LIBRARY IDEAS

During COVID-19

Here are some of the creative ideas and experiences
of groups and individuals who have
continued to keep library work
central in this uncertain time.

The library can be reimagined in simple ways.

Peruse this list to be inspired by our community!

INTERACTIONS

At the heart of library work are our interactions with everyone who uses the library.
Here are some ways that have worked:

CfL (*Bangalore*) have been using 1:1 phone calls with children & readers to talk about books they have been reading, make suggestions, and also to simply be in touch and affirm that despite the absence of a physical meeting, the library is in touch with the children.

Sharon School (*Mumbai*) has been using a Youtube channel to share stories with children at regular intervals, and cross-sharing children's responses to the story on the channel as a way to encourage interaction.

Vikramshila (*Kolkata*) is also using phone calls and small groups over WhatsApp calls to stay in touch with children & parents and also disseminate reliable COVID information.

Sajag (*Maharashtra*) is staying in touch with parents through phone calls encouraging parents to ensure that children are receiving the story hour and other material being shared.

Buguri (*Bangalore*) turned inwards and ramped up team meetings, knowledge sharing and skill-building of the working team to prepare for the time ahead.

Bookworm (*Goa*) launched a podcast series, *Live From Lockdown Library* to interact with organisation leads and individuals who inspire library work.

Prayog (*Bihar*) initiated story reading event for children of ages 10-15 years, where they shared stories from Arvind Gupta's website over WhatsApp.

Dakshin Foundation (*Andaman Islands*) moved into the community, strengthening interaction with parents and children on matters of emotional and mental health, to strengthen interactions with the library team.

Mumbai Mobile Creches through its digital learning initiative *"Shiksha Ghar se Ghar tak"* ensured all children continue to get adequate stimulation across all domains of development where parents play the role of primary care-givers & educators. The StoryWeaver platform was used to share stories with children.

Government Upper Primary School (*Chhindwara block in Madhya Pradesh*) has reached out to communities who were beyond the radius of 2 km and could not come to school. Teachers and librarians gave library books which were rotated in one week.

COLLECTION

Finding ways to take the library collection to children has resulted in diverse ideas. We present some here:

Buguri Library (*Bangalore*) hosted "*The Buguri Podcast*" in English, Kannada, Tamil & Bengali on a community radio channel to share stories with children.

Dakshin Foundation (*Andaman Islands*) has two library workers who carry a bag of books and go door to door sharing the collection with families.

Bookworm (*Goa*) offers home delivery of books from the main library, has provided bags of books at home level in one village, and boxes in 'senior' children's homes for neighbourhood sharing.

Sajag (*Maharashtra*) are also providing books with ration directly to children through a parent collection service.

The Somaiya School (*Mumbai*) are providing online access to collection from sites like Tumble Books Library, International Children's DIgital Library, Storyweaver, NBT, Storyline Online and other sites.

Apni Shala (*Mumbai*) is looking at creating options for resources to be shared with families and children.

Burguri (*Bangalore*) are also providing Lockdown Book Kits to children so that material and books are directly accessible.

CfL (*Bangalore*) are asking children to review their own collections in their homes since that is possible, read aloud to an older or younger family member, discuss the book with someone in the home and such.

Prayog (*Bihar*) kept the collection of books at a community member's house. The issue and return of books are maintained by the children of that community.

Government Upper Primary School in Chhindwara block (*Madhya Pradesh*) continued the reach of books to children through their school library. For children who were not able to come on Mondays to take books for the week as was usual, the librarian took the books to the communities and did book talks to encourage children to read the book.
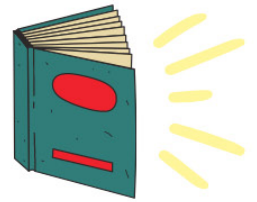
Mumbai Mobile Creches created age-appropriate videos & audios of activities with resources easily available at home, and also used online portals like Pratham and Storyweaver for material and content available to everyone to connect and introduce parents to the world of storytelling and early literacy.

ACTIVITIES

A positive library space has room and scope for engagement. Some activities in this direction are here:

Shatsa (*Ladakh*) have weekly Guided Drawing sessions where a story is read aloud and children visualize and draw. They have also introduced Telling Tales, where Tibetan elders in refuge share stories with younger community members.

Sajag (*Maharashtra*) asked children and families to dramatise their lives following the lockdown and share videos back. Many of these included song and dance and brought home stories alive.

Reading Stars (*Bangalore*) began an online library program with a story, link to a video read aloud and questions and prompts for thinking connected to the children's lives.

Vikramshila (*Kolkata*) asks children to share drawings and pieces of writing after they listen to stories over community radio.

Sharon School (*Mumbai*) uses options available on a platform, like polls and chatboxes to ensure that children can participate in the online library activities offered.

Sharon School (*Mumbai*) and **Bookworm** (*Goa*) are doing virtual storytimes over Youtube.

CfL (*Bangalore*) has suggested various activities from home collections, including book recommendations, organising one's collection, pairing fiction and non-fiction books from one's bookshelf , repair & maintenance of books, writing reviews, making a poster or an advertisement to promote a book and also arranging mini displays.

Apni Shala (*Mumbai*) used the online space to bring adults together to talk about books and book-related activities, and also has sessions for children where post-story activities are hot-seating, interacting with authors and illustrators from the known network and observation and art activities based on books.

The Somaiya School (*Mumbai*) sends activities through internet services in the form of crosswords, recipes to follow, word searches based on stories, and also uses story applications like Quizziz and Quizlet to generate responses to books.

Prayog (*Bihar*) designed worksheets on books for children to express their thoughts by drawing or writing after reading the book. Children write their responses on the sheet and share when they come to return the book.

Government Upper Primary School in Chhindwara block (*Madhya Pradesh*) made sure to practise that when children come to return the book and borrow another set, they share their response on the book. The sharing on books read was initiated by children and it motivated many other children to browse and borrow the books.

Mumbai Mobile Creches asks children to draw pictures based on the stories heard/read. They also make the reading engaging by adding different games and songs with the story.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

While this element will have overlap with interaction, we wish to reaffirm practices that recognised the process of re-adjustment this pandemic compelled within us. Some ideas to continue are here:

Bookworm (*Goa*) had story-related games every Saturday for the lockdown period for its team members resulting in laughter, fun and reconnection with the collection.

Bookworm (*Goa*) produced a Torchlight Issue on the Lockdown to knit diverse ideas together.

Buguri (*Bangalore*) had workshops and increased meetings for the working team to knit and share knowledge and information together. They also ensured that children have psychological support in this time.

Reading Stars (*Bangalore*) duo took time to assess the situation in April and stayed in touch with teachers to see how things pan out.

Apni Shala (*Mumbai*) reached out to other library and reading practitioners for online gatherings.

Shatsa (*Ladakh*) used WhatsApp conversations with parents and community members to understand how to recreate the joy of interaction that children are missing out with schools closed.

Prayog (*Bihar*) has set up community meetings in one village of Bihar where mothers from the community voiced the need of books and library in the community. One person from the community has given the space to start the community library to reach out to children.

Sajag (*Maharashtra*) did capacity building of teachers through Read Aloud workshops by alumni of the LEC and Azim Premji University.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Schedules, time tables, lists, check lists , budgets, registers are all part of library work. During the pandemic some matters have been addressed differently. Here is how:

The Somaiya School and **Sharon School** (*Mumbai*) ensured that library periods remain on the school online time table.

Bookworm (*Goa*) faciliated work from home for those who were concerned about health and contamination. Also a survey of community access to e-resources and an infographic on the summer slide was developed and shared.

Buguri (*Bangalore*) worked on keeping data light for quick and easy sharing within the community. A database of contact information as well as access to devices was also undertaken.

Apni Shala (*Mumbai*) realigned goals and plans in light of budgetary concerns that the pandemic has provoked.

Dakshin Foundation (*Andaman islands*) team have committed to realign their presence in the community to ease the burden on other resource staff and equitably share resources.

Sharon School (*Mumbai*) absorbed the non return of books that are still pending with the abrupt closure of schools.

Government Upper Primary School in **Chhindwara block (Madhya Pradesh)**, due to lockdown the reach of books has not stopped as children took the responsibility to open the library once in a week to access the books.

VALUES

Throughout the larger community of library work, the Constitutional Values of equity, social justice, and equality have been affirmed.
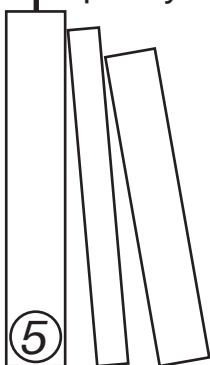
The Somaiya School (*Mumbai*) shares a list of open access free online resources that can be used by all.

Sajag (*Maharashtra*) ensures that disadvantaged communities continue to receive daily ration and mental joy through stories.

Buguri (*Bangalore*) provided access to books, emotional and creative support to many vulnerable communities.

Apni Shala (*Mumbai*) reached out to community irrespective of the ability to pay despite their own budgetary concerns.

Keeping costs low, ensuring inclusion and affordability, being sensitive to diverse needs and situations, and ensuring equity are the hallmarks of contributors here in particular; and to the spirit of library community in general. We are so proud to be with you.

INDEX OF ORGANIZATIONS

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