



Bookwallah

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



We help children of trauma
make a positive shift
in their consciousness
through the power of stories.





FOUNDER'S NOTE: A YEAR OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS

As we turn the pages of 2023, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude at what we have achieved together under the banner of “Great Expectations.” This year wasn’t just about aspiring to lofty goals; it was about surpassing what we believed was possible, driven by our shared commitment to healing children of trauma through stories.

As we go through this journey in life, there are a myriad of obstacles that can prevent us from moving forward, from nurturing our own expectations and fulfilling our purpose and potential. In these times, the people who surround you- matter. Your unparalleled support—be it through time, skills, resources, or belief in our mission—has been the cornerstone of our success.

From an initial idea sparked by personal experience and a suitcase of storybooks, to touching the lives of over 51,000 children with first-level intervention services, our journey has been remarkable. Thanks to your support, our more in-depth holistic programs now reach 1,200 children annually across 18 Bookwallah locations, offering them a renewed sense of possibility.

In 2023, we focused on strengthening our foundation for future growth, highlighted by the return of our gala in Chicago, which was pivotal in enhancing our services. Thanks to generous individuals, we rebranded the organization and expanded our psychology research.

We envision ourselves as “Small Giants,” on a mission to build & run 100 locations – Imagination Havens- by 2030. Your continued support this year is crucial as we aim to reach 500 more children in new locations while embodying *our five-year theory of change* with existing ones.

I stand with these children because their story is my story. Together, we are nurturing a generation of hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seena Jacob'.

Seena Jacob, Founder



2023 AT A GLANCE

+7,700

Children

51k cumulative,

108 Magic Crate Libraries

18

Bookwallah Locations

(Imagination Havens)

1,200 children annually

566

Story Sessions & Activities

157

Dedicated Volunteers

95%

Volunteer Run





BEYOND ADVERSITY: CHARTING NEW STORIES OF STRENGTH

At the heart of our mission, Bookwallah confronts a global challenge: aiding the social integration of over 175 million children affected by severe adversities carry a heavy burden everyday. The following are profiles of children you support through Bookwallah on an ongoing basis:

- Girls and boys who have endured mental, physical, and sexual abuse
- Children affected by HIV/AIDS
- Victims of sex trafficking and exploitation in brothels
- Children with families facing severe economic hardship
- Children of farmers driven to suicide by the devastating effects of drought
- COVID orphans
- Children with disabilities
- Street Children

The long-term effects of their traumas—ranging from impaired brain development to physical health issues—severely hinder their ability to blend into society, perpetuating a cycle of hardship with alarming societal repercussions, such as increased healthcare costs and a higher propensity for criminal activity.

Our commitment is rooted in the transformative power of the hero's journey—a method that employs the profound impact of stories to foster healing and growth. By diving into the realms of stories like “Beauty and the Beast,” “Harry Potter,” and “The Chronicles of Narnia,” we ignite the children's imagination, guiding them through their own narratives of resilience and recovery. This approach is not merely about sharing tales; it's a scientifically supported strategy aimed at building a solid socio-emotional foundation for these young individuals.

Through our work, Bookwallah strives not just to alter the course of individual lives but to shape a future where each child can emerge from the shadows of their challenges. By transforming a victim's narrative into a victor's triumph, we believe in creating a society where every child can thrive, embodying the essence of positive change in consciousness and social integration.

OUR PROGRAMS - BUILDING HOPE -THE POWER OF STORIES

IMAGINATION HAVEN PROGRAM- BUILD A LIBRARY

Our initiative transforms spaces in orphanages and schools for children with special needs into enchanting, secure havens of imagination. These revamped areas are enriched with a vibrant selection of storybooks, artistic elements, bookshelves, and additional resources. Each library we create features a unique mural, thoughtfully designed to reflect the surrounding environment and to resonate with the children who use the space. A significant 90% of the gently used storybooks that fill the shelves of these new libraries are generously donated by children in the United States. We purchase local language storybooks depending on availability and need.

STORYTELLING & STORY SPARKLER PROGRAMS

Our Story sessions are rooted in themes like trust, self-acceptance, and self-love, empower children through a journey of healing and growth. By integrating arts, crafts, and interactive activities, we create a dynamic environment for transformation. Adapting to challenges, we've embraced hybrid sessions, combining in-person and virtual experiences to reach children wherever they are. Your support can help us continue these programs in existing Imagination Havens, making a significant impact in the lives of children as they navigate their paths toward empowerment and self-discovery.

THE GIVING TREE PROGRAM- FIRST LEVEL INTERVENTION

Many children affected by sex trafficking, illness and abuses lack the physical and emotional strength to break free, envision a brighter future, and transform their narratives. In certain scenarios, intervention with *just storybooks* alone make the most sense. It's the first dose of "medicine". Bookwallah launched the Magic Crate Library and Happiness Parcel programs as *primary FIRST LEVEL interventions* designed to support numerous trauma-affected children. Staff in shelter homes, child friendly police stations, hospitals, slums then make the storybooks available for the children.

BUDDY PROGRAM – BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER

Our commitment extends beyond the construction of libraries. We engage and equip a variety of local volunteers to lead our initiatives. At Bookwallah, our volunteers are more than just facilitators; they embody the roles of mentors, akin to elder siblings. Their involvement sends a powerful message of inclusivity and worth, affirming to the children that they are esteemed and significant contributors to our community.

EVALUATION – RESEARCH PROGRAM

In 2017, Bookwallah launched a groundbreaking study led by Dr. Amy Governale of NorthPark University in Chicago to explore how storybooks can help heal children facing trauma. Led by various R&D Managers, including Simi Shibu in India, we began quantitative and qualitative analyses, with International Review Board-approved research. The research focuses on the positive effects of storybooks on hope, social behavior, and resilience. The research also allows us to tailor our programs better. Despite the setbacks caused by COVID-19, we've re-started the important work in 2022/2023 and look forward to 2024.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

NEW. Library Monitor and Library Interns so the children with the highest Hope scores are given opportunities to manage and lead.



12 YEARS OF UNWAVERING SUPPORT: *MORE THAN BUILDING LIBRARIES*

12 out of 18 Bookwallah locations- Imagination Havens- featured below



Library of Journeys
Recycled Shipping Container Library
Pune-Snehwan Children's Home
Launched: February 15, 2020



Lotus Library
Pune- BJS Children's Home
Launched: February 24, 2019



East Meets West Library Mumbai-
Stephen School for the Deaf
Launched: November 22, 2013



Noah's Ark Library
Kolar- Kolar Girls Home Launched:
December 14, 2014



Library of Dreams
Pune- Sanmati Bal Niketan Boys'
Home
Launched: March 3, 2019



Phoenix Rising Library Pune-
Manavya Home for Hiv/Aids
Launched: November 2, 2014



Hungry Caterpillar Library
Bangalore- St Patricks' Boys'
Home
Launched: November 20, 2011



Kung Fu Library Mangalore-
CARDTS Boys' Home for HIV
Launched: August 19, 2012



Secret Garden Library Mumbai-
Snehasadan Girls' Home
Launched: December 10, 2017



Library of Wishes
Mumbai- Children's Aid Society
Launched: December 5, 2017



Library of Hope
Mumbai- Amcha Ghar
Launched: December 19, 2021



The Giving Tree Library
Mumbai -Faith Children's Home
Launched: September 4, 2012

2023 SPOTLIGHT ON INDIA

Transformative Impact

Revitalized our existing libraries like The Hungry Caterpillar Library, Library of Dreams to ensure the sanctuaries continue to flourish.

Joy and Stability Through Rain or Shine

Conducted 566 story sessions and activities across our 18 locations, spreading joy and ensuring a sense of stability in the lives of our children- Rain or Shine!

Community and Inclusion

Bridged remote and in-person engagements with technology, connecting our rural children to volunteers more frequently.

Personalized Support

Utilized the Children's Hope Scale and expanded our psychology research to 400 children to understand & customize our services.

Expansion and Growth

Expanded our full-time staff members from our volunteer ranks to help increase our capacity to deliver more impactful services.

Corporate Partnerships

Expanded partnerships with SMEs & MNC's like Amazon India, Fortune 500 Bank, InTouchCX to amplify the impact of donations, underscoring trust in our mission.

Innovation and Future Planning- 2024

Designed additional programming (see Theory of Change) to provide children with the Highest Hope Scores new avenues for growth .



BOOKWALLAH STORY-STORYTELLING VOLUNTEER

“While the kids themselves might not acknowledge it, Bookwallah is there to keep telling them that they are good and worthy of absolutely everything that matters in life...

....while the giggles and chirpings of the kids have always been pleasant to my ears, I simply can't put into words the feeling of seeing an uninterested, self-isolating kid, finally raising hands to talk during the sessions, an otherwise silent kid talking about their story-relevant instances from life. These transformations are the impacts that'll last and promises even better things for them in the long run for sure.”- *Shreya Chabra*



A HERO'S JOURNEY: HEALING YOUTH, ENRICHING COMMUNITIES: A PATH TO SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The Bookwallah (BW) **process** (or theory of change) is a **five-year commitment**- a “**Hero's Journey**” which helps our children understand their unique strengths, build self-worth and begin a journey of *overcoming* to create new possibilities as responsible members of a larger community. We call it our “Cinderella Methodology”.



HEAL

Children build trust, safety, and stability as foundation for healing.

Children develop self-awareness and explore 'self'.

-----Bookwallah Services-----

Imagination Havens build safe, positive library spaces-reimagined.

Story Sessions deliver stories of hope, self-love, self acceptance & self awareness.

Story Sparkler Sessions reinforce messages found in the storybooks with arts & crafts, movies, skits, field trips.

----Expected Outcomes----

Hope improves from low to moderate. Caregivers' insights assess child's growth. Academic correlation is measured.



EMPOWER

Children cultivate positive self-worth, connect with others, gain confidence.

Children demonstrate pro-social conduct and behavior.

-----Bookwallah Services-----

Story Sessions deliver stories of empathy and interaction.

Story Sparkler Sessions reinforce messages with activities.

Buddy Program intervene with efforts with local role models.

Library Monitor management skills.

***English Literacy** via *Partnerships*.

----Expected Outcomes----

Hope stabilizes at moderate. Self Perception scores improve. Qualitative validation. Academic correlation to Hope is more defined.



TRANSFORM

Children demonstrate empathy and healthy coping mechanisms to navigate diversity.

Children engage with abstract values facilitating social integration.

-----Bookwallah Services-----

Story Sessions deliver stories that foster abstract thinking.

Library Intern develop leadership skills with hands-on experience.

College Tours with BW team.

***Social Readiness** via *Partnerships* to broaden horizon – with other NGOs, colleges, companies.

----Expected Outcomes----

Hope score is high. Self-esteem score is moderate-high. Higher Hope scores = Higher academic outcomes.



FLOURISH

Children are socially integrated and assimilated in society so they can live a life they choose with pride and self-worth.

-----Bookwallah Services-----

Bookwallah Ambassadors

Children inspire others with their story.

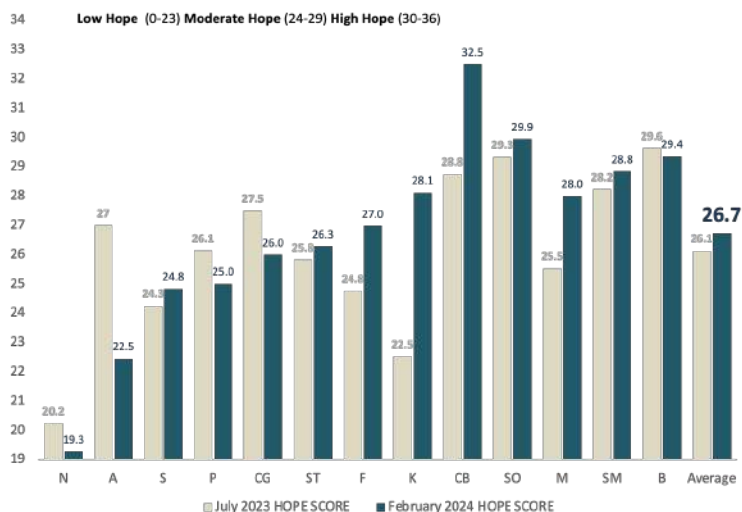
Bookwallah Alumni Network

Alumni network provides ongoing professional support and opportunities to inspire others.

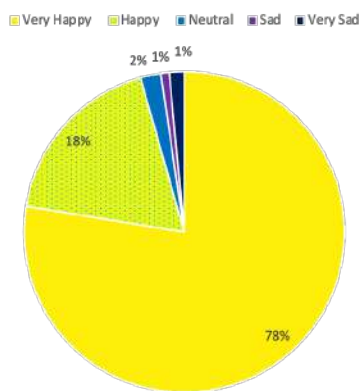


RESEARCH FINDINGS-BUILDING HOPE

This past year, Bookwallah has made significant strides in measuring the hope and resilience of children, critical indicators of their future success. Our unique Hope Score initiative based on IRB approved Children's Hope Scale measured select children in 13 of our locations. A notable 3% increase in Hope among children we serve (same sample group), with gains observed in girls and in specific areas like Pune, India. We collected over 400 Hope Scores with 258 of the same children measured in July 2023 & February 2024. This progress is a testament to the dedication of our Research Team, including 1.5 Psychology Staff and 27 psychology volunteers, who have diligently collected the data. Next steps - providing the appropriate stories & activities based on scale.



96% of responses from our children indicated substantial happiness after a session. More frequent moments with new memories aid in their healing journey. With additional support we can do more, enabling every child to reach their highest potential for a significant effect on their lives and the wider global community. A comprehensive research report is due in May 2024.



Research Results

+3%

Improved Hope Scores

Happiness

96%

Responses Happy after Sessions



Photo: East Meets West Library- School for the Deaf





CELEBRATING SUCCESS: OUR CHICAGO GALA

After a pause that lasted two years, our eagerly anticipated gala fundraiser made a remarkable comeback in 2023. Hosted at the exclusive The Chicago Club, the gala “A Starry Night” Dream Launcher, marked a significant milestone for Bookwallah, raising an impressive **\$230,000**. These funds played a crucial role in sustaining our initiatives 2023-2024, enabling us to continue our mission of transforming lives through the power of stories.

The gala* was an exceptional gathering of global citizens. Their generosity and enthusiasm have been instrumental in propelling our cause forward. Our guests began the evening atop the terrace, indulging in cocktails and panoramic views of the city. The setting sun served as a backdrop to conversations that sparked connections and a collective commitment to making a difference. We were honored to have **Sid Bala, Chairman of Bookwallah**, welcome our esteemed guests, ensuring the evening was both meaningful and memorable. The event was masterfully emceed by **Samir Mayekar**, the former Deputy Mayor of Chicago and current Managing Director of the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at University of Chicago.

Thank you to the many sponsors including Ducknowl, Merrill Lynch, 1o8 Agency, MOTR GRAFX, Trillicent, National Louis University, Buckingham Advisors, URJA Communications, Stretching Goats, Whirli-Gig Brand Design, GI Stone, Kumar & Shaheen Thason, Sid & Jay Bala, Chetan & Karin Ghai, Anonymous, Rohit & Sunita Tendulkar, Deep & Nisha Patel, Biju Kulathakal.



BOOKWALLAH STORY- PARTNER ORPHANAGE

“Books are like friends who never clock out, always there for us and our children. Your clever design, from the comfy carpet to the easy-to-reach shelves, makes a cozy spot for little ones. The dreamy mural on the walls sparks their imaginations, helping them dream big – whether it's becoming an engineer, doctor, or farmer.

Your design isn't just about space; it's a canvas for a child's imagination. The mural isn't just pretty; it's a roadmap of dreams, inspiring the next generation to aim high. This artistic touch isn't just for show; it adds a vibe that makes the whole space special. In your warm atmosphere, books become more than pages; they're gateways to adventure, knowledge, and self-discovery. Your design, simple and pro, turns reading into a journey where kids not only learn but also let their imaginations soar.

Plus, the mix of different books covers everything from fun stories that spark creativity to informative ones that broaden their understanding. Your design isn't just a spot; it's a boost for kids' brains and emotions. It's where a simple setup meets the amazing potential of a child, making a place where dreams grow and learning never stops.”- *Mamta Tai*



Testimonial by MAMTA TAI, CEO of SANMATI BAL NIKETAN IN PUNE, INDIA.
Daughter of deceased Sindhutai Sapkal, Mother of Orphans



OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM – 95% OF OUR FORCE

In 2023, Bookwallah and our passionate supporters kindled a wave of inspiration with 157 individuals from local communities dedicating their time to our heartfelt cause. Many of them offer a year or more of their time, including some who've been with us for a breathtaking 11 years. These volunteers aren't just part of our team; they are the very heartbeat of our mission. As a result of their investment, we can guide crucial resources – cash- with precision and care to where they are needed most.

It's a journey of heart and soul to connect with individuals who share our fervent desire to make a real difference, especially in the face of challenges in developing regions. Yet, witnessing the younger generation stepping forward, eager to transform children's lives and shatter social barriers, fills us with hope and pride.

Each year, we listen to our volunteers, whose feedback radiates with positivity, revealing an impressive **77% Net Promoter Score and an 81% retention rate**. These numbers speak volumes, but it's the deep, enduring connections and shared dreams that truly reflect the spirit of our Bookwallah family.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize our high performing volunteers. Volunteers who represent and “EVOCH” the values our organization. “EVOCH” stands for Empowerment, Value Creation, Optimism, Creativity & Imagination, and Happiness.

EVOCH WINNERS JANUARY 2023: Akshita Parmar, Yogita Chauhan, Alfiya Khan, Shruti Suvarna, Para Raturi, Shama Suryavanshi, Sakshi Manglik, Tejaswini Bhavsar, Rupal Rai Rathi, Nagarjun V, Anisha Micheal Sequeira, Navya Mathod, Nandita US, Bhuvitha S, Anu Arun, Shalaka Bangad, Brunda MM, Samata Revanna, Aishani Ghosh, Shatakshi Sharma

EVOCH WINNERS OCTOBER 2023: Aarathi Ajaykumar, Anuskha Rasal, Leena Thomas, Ammara Habib, Varun Singh, Tejal Lalwale, Manoti Agarwal, Aanavi Neupane, Shrutika Gadekar, Sumeet Ahuja, Nanditha U S, Bhuvitha S, Hannah Johnson, Navya Mathod, Ravi Chandra, Purva Choudhary, Khushi Jain, Amogh Vignesh, Yashaswini Sriram, Drishti Dubey

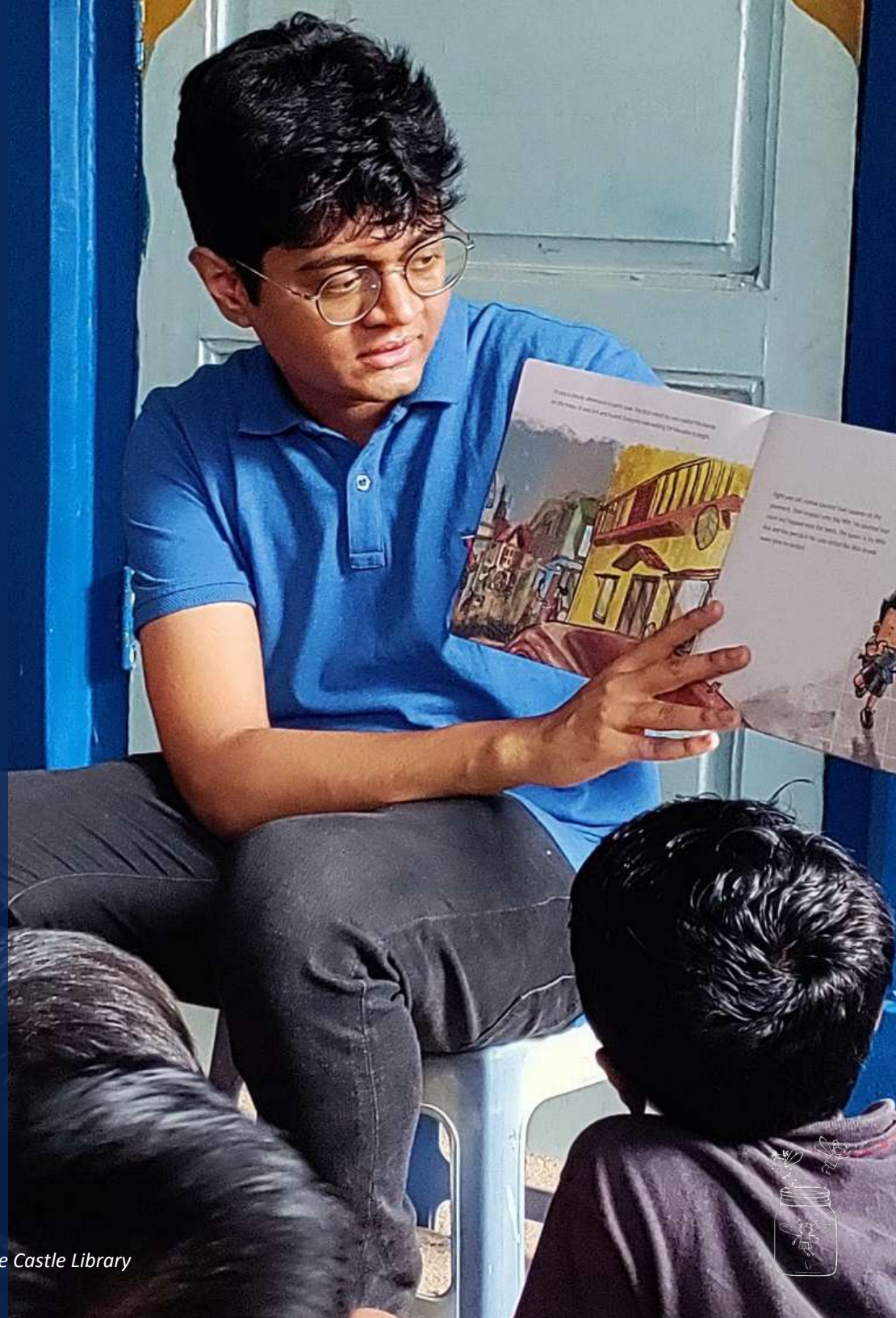
*Net Promoter Score measures customer experience based on the question of how likely are you to recommend Bookwallah to family or friends 77% is industry excellence



BOOKWALLAH STORY- STORYTELLING VOLUNTEER

"Since joining Bookwallah in June 2022 as a volunteer, I've encountered countless moments that have moved and inspired me. A particularly poignant memory was during Christmas 2022. We distributed gifts. Among the items, a football jersey meant for one of the boys caught my attention. Despite the small size obviously being too snug for him, one boy insisted it was what he wanted. It was only upon further inquiry we understood his intention: to gift it to his younger brother, also a resident at the orphanage. This gesture of selflessness deeply touched me.

My weekly contributions are fueled by the aim to brighten the futures of these young souls. Yet, in their simple acts of kindness and the clear dedication of Bookwallah's staff, I find myself on a reciprocal journey of learning and inspiration, driven by a shared purpose."- Varun Singh



Testimonial: Varun Singh, C.A., Manager in Finance, Reliance Corp. @ Kings of the Castle Library

FROM VOLUNTEERS TO STAFF LEADERS: A JOURNEY OF PASSION

Seena Jacob Founder – FTE Chicago, U S A (not pictured ere)

CENTRALIZED OPERATIONS OUT OF MUMBAI

As of June 2023

Priyanka Roy Outreach/Partnership & Programs– FTE Mumbai, India

Vaishali Ravaria Program Manager, Mumbai- FTE, Mumbai, India

Sharen Achangadan Program Design & Development Manager- FTE Mumbai, India

Omkar Sawant R&D Coordinator- FTE Mumbai, India

Melvin Philip Outreach Associate- FTE Mumbai, India

Simi Shibu R&D Manager (Psychology)– PTE Mumbai, India

Deena Shibu HR Coordinator– PTE Mumbai, India

Rashmi Parab Marketing Coordinator- PTE Mumbai, India

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM PRESIDENTS

June 2023- June 2024*

Kunal Pawar President – PTE Pune, India

Nagarjun V Vice President- PTE Pune, India

Mrinalini Manda President– PTE Bengaluru, India

Anne Anjali President – PTE , Mangalore India

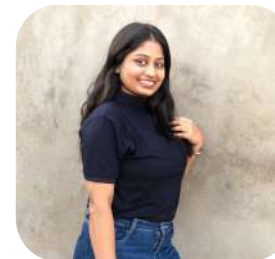
INTERNS

June 2023- June 2024*

Nikunj Tarneja HR Intern -PTE Pune, India

Anjali Nair R&D Intern- PTE Mumbai, India

Amaan Ojha Finance Intern - PTE Mumbai, India



OUR BOARD- OUR ROCK

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

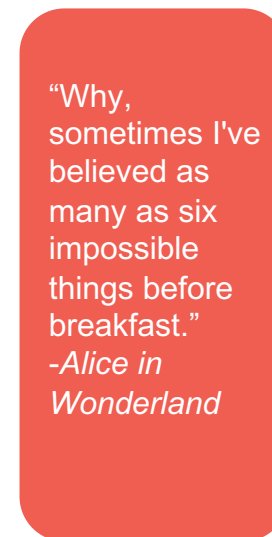
Aalap Shah Founder, 1o8
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 Ranjeet Nambiar Co-Founder, URJA Communications; Founding Board Member
 Seena Jacob- Founder, Bookwallah
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 Chander Kanagaraju, Real Estate Exit Strategy Reality (not seen here)



SUPPORTER STRUCTURE

We are so grateful. Since the very beginning we have been committed to a 100% donation model. Please reach out if you could help support the organization in the following ways or make a donation on www.bookwallah.org. Thank you!

The Lotus

The Lotus is a group of private donors who fund (cash, stock) for staff & other major infrastructure costs allowing us to keep the public 100% model.

Once Upon a Time

The Once Upon a Time group is for donors who love to raise funds through crowdfunding, parties, running, climbing, lemonade stands- adventures for a purpose.

The Round Table

The Round Table is inspired by King Arthur's legend and consists of monthly supporters -both donors and volunteers.

The Nightingale

The Nightingale is our "planned giving" program where you can leave a legacy that continues to inspire.

FINANCIALS 2023 Year ending December 31, 2023

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Cash Donations	\$336,879
In Kind Donations	\$198,234
Total Revenue	\$535,113



EXPENSES

Program Services Expenses

Donated Volunteer Service Hours (Community involvement)	\$181,317	
Program Supplies, Construction, Activities, Books	\$46,040	
Donated Gifts in Kind (Travel, Warehouse for Books, Office)	\$10,917	
Administrative Expenses	\$4,324	
Travel and Meeting Costs	\$3,898	
Program Personnel Expenses	\$143,649	
Professional Fees and Bookwallah Publishing	\$1,076	
Information Technology	\$7,053	
Total Program Services	\$398,274	(80%)
Total Management and General	\$12,796	(3%)
Total Fundraising and Marketing	\$87,780	(17%)
Total Expense	\$498,850	(100%)

Note: Private donors including Board (BW Lotus Club members) covered 100% of U.S. Personnel

BOOKWALLAH STORY- HEAR FROM OUR DONOR

"I had the opportunity to hear Seena Jacob, the founder, speak at a conference in California. At that time, I was searching for a meaningful way to contribute to a cause, and Seena's dedication to her mission truly resonated with me.

Often, nonprofits can appear more business-like, focusing on metrics and saying the right things without a deep, personal commitment. However, Seena's close involvement and genuine passion set her apart.

Unlike many organizations that primarily focus on numerical achievements, Bookwallah stood out by emphasizing the real, meaningful impact of their work, beyond just the numbers.

This included their commitment to ensuring their efforts were genuinely effective, incorporating positive psychological analysis - seeing if the programs were working and incrementally improving with resources.

It was this holistic approach to making a real difference that was profoundly significant to me and it is why my family and I continue to support Bookwallah to this day." – Deep & Nisha Patel & Family



GROWING UP WITH BOOKWALLAH – THANK YOU!



“RAJ”, age 14, HIGH HOPE SCORE of 34

“RAJ” has been a part of our organization, Bookwallah, for 5 years. Growing up in an abusive environment, he witnessed his mother's resilience as she fought for herself and provided a new life for him and his brother. When we first encountered “RAJ” in 2019, he displayed signs of distrust and primarily interacted only with his close friend.

Transformation has been tremendous. “I look forward to each Sunday because that means meeting the volunteers, they have made this space more fun and safer for us to be ourselves and for that: I forever would be grateful to Bookwallah.”

Today, because of his high hope score, we believe he has a strong social-emotional foundation for continued success. He has been given leadership responsibilities as a library monitor and will be promoted “intern”. We will be on a lookout for future collaborations with corporations/NGOs to encourage his growth.



“REKHA”, age 10, HIGH HOPE SCORE of 32

“REKHA”, at the age of 10, has been a part of Bookwallah (BW) for 7 years. Hailing from a poor socio-economic background, “REKHA” is the only child of parents who are both deaf; her father earns a living as a carpenter while her mother manages the household.

Despite the challenges she faces, “REKHA” has shown remarkable growth during her time with BW. She exudes confidence and determination, eagerly participating in and engaging with all activities. Her love for reading and drawing shines through, and visiting the library brings her genuine happiness.

“I love Bookwallah because they always come up with new activities that are fun and help me learn new things in my life.”

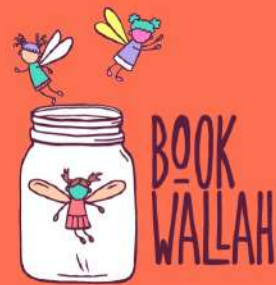


“BARB”, age 11, HIGH HOPE SCORE of 30

Thanks to Bookwallah sessions, “BARB” has actively participated in various activities and faithfully attended Sunday storytelling sessions, which have notably improved her English communication skills. Despite her HIV positive status, Bookwallah has provided her with a supportive environment that helped her overcome feelings of inferiority and the sense of limited potential normally associated with her condition.

Through the encouragement and opportunities offered by Bookwallah, “BARB” has gained confidence and a renewed sense of purpose, empowering her to strive for more in life despite the challenges she faces.

“BARB” wants to be a dancer.



BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
DESERVES A
CHANCE IN LIFE



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