

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

“Turning Pages”

Lead Read Quarterly Bulletin



Volume 1 | March-May 2025

1

Slums

2

Schools

1

Library

350

Children

400+

Books

200+

Girls

About Lead Read Foundation

Lead Read Foundation is a non-profit organization registered under section 8 of companies act 2013; dedicated to empowering children and youth from marginalized communities through literacy, cognitive skill development, and access to quality educational resources. We create inclusive reading spaces that foster a love for books, enhance comprehension, and promote creative expression. By using books as catalysts, we aim to build agency, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills, enabling individuals to break free from socio-economic barriers. Our mission is to nurture curious, informed, and empowered individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society, driving sustainable social change through education and knowledge accessibility.

Report Prepared by: Shrishail Birajdar

Birth of in-house office

I started Lead Read Foundation's in-house office space at my home to officially initiate our journey. This dedicated space allows us to streamline our work, host visitors, and collaborate effectively. It also enhances our accessibility and establishes authenticity, giving donors and partners confidence in our presence. The office serves as a foundation for planning, coordination, and growing our impact, ensuring we have a consistent and reliable space to drive our mission forward.



Registration Journey

We began the registration process for Lead Read Foundation in January 2025. Initially, we first attempted to register under the name Reader's Sanctuary, which perfectly reflected our vision of creating reading spaces in slum communities. However, due to an existing trademark on the word 'Sanctuary', we were unable to secure the name. Despite trying multiple synonyms and new name combinations, none were available.

Finally, we landed on the name Lead Read Foundation, which resonated deeply with our mission of using books as catalysts to promote literacy, cognitive skills, and lifelong learning. The name encapsulates the essence of our work leading children towards reading and empowering them through knowledge. With the registration process completed and all necessary licenses obtained, we are now ready to launch our projects. While the organization is officially registered as Lead Read Foundation, we plan to continue using Reader's Sanctuary as the project name for our reading spaces in slum communities. Each center will be called Reader's Sanctuary, symbolizing a place where readers are promoted, protected, and nurtured as lifelong learners.

Meet-ups

To kickstart the Lead Read Foundation journey, we organized meet-ups to promote and validate our concept. We engaged with over 40 individuals, including alumni groups from Karve Institute, Modern College, Jagriti Yatra, PUMBA, and many others. These interactions helped us share the vision of establishing the Reader's Sanctuary Community Centre, dedicated to promoting a reading culture, enhancing literacy, and developing cognitive skills among children. The meet-ups enabled us to gather valuable feedback, build connections, and refine our approach, laying a strong foundation for our mission to empower children through the transformative power of reading.

Partnerships

Khelghar

Khelghar works with slum children making learning joyful. From this year they are planning to provide financial support for higher education to the needy youngsters in the community. Lead Read Foundation has collaborated with Khelghar to design their scholarship policy by involving all stakeholders. Along with it we are also supporting them in building their team's capacity. In return, they are supporting us by helping develop the curriculum for our literacy sessions and offering free access to their workshops.

The Potters Earth

They are providing mentorship and assisting us with books, stationery, and furniture for the school library we are setting up during the initial phase. Additionally, they are helping us design creative learning spaces by offering guidance on library aesthetics and child-friendly layouts. Their expertise in sustainable design and educational resource management is enhancing the overall experience and functionality of our library, making it more engaging and effective for children

In our search for the right partners to advance the Lead Read Foundation initiative, we reached

- ✓ **Raah Foundation**
- ✓ **Story House**
- ✓ **Khelghar**
- ✓ **Paryay School**
- ✓ **Kahanee Tree**
- ✓ **The Potters Earth**

Project initiative

“WE OWN OUR LIBRARY”

We started with understanding why children weren't using the library; lack of age-appropriate books, locked doors, restrictions on access, strict rules, disorganised bookshelves and lack of enthusiasm of teachers were few major issues we identified. We involved students. They decided what they need; what design, which books and timings too. With their help we segregated all the existing books, replaced hundreds of irrelevant books with new picture books, story books of their interest and restructured the bookshelves. We made borrowing easy. A student-led group now helps manage the space, giving them a sense of ownership. We learned that *“Schools do have so called libraries; just having room full books is not a library”*. Dumping books in shelves does not encourage children to read or engage with books. Access to books with age appropriate, child friendly content, and illustration are crucial to increase engagement and build reading habit.



We are proud to promote “Kulfi” a Kids Magazine by Atak Matak. This vibrant, child-friendly magazine offers creative and engaging content, including stories, poems, and activities designed to spark imagination and enhance literacy among children.



Storytelling sessions



We have conducted more than 10 storytelling sessions for slum children and school students, promoting reading, creativity, and self-expression. Through interactive stories, discussions, and creative activities, we've enhanced comprehension and vocabulary. We could see how children enjoy storytelling and ask funny questions during the session.



Youth Group- Action Plan

We are working with 40 youth aged 16 to 25 from the Laxminagar slum in Kothrud, Pune, guiding them to recognize their socio-economic realities and tap into their inner strengths, dreams, and



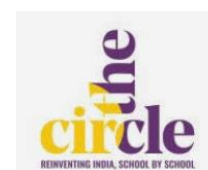
aspirations. Through deep reflection and capacity-building exercises, we help them identify their strengths and weaknesses, recognize skill gaps, and develop a year-long action plan. Our approach encourages full participation, empowering youth to take charge of their lives and make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. We focus on skill enhancement aligned with their goals, equipping them with the tools to pursue sustainable opportunities. By fostering self-awareness, confidence, and practical skills, we aim to break the cycle of poverty and enable these youth to build resilient, purpose-driven futures.

Applications for Incubation



We successfully completed Stage 2 of the Eivolve Incubation Program, progressing through the initial phases of evaluation. This program offers mentorship, funding opportunities, and capacity building, which will help us refine our model and expand our reach.

We have also applied for The Circle Incubation Program, which focuses on supporting early-stage social ventures in education sector and apt for aligns with Lead Read Foundation's vision. Through this program, we aim to gain access to expert guidance, funding support, and networking opportunities.



We have applied for the Charity Entrepreneurship Incubation Program, which offers 2 month training, mentorship, and seed funding for high-impact nonprofits. This program would provide us necessary tools and resources to strengthen and scale our literacy initiatives effectively.

We have submitted our application for NSRCEL's Accubate Incubation Program by IIM Bangalore. This program is known for its strong mentorship network, business development support, and access to funding opportunities.



I attended a 6-day workshop on Reimagining Participation and Life Skills for children, youth, and adults. It focused on experiential learning, enhancing confidence, communication, and problem-solving through interactive methods, fostering meaningful participation and empowering individuals with essential life skills.

Exploring Books Publishers

To curate a diverse and engaging book collection for children, we visited several renowned publishers. Our goal was to find books that would spark curiosity and nurture a love for reading among children. The visit helped us identify age-appropriate and interest-based books that will form the foundation of our Reader's Sanctuary collection, ensuring that children have access to a variety of genres and formats, encouraging them to embark on lifelong reading journeys.



Future Plan (2025-26)

- ✓ We plan to launch a 7-day book collection drive to gather 2,000+ books for slum children and low-graded private schools benefiting 1,500+ children.
- ✓ To promote regular reading, we will conduct weekly literacy and storytelling sessions. These 90-minute sessions will include read-aloud stories, discussions, and creative activities.
- ✓ We will also set up five new libraries in private schools accommodating slum children. Each library will have 300-500 books and involve students in its design and management.
- ✓ In addition, we will establish a Reader's Sanctuary centre in a slum community, offering daily literacy, storytelling, and creative activities.
- ✓ We will run a 1-year capacity-building program for 40 youth (aged 17-25) from slum areas.

Donate Here

FOR ONLINE /CHEQUE DONATION

LEADREAD FOUNDATION

Bank: **Federal Bank**
Branch: **Warje, Pune**
Ac Number: **15060200024104**
IFSC Code: **FDRL0001506**

Visit our website



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