

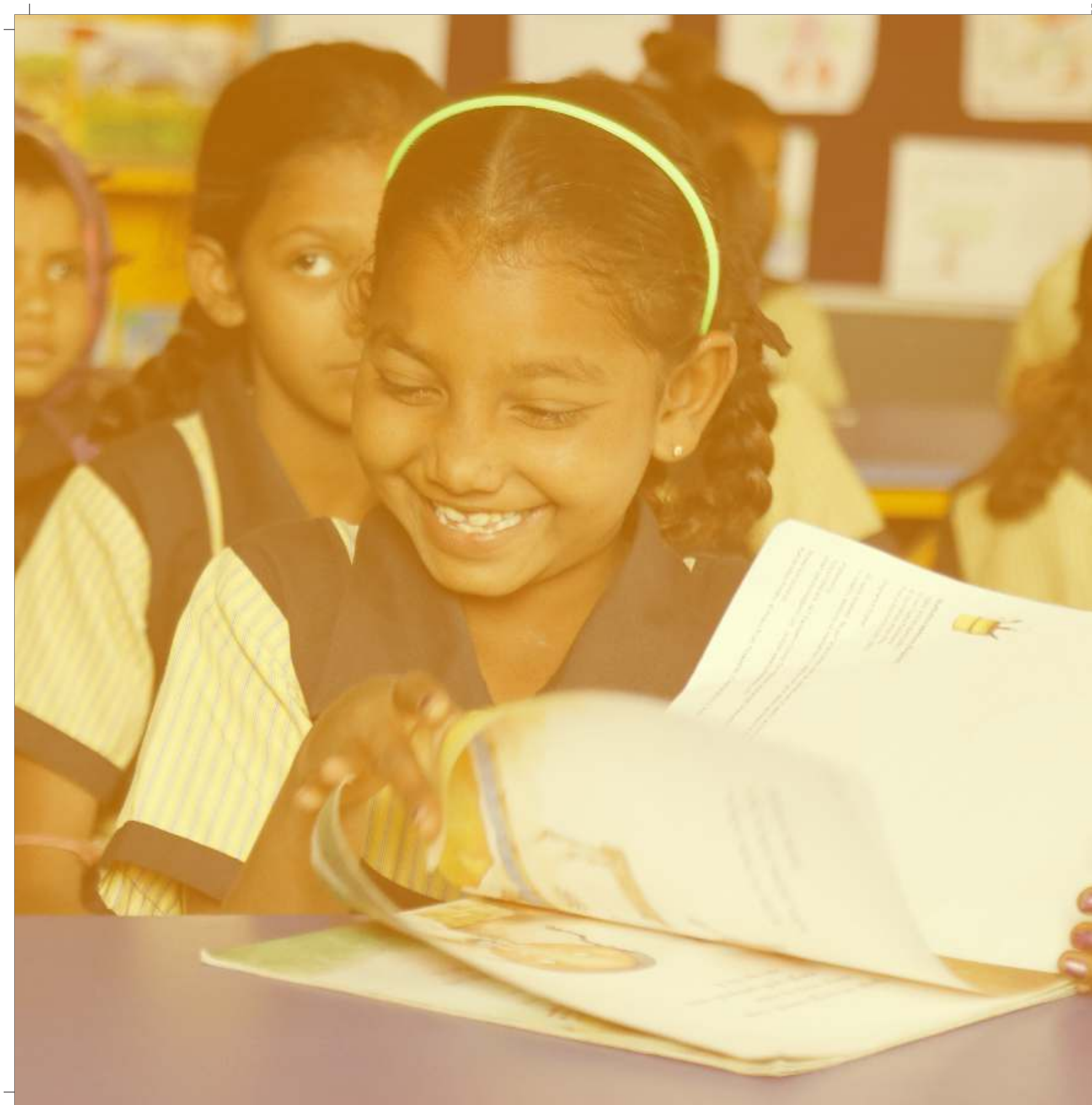


## THE GIFT OF READING

### Adani Foundation

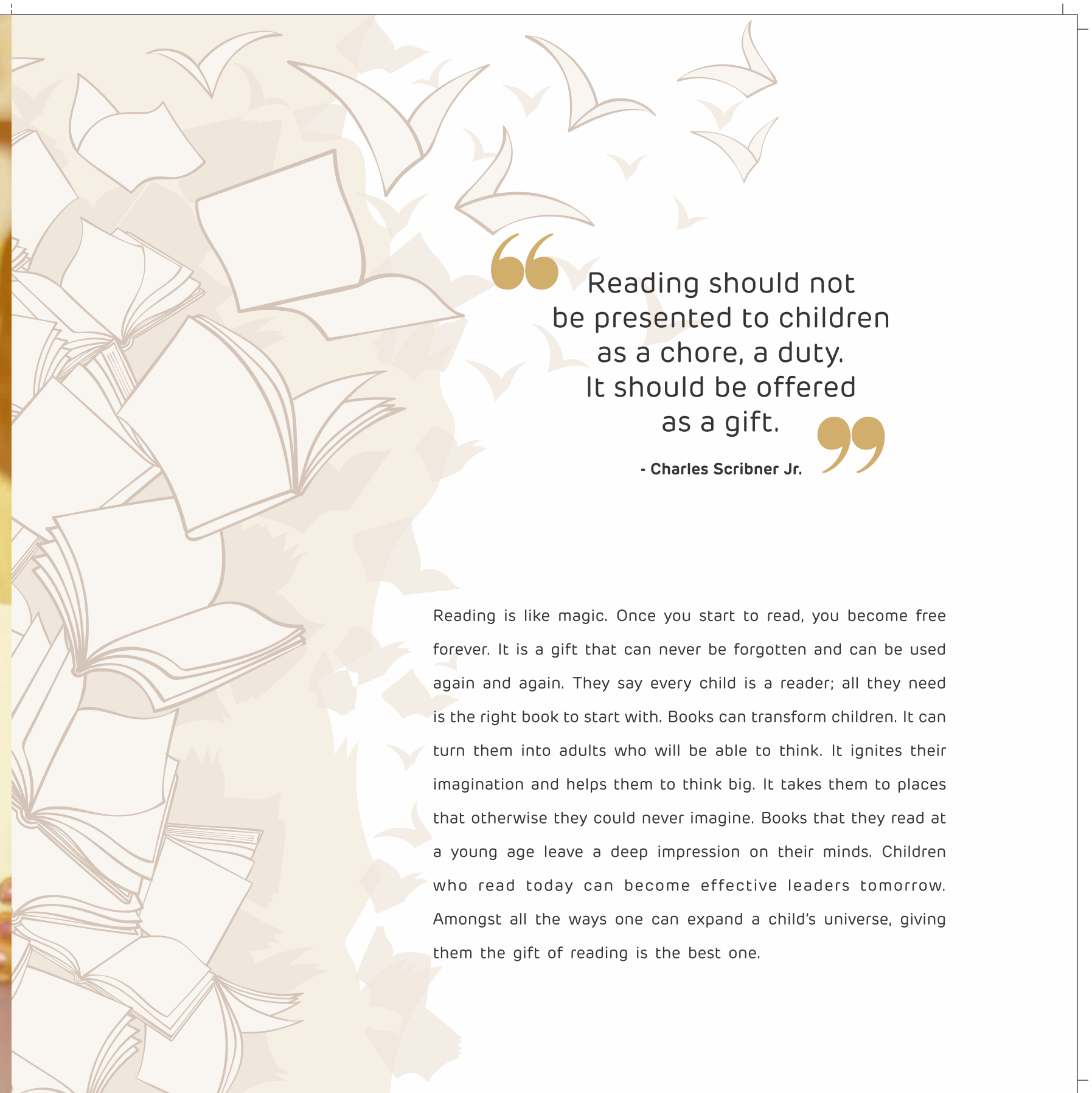
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“ Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift. ”  
- Charles Scribner Jr.

Reading is like magic. Once you start to read, you become free forever. It is a gift that can never be forgotten and can be used again and again. They say every child is a reader; all they need is the right book to start with. Books can transform children. It can turn them into adults who will be able to think. It ignites their imagination and helps them to think big. It takes them to places that otherwise they could never imagine. Books that they read at a young age leave a deep impression on their minds. Children who read today can become effective leaders tomorrow. Amongst all the ways one can expand a child's universe, giving them the gift of reading is the best one.





Dear Friends,

In 2017, Room to Read, Government of Gujarat and the Adani Foundation came together to improve the reading ability of children across 50 government primary schools of Gandhinagar, Gujarat, and inculcate among them a habit of reading. The project established print rich libraries in these schools, stocked them with a curated set of books and child friendly furniture, and trained up the teachers. In the three years of the intervention, more than two lakh books were distributed benefitting more than 15,000 children.

The 50 schools of Gandhinagar are today testimony to the importance of a library in enhancing reading abilities among children. Children in these schools not only read books during their library period and take books home, but also take active part in library management. Teachers in these schools have been able to make full utilization of the school library and through interesting read aloud and shared reading sessions, have created an interest in books among the children. There are several inspiring stories of success, of children who started to love their school once they were exposed to the magical world of books!

As the project comes to a close and Room to Read's coaching and monitoring support to the schools end, we hope that the school authorities, teachers and children will be able to not only sustain the library but further build on it.

With best wishes,

**Sourav Banerjee**  
Country Director,  
Room to Read, India



“Every student can learn.  
Just not on the same day  
or in the same way.”

– George Evans

This quote is very relevant as we switch gears from traditional teaching-learning methods to holistic and technology-driven ones. While it is not exactly possible to customize education for every single child, it is quite possible to customize a pedagogy that is not only accommodative but also appreciative of every child's individuality. In this regard, encouraging good habits, hobbies, sports and extra-curricular activities ensures that a child absorbs more than just the academic syllabus.

Adani Foundation's association with Room to Read aligns with its resolve to provide quality education to children belonging to the marginalized communities. Joining hands with this global organization to focus on literacy and gender equality in education has led many children to discover the joy of reading. Comprehensive efforts are being made to sustain this joy of reading over a period of time and convert it into a habit – shaping children into sharp, critical thinkers, armed with optimum literacy and a robust vocabulary. Many case studies indicate that this has augmented the students' academic performance and overall personality development.

We will continue to develop and promote educational models that help nourish more and more children in their formative years so that they are equipped to pave their way towards a bright future.

**Dr. Priti Adani**  
Chairperson  
Adani Foundation





## ROOM TO READ



Room to Read, founded in the year 2000, is a global organisation with the vision that **'World Change Starts With Educated Children'**. It seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in low-income communities by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Its innovative model focuses on deep, systemic transformation within schools during two time periods that are most critical in a child's schooling: early primary school for literacy acquisition and secondary school for girls' education. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, it develops literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children. It also supports girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.



## THE PROJECT

The government of Gujarat, Adani Foundation and Room to Read share a common vision of a world, where children can pursue quality education that enables them to reach their full potential and contribute to the community and the world.

Room to Read in collaboration with Adani Foundation under the able guidance of Gujarat Education Department has set up libraries in 50 government primary schools across four blocks of Gandhinagar district, Gujarat namely Gandhinagar, Mansa, Kalol and Dehgam.

The expected outputs of this project are:

- Increased access of students to quality reading materials
- Improved school environment that supports development of reading habits
- Enhanced capacity of teachers to encourage habit of reading
- Increased community and family awareness and support for reading

OCTOBER 15, 2017



MARCH 31, 2020



## COMBINING SCIENCE WITH MAGIC

This project combines the science of learning to read with the magic of loving to read. The libraries aim to develop 'reading habit' and 'love for reading' for all the children from grade 1-5 by establishing child-friendly libraries where children can read with comprehension. These libraries enable children to read and take part in reading activities in a welcoming, supportive and non-threatening environment where they can also Check-in and Check-out (CICO) books for reading at home.

Teachers and other education officials work together to ensure a designated time in the school time-table for a library period every week, termed as Time to Read. Additionally, family and community engagement activities are also conducted to support children's reading habits. Libraries are established in each school with selected story books conforming to various genres and various reading levels. Room to Read follows a colour coding of book levelling system denoted as GROWBY. Levelled books, for each stage of the continuum, allow children to progress from simple to complex texts with appropriate challenge. These levels are not based on ages or grades, but on a child's independent reading skill.

To improve children's engagement with library books, reading activities such as, Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Pair Reading and Independent Reading are conducted. Teachers are regularly supported by Room to Read team to conduct these activities. Capacity building of teachers is conducted on requisite library activities in the school/class-room library with students.



The school library in-charge is the catalyst for the library program. The in-charge is responsible for conducting library activities and for introducing the appropriate books to the children.

Room to Read maintains a robust system to monitor the program and support schools through trained library coaches. A cluster of libraries (15-20) is assigned to a Library Coach who visits each school of his/her cluster at least once in a month. During monthly visits, the Library Coach observes the library activities and provides relevant feedback to the school staff. The long-term objective of the program is to build ownership of the Libraries amongst teachers, government authorities and larger community.

The Children's book fund is an initiative now common in most library project schools. The fund receives a small donation from visitors, parents, teachers and children on occasions such as festivals and birthdays. These funds are then used to buy new books for the school library.



# KRISHNA - BORN TO READ



40 year old Vikrambhai hails from the sleepy little village of Nana Jhalundra in Gandhinagar district in the state of Gujarat. His life had revolved around farming and cattle rearing. But despite the meager resources, the family was adamant that all four of their daughters would be educated.

The third of four daughters to Nitaben and Vikrambhai Krishanbhai Rabari, 8-year-old Krishna loathed going to school. Each morning, Vikrambhai would have to drag an unwilling and sullen Krishna to the nearby government school. But everything changed when one day; Krishna came across books in her school library and fell in love with reading. Books in the school library were a revelation to Krishna. She was soon absorbed in the new perspective they provided. The library changed how Krishna perceived schooling and education. Krishna was hooked to the engaging stories and the mind blowing illustrations. Each week she would take home a couple of books from the library. She would then proceed to read them whenever she could. She would also read to her younger sister and to her parents.

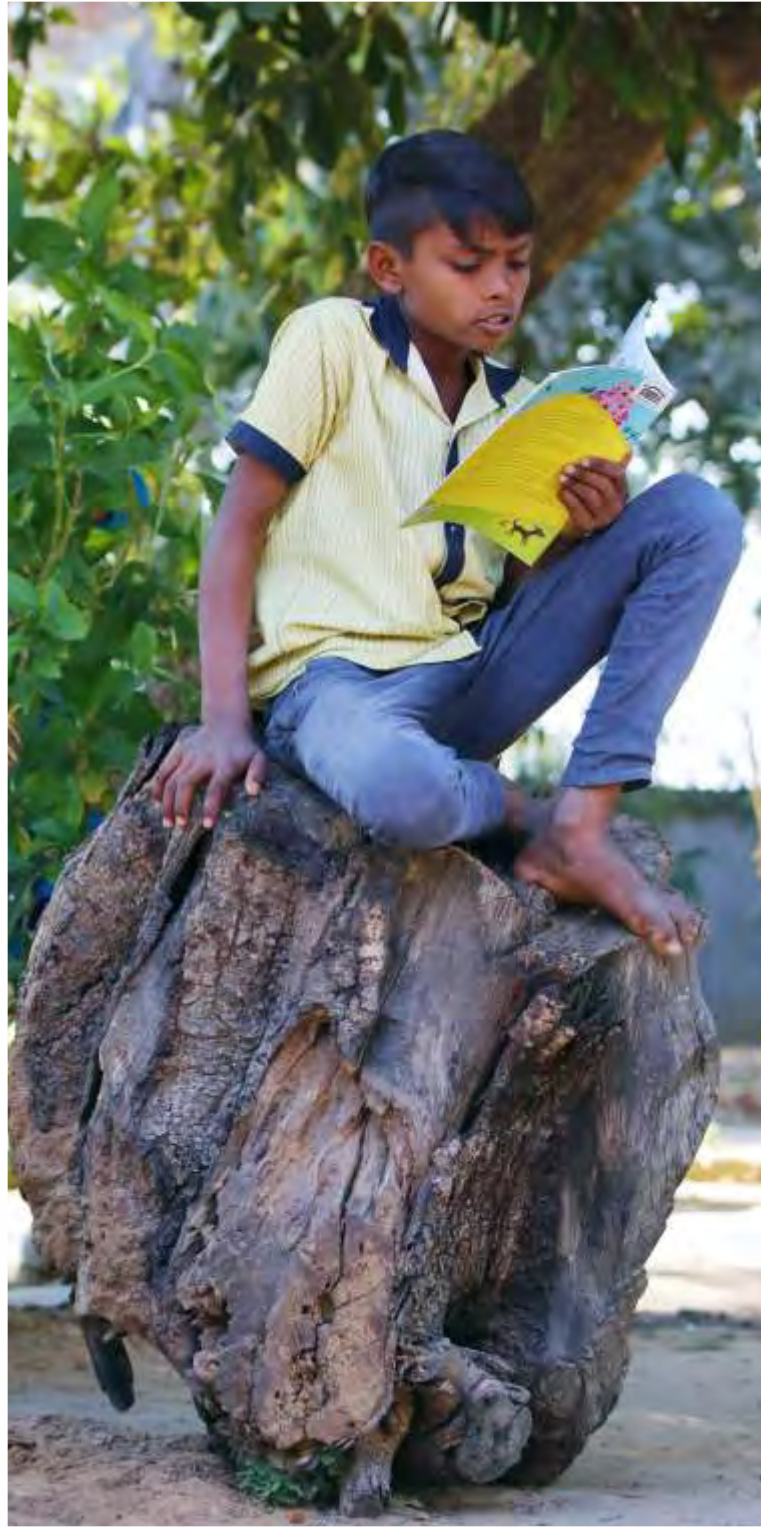
Participation in library activities like Reading Aloud (The teacher read the stories to the children), Shared Reading (the class would

read a book selected by the teacher), Paired Reading and Independent Reading changed how Krishna interacted with her surroundings.

Reading had become a part of Krishna's life and like any habit it too had its consequences. School was no longer a dreary place for Krishna and the routine of classroom lessons was interspersed with much enjoyed moment in the library. Her academic performance too improved. For the Rabari family the changes were beyond expectations and for Vikrambhai his hope rekindled. Krishna was now a cheerful & confident child, a good student and ready to take on the world.

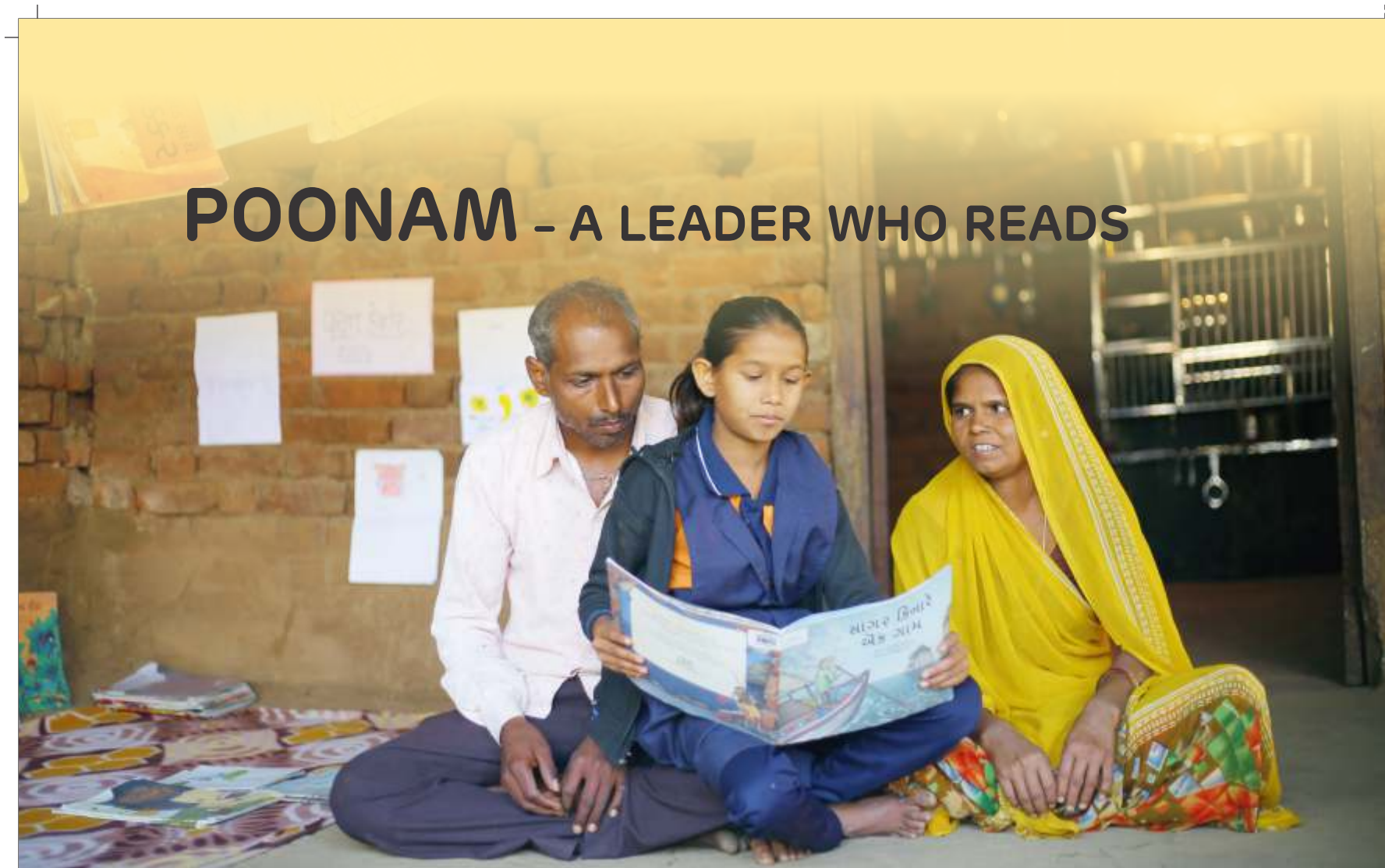
Books are Krishna's best friend and she can always be found with a book in her hand. Wherever she goes – school, home or even the family's farmlands- there's always a book for whenever she may want to read.

An active member of the Children's Library Management Committee (CLMC), Krishna is meticulous in arranging the books in the right order. The CLMC helps children develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. Members of the CLMC are responsible for noting down book check-in and check-out. They are also required to maintain a proper record of who borrows which book and when.





# POONAM - A LEADER WHO READS



Twelve year old Poonam knows little of life's luxuries, but the joy of reading is something that she holds dear. Today as she sits in the small library that she has created in a corner of her home, few would believe that she was unable to even read just a few years ago.

This was but one problem in Poonam's life. A slow learner, she struggled with the most basic tasks at school. To say that her family struggled financially

would be an understatement. A better life and access to a world outside her small hamlet was all but inconceivable for Poonam.

A resident of Pahadbamudwani village in Gandhinagar district, Poonam's father – 40-year-old Rajeshji Jesangji Chauhan is a daily wage labourer, while her mother 32-year-old Tejal Ben is a mother to three children – Kajal (14), Poonam (12) and Sagar (10). The family is sustained by a small

0.25 acre plot of farming land and 2 buffaloes which bring in about Rs. 70,000 annually. The family's financial resources, already stretched thin, were further strained when Rajeshji was bedridden with a kidney ailment. The family could not even afford to treat the breadwinner, let alone seek professional help for their daughter's education.

In this seemingly all-pervading gloom, the library program became a ray of hope for Poonam.

Poonam was a student in grade 4 when the library program was first introduced at the government run school in Poonam's village. Where other children took excitedly to perusing the books, Poonam was apprehensive to even approach them. Instead she would sit quietly in a corner, consoling herself in the company of her oblivious peers.

It was her teacher, the school library in-charge – Bhavna Kasalkar who came up with a solution. Poonam was handed a green level book. Green level books are books designed for beginner level readers under Room to Read's GROWBY levelling system where each letter signifies a colour of the rainbow and each successive colour represents an increase in the complexity of the letters, words and themes in the stories.

This became a fresh start for Poonam's quest for knowledge and to the surprise of everyone around her she took to reading. Soon she was devouring the books in the library. Better still was Poonam's performance in school. Once a slow learner, her grades climbed steadily as she progressed to successive levels in the GROWBY scheme.

But Poonam was not done. Borrowing books from the school library and getting her hands on anything that she could from the neighbourhood, she soon built her own library in a corner of her home. Here she would read to her heart's content. She would read aloud to the immense gratification of her parents who would eagerly listen to the stories and when possible join Poonam as she read the books. This was not lost on the children in the neighbourhood and soon Poonam would have an eager audience every evening. The slow learner had become a teacher!

Today Poonam's is one of best performing students in her grade. She is an active participant in the reading sessions that the school has institutionalised as a part of the daily assembly ritual. And while she is still conflicted about her future (she can't decide between becoming a teacher or a doctor), the path to bright future lies unfolded before her.



# NAVYA - READY TO BRING A CHANGE



30-year-old, Rekhaben studied up to grade seven before circumstances forced her to quit school. But even after 7 years of schooling she could hardly read a sentence. This has now changed. Rekhaben has slowly learnt how to read and even write a little and that's because she found a teacher and confidante in her daughter 8 year old daughter Navya. But Little Navya was not always so adept at teaching or for that matter her own studies.

Navya is one of two children to Rekhaben and Pankajbhai Kumar Chaturbhai (30), hereditary landless labourers who lived in a makeshift hut on farmland that they rented. Till just over a year ago, the couple would spend all their time growing cotton and wheat, apportion of which had to be handed over to the landlord in lieu of rent. The going was tough but they would manage to get by. All this changed when Rekhaben got electrocuted in a freak accident that left her unable to use her left hand. Pankajbhai soon found it difficult to work the land alone. Instead he chose to join a factory nearby where he now operates a machine that produces ball bearing for submersible pumps. Pankajbhai manages to bring home a monthly income of 10,000 which is just about enough for the family's daily expenses, in turn he now spends long hours away from home.

For the two children – Navya and her brother Naseeb (10), the drudgeries of life disappeared when they found engaged in the daily activities at the nearby school. Both children eagerly went to school – a task which involved a long walk through narrow lanes between fields that surrounded their home. It took about 15 minutes just to get to the nearest pukka road where a government subsidised auto-rickshaw would pick them up and ferry them to and from school.

Where Naseeb would rush into the school playground, Navya could always be found near the school library. There she would find books with engaging stories, attractive illustrations that would occupy her for hours. The best part – they were in the local language – Gujarati – a fact that made them accessible to her young mind.

Soon Navya emerged as one of the most prolific readers in her entire school, reading whenever and wherever she could. This habit also carried over to her home and Navya could always be seen carrying a book in her hand as she passed through the fields on her way home.

Today Navya's parents eagerly wait for her to bring new books from the school library. While Rekhaben is sure to never miss a new reading session with her daughter, Pankajbhai finds an escape as he proudly listens to his young daughter narrate tales familiar and exotic.



# TRISHUL - READING TOWARDS A CONFIDENT FUTURE



It was a long frantic search as teachers and students at the Government Primary School in Ajol looked for 10-year-old Trishul. Over the past few weeks, Trishul, a student in grade 4 was often missed by his peers as they played together in the school recess. But that day, worried by his apparent disappearance, they went through every nook and corner of the school. No one thought of looking in the library. However, Trishul having lately taken to reading, was oblivious to the heartburn that he had caused. He was engrossed in yet another book in the school library.

Trishul wants to become a police officer, while some may dismiss this as just another fancy of a young mid, the earnestness in his eyes speak at least of a hope to rise above his means. And books – education rather – form the only path that lies before him.

Trishul's father Kanuji Jituji Rathore (40) worked as a security guard in Gandhinagar district before he decided to quit and move to his village. He is a resident of Ajol Village in Gandhinagar district. But the family has no land and no home. Kanuji and his wife Anitaben are landless labourers who live in small hut in the middle of farmland that they have rented. Here Kanuji and Anitaben grow cotton, wheat and

tobacco, a share of which they give to the landlord. It is here that Trishul, in the company of his two sisters, dreams of something better.

Trishul was not always a voracious reader. But the day he participated in the reading sessions in the newly established library, his life changed. In books, he found not just escape but also engagement with ideas old and new. He would read stories familiar and tales from cultures and lands that he had never known. Added to this were activities that for Trishul became tools for bettering himself. Participation in story telling sessions brought to him a new confidence and a belief in his own abilities.

He wouldn't keep this treasure to himself. Each evening he would read to whoever he could - his mother soon began learning to read herself, his father found a ready source of entertainment, his grandfather loved the illustrations and Trishul's sisters become his favourite audience. He's always been a decent student, regular at school and boisterous as any 10 year old boy. But Trishul has changed, everyone around testify this. Ask him and he'll happily say that he has and is still growing.



**12,278**  
Children directly benefitted

**37,500**  
Library books provided

**1,99,380**  
books checked-out to homes

**11.8**  
average books checked-out per child

**261**  
Teachers and headmasters trained in library activities and management