596	
Opening Balance in Specified Fund		13,43,13,725	6,75,69,912	
Balance of Funds after appropriations				
Corpus Fund		5,68,30,909	4,50,88,183	
Specified Fund		7,15,18,870	13,43,13,725	
Total balance in Funds		12,83,49,779	17,94,01,908	
Significant Accounting Policies and notes to accounts	30			





As per our report of even date for Singhvi Dev & Unni LLP Chartered Accountants
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CHARTERED CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS 5

Shashi Kumar H D GALUS

Partner
Membership No.: 235431

UDIN: 21235431 A A A A BS3545

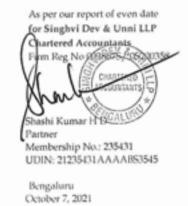
Bengaluru October 7, 2021

Pratham Books Receipts and Payments account for the year ended March 31, 2021

	(Amount in Rupees)		
Particulars	Sch no.	Year ended March 31, 2021 Amount	Year ended March 31, 2020 Amount
Receipts			
Balance brought forward			
- Cash on hand		29,238	38,623
- Cash at bank		1,54,46,287	6,79,24,361
Sale of books	22	3,73,86,097	4,78,64,448
Donations	23	59,90,872	58,32,420
Other Income	24	70,69,116	95,14,943
Specified Funds	25	2,93,32,030	17,08,14,348
Fixed Deposits - Withdrawn		18,83,89,294	23,43,84,228
Rent Deposit Received		1,75,500	3,55,000
Travel Reimbursement Received		-	1,14,608
Income Tax Refund - Received (TDS)		9,39,275	-
Total		28,47,57,712	53,68,42,978
Payments			
Book Development Expenses	26	1,21,16,719	1,56,17,229
Selling, Administrative Expenses and Promotional Expenses	27	91,92,709	1,56,94,086
Staff Expenses	28	1,52,06,090	1,82,21,250
Research & Evaluation Expenses		5,36,440	5,95,830
Fund Expenditure	29	9,42,83,977	10,06,36,624
Fixed Assets Purchased		57,500	15,53,741
Fixed Deposits		11,96,16,369	36,78,08,693
Gratuity- LIC Policy		10,00,000	10,00,000
Rent Deposit		-	2,40,000
Earnest Money Deposit		3,48,880	-
Balance carried forward			
- Cash on hand		12,859	29,238
- Cash at bank		3,23,86,168	1,54,46,287
Total		28,47,57,712	53,68,42,978
Significant Accounting Policies and notes to accounts	30		







Board of Trustees

Ms. Suzanne Singh, Chairperson
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Ms. Rekha M. Menon, Trustee
Ms. Kanchan Bannerjee, Trustee
Prof. M.S. Sriram, Trustee
Mr. Srikanth Nadhamuni, Trustee
Ms. Pervin Varma, Trustee



Credits

Illustrations in this Annual Report have been taken from the following Pratham Books titles:

Title	Author	Illustrator
A Book for Puchku	Deepanjana Pal	Rajiv Eipe
A Library Story	Anitha Murthy	Dipanjan Dutta Chowdhury
Ammachi's Amazing Machines	Rajiv Eipe	Rajiv Eipe
At Home	Shweta Ganesh Kumar	Annada Menon
Button Box	Aparna Kapur	Adrija Ghosh
Have You Ever Heard a Whale Sing?	Divya Panicker	Deepti Sharma
I Wish	Bandna Devi, Kunal Rajpurohit, Deepak, Radhika, V. Shivya, Kajal Kumari, Keerthika, Sagar Lohawe, Aryan G Pawane, Lakshya, Gauri Rachalwar, Sunny, Riya, Sharwari Sonawani, Dhawan Choudhary and Aravind Karthik	Anjora Noronha, Canato Jimo, Gitanjali Iyer, Habib Ali, Jayesh Sivan, Kanak Shashi, Lavanya Naidu, Manjari Chakravarti, Nancy Raj, Nidhin Shobhana, Niloufer Wadia, Priya Kuriyan, Proiti Roy, Rajiv Eipe, Roshni Vyam and Somesh Kumar
Ikru's First Day of School	Sunaina Coelho	Sunaina Coelho
PS What's up with the climate?	Bijal Vachharajani	Archana Sreenivasan
Sharanya Speaks to Robots	Tanvi Bhat	Tanvi Bhat
Sizing Things Up	Aparna Kapur	Debjyoti Saha
The Birthday Cake	Andaleeb Wajid	Kabini Amin
Tree's Company: a play	Jerry Pinto	Kalyani Ganapathy
Under the Invisibility CLoak	Varsha Joshi	Radhika Tipnis
Why Do Sunbirds Eat All Day?	Anusha Shankar	Harjyot Khalsa
दीदी का रंग बिरंगा खज़ाना	Rukmini Banerji	Kaveri Gopalakrishnan
बेटियाँ भी चाहें आज़ादी	Kamla Bhasin	Shrujana Shridhar



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