

A Storytelling Revolution

Over 5700 Reading Volunteers join Pratham Books to celebrate International Literacy Day across India.

Every year, around International Literacy Day, Pratham Books conducts its '[One Day, One Story](#)' campaign. The campaign is a nationwide volunteer-driven effort that aims to spread the joy of reading through storytelling. Storytelling is a powerful and attractive tool to spread the love of books and reading. The campaign provides individuals and organizations an opportunity to connect with children in their own cities, towns and villages and share a story in their native language.

The campaign is in its sixth year and over 5700 Pratham Books' Champions (#PBChamps) will be conducting more than 6300 storytelling sessions. This year's event is taking place on **9th September, 2017**. Sessions are scheduled across India and also in 13 other countries. These interactive storytelling sessions are conducted free of cost and thousands of children are introduced to the pleasure of joyful reading. From sessions in government schools located in a tribal belt of Rajasthan to sessions in a city apartment, from skype sessions to sessions done through tablets - the sessions are going to be accessible to a diverse set of children!

The storybook chosen for this year is '[Kottavi Raja and his Sleepy Kingdom](#)', written by Yyaswini Sampathkumar and illustrated by Henu Mehtani. This is the story of a king who has trouble sleeping at night, but is sleepy throughout the day. "While the story is available in 5 languages, our sparkling community has translated the story in [13 new languages](#) on StoryWeaver and the story is being told in around 26 languages. These translations include Indian languages like Surjapuri, Sanskrit, Konkani, Kumaoni, Urdu and international ones like Bahasa Indonesia and French. Every version added helps the story travel further and be read and enjoyed by many more children.", says Himanshu Giri, CEO, Pratham Books.

Yyaswini Sampathkumar, the author, is ecstatic, almost incredulous, about how many people have signed up to be volunteers. "I'm really, really, really thrilled that a story I wrote in a moment of frustration with my son's sleeping habits has been translated into so many regional languages," she adds. September 9 is special to her on two counts: the fact that her story will be told and retold across the country and beyond its borders, and because her son turns three. Her family is planning to celebrate the occasion with children in IIT Guwahati, where she lives, with stories -- including Kottavi Raja... -- in several languages.

Says Lopamudra Mohanty, a volunteer, "A Revolution always needs a strong, positive movement towards a common objective. That's where Pratham Books is creating a difference. I

could have never missed out on this opportunity to be a part of this beautiful movement of shaping the imaginative and creative minds of young children. Stories are powerful. Lets use them in the correct manner and make a difference and create a Reading Revolution.”

The simplicity and flexibility of the campaign is what makes it attractive to volunteers. How does it work? Choose the time and venue, find the kids you want to share the story with and spin your own version of the tale! This year, technology is also playing a big role in bringing the story to children. From the book being available for reading and download on StoryWeaver to audio versions recorded by Radio Mirchi, from partner organizations using tablets, projectors and mobile phones to listening to the story for free by giving a missed call to 08033094244.

The campaign which was launched 6 years ago has grown from 250+ to 5700+ volunteers and has also been featured in the Limca Book of Records for hosting the largest number of volunteer driven reading sessions on a single day. “For many of our reading volunteers, this event has been a starting point of their engagement and interaction with children. This one day has catapulted into a continuous sustained reading program or other ways of volunteering in many cases. This annual celebration of reading has transformed into a reading movement that connects volunteers to the children who have less or no access to books or storytelling,” says Maya Hemant Krishna, Senior Community and Outreach Manager, Pratham Books.

For more details on this initiative please visit: <http://bit.ly/pbchamps2017>

Pratham Books (www.prathambooks.org) is a not-for-profit children’s book publisher in 2004 with the mission to see ‘a book in every child's hand’. Its key objective is to publish good quality, affordable storybooks in multiple languages to support reading acquisition among children.

Since inception, Pratham Books has published over 2400 books in 21 Indian languages. The books cover a range of genres including early readers, fiction, nonfiction, and storybooks on science, history, mathematics and nature. They have had the distinction of working with many of the country's renowned authors and illustrators and their books have won several awards as well.

StoryWeaver (www.storyweaver.org.in) takes the mission of ‘a book in every child’s hand’ further by openly licensing its storybooks for users to read, download or print. By embedding tools for content creation - to enable users to repurpose the content into more languages and versions, a multiplier effect has been created that is catalysing the creation and availability of more content for children.

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