

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



**Volume 2 | June-August 2025**

**2**

Slums

**1**

Schools

**2**

Library

**350**

Children

**600+**

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

## House turned into Library

In an exciting step forward, we have transformed our office space into a library open for all. What was once a working space has now become a vibrant reading hub, welcoming children, youth, and community members to explore books in a in their own community.

The office is designed to be more than just library, it is a space for curiosity, conversations, and connection. With a growing collection that includes children's stories, youth-oriented literature, and thought-provoking non-fiction, the library invites readers of all ages to discover, and learn.



## Pilot Project

### Pilot Project on Cultivating Reading Habits at Nanadeep High School

As part of our journey to build a strong reading culture among children, Reader's Sanctuary successfully ran a two-month pilot project at Nanadeep High School. The project was designed to cultivate reading habits and test key hypotheses around how children engage with books, stories, and structured reading activities in a school setting.

During the pilot, we wanted to check this assumption "Children aged 12-15 feel comfortable reading or listening stories from beginner level books, and not feel that activities based on those books or literacy focused are too "childish" or boring". students participated in interactive story making sessions, read-aloud activities, and group discussions that encouraged them not only to read but also to connect stories with their own lives. We observed promising outcomes children showed increased curiosity towards books, shared personal reflections, and began developing the confidence to express themselves through stories.



The pilot gave us valuable insights into session design, facilitation methods, and assessment tools, which will shape the larger roll-out of our community-based reading initiatives.



## Project initiative

### “WE OWN OUR LIBRARY”

We began by exploring why children were not using the library and found several barriers: lack of age-appropriate books, restricted access, strict rules, disorganized shelves, and little encouragement from teachers. To change this, we involved the students in every step. They decided what books they needed, how the library should look, and suitable timings. Together, we reorganized the shelves, replaced irrelevant titles with hundreds of picture books and storybooks of their interest, and simplified borrowing. This transformed the library into a space children enjoy. Our work is ongoing, as we continue improving the library with students' active participation.



### Expanding the School Library with Child-Friendly Books

As part of our ongoing effort to make reading joyful and accessible, we recently purchased more than 150 new books for the school library. These books were carefully selected to be child-friendly, colorful, and beautifully illustrated, ensuring that children feel drawn to pick them up, handle them, and explore their stories.



The impact was immediate, children who were previously hesitant began showing interest in the library, browsing through the vibrant collection with curiosity and excitement. Many even started borrowing books to take home, marking an encouraging step toward cultivating independent reading habits.

This development reaffirms our belief that when children are given access to engaging and visually appealing books, they naturally develop a stronger connection to reading. The growing enthusiasm around the library has set a positive foundation for building a lasting reading culture within the school.

We have conducted more than 25 storytelling sessions for children, promoting reading, creativity, and self-expression. We could see how children enjoy storytelling and ask funny questions during the session.

## **A World of Stories: 200+ New Books for Our Office Library"**

To further strengthen our mission of promoting reading among young people, we have added over 200 new books, worth ₹34,000, to the library run through our office. This growing collection is carefully curated to include diverse genres and themes that spark curiosity, broaden perspectives, and encourage youth to develop a sustained reading habit.

The new additions have made the library a more vibrant and inviting space, offering young readers opportunities to explore literature that resonates with their interests while also introducing them to fresh ideas and worldviews. By creating easy access to high-quality books, we aim to build a culture where reading becomes a natural part of youth life—opening pathways to knowledge, imagination, and personal growth.

This investment marks another step toward nurturing confident, thoughtful, and informed young leaders in our communities.

## **Partnerships**

### **Storytelling and Read-Aloud Sessions at Gosavi Vasti**

Reader's Sanctuary has recently begun working with the Sumantra Centre in Gosavi Vasti, engaging with children below the age of 12 to nurture their love for reading. Recognizing that many of these children have limited access to books and reading spaces, our sessions are designed to make stories come alive and build joyful experiences around books.



Through storytelling and read-aloud sessions, we are creating an environment where children can listen, imagine, and connect stories with their own lives. These activities not only improve listening and comprehension skills but also spark curiosity, creativity, and confidence among young readers.

Our work in Gosavi Vasti is a small but meaningful step toward building a sustainable reading culture within the community. We look forward to deepening this engagement and inspiring more children to embrace reading as a source of joy and discovery.

### **Khelghar**

Reader's Sanctuary has expanded its efforts by engaging a youth group from Laxminagar slum, Kothrud, Pune, to strengthen life skills through project-based learning. Working with 40 young people aged 16 to 25, the initiative equips them with practical knowledge, critical thinking, and confidence that go beyond classroom education. Sessions are designed around skill development, financial literacy, and awareness of social issues, encouraging participants to learn by doing and view themselves as active contributors to their community's growth.

Through reflection and capacity-building exercises, youth recognize their socio-economic realities while exploring their inner strengths, dreams, and aspirations. Together, we guide them to identify skill gaps and prepare year-long action plans aligned with their goals. This approach fosters self-awareness, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making, enabling them to pursue academic and career opportunities with clarity. By building confidence, resilience, and practical skills, Reader's Sanctuary seeks to break cycles of poverty and empower youth to create purposeful, sustainable futures.



In our search for the right partners to advance the Reader's Sanctuary initiative, recently we are exploring partnership with "WAY Foundation" in Pune city.

## Achievement

### Reader's Sanctuary got Selected for The Circle Incubation Program 2025

We are delighted to share an exciting milestone in our journey. Reader's Sanctuary has been selected for The Circle Incubation Program 2025. This prestigious program supports early-stage social enterprises that are working on innovative and impactful solutions to address critical community challenges. Out of several applications nationwide, Reader's Sanctuary has been chosen for its unique vision of fostering a culture of reading and learning among children living in urban slum communities.



The incubation program will provide us with mentorship, strategic guidance, and financial support of USD 10,000–15,000 over the next two years. This will help us strengthen our model, refine our strategies, and expand our impact. For us, this achievement is not just recognition of our idea, but also an affirmation of the importance of creating safe, vibrant spaces where children can access books, build life skills, and reimagine their futures.

With the support of The Circle, we look forward to scaling our efforts, engaging more communities, and moving one step closer to our vision of nurturing curious, confident, and compassionate young readers across India.

## Actively Participated in Personal wellbeing training Program

The founder, participated in a 6-day training on Personal Wellbeing, organized by Viridus Foundation and supported by the Wipro Foundation. This program gave me the opportunity to deeply explore my inner self and reflect on the ways I can maintain balance in my personal and professional life. The training was focusing on, how to remain detached from unnecessary and unwanted pain that often arises from other people's behavior. I gained awareness about what stimulates or triggers me, and how I can respond to such situations without anger or impatience. He explored practices such as meditation and grounding techniques, helped me build resilience, strengthen my emotional balance, and cultivate a more mindful approach to challenges.

## Future Plan (2025-26)

- ✓ Apply for Kanthari Swiss Funds.
- ✓ To start working on pre-assessment process to design a robust project along with "The Circle".
- ✓ Attend Workshops, participate in exposure visits, and include learning into the project execution.
- ✓ Apply for funds to Banks, The Circle and run a fundraising campaign.
- ✓ Start a literacy session focusing on small group of children with poor literacy skills in school.
- ✓ Continue working with Sumantra Centre, focusing cultivating reading habit and introducing new books to the kids to build curiosity among them.
- ✓ Start a Reader's Sanctuary space in the Slum community and organise events to make organisation visible to community people.
- ✓ Higher 3-4 volunteers and team members who support in the execution of project activities.

## Donate Here

### FOR ONLINE /CHEQUE DONATION

### LEADREAD FOUNDATION

Bank	<b>Federal Bank</b>
Branch:	<b>Warje, Pune</b>
Ac Number:	<b>15060200024104</b>
IFSC Code:	<b>FDRL0001506</b>

## Visit our website



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