Supporting Children’s Storybook Ecosystems

Kyle Barker, The Asia Foundation
Children’s Storybook Ecosystem

- Readers
- Creators
- Distributors

Kids Reading
Children’s Storybook Ecosystem

Readers
- Families
- Parents
- Kids
- Schools
- Teachers
- Principals
- Community Organizations
- Ministry of Education
- Grandparents

Creators
- Language Experts
- Translators
- Editors
- Authors
- Illustrators
- Art Directors
- Designers

Distributors
- Publishers
- Digital Libraries
- Markets
- Book Stores
- Print Houses
How do we support this entire ecosystem?

Open Licenses
COVIBOOK
by Manuela Molina

4 weeks
22 Languages
100+ Countries
45,000+ Times Read
Children’s Storybook Ecosystem
How can open licenses also support the creators and distributors?
Publishers are key to a sustainable ecosystem.
Publishers Continuum

Nascent
- Print shop

Emerging
- Licenses books
- Digital printing

Established
- Creates books
- Network of creators
- Editors, designers, etc.
- Marketing & sales teams
- Offset printing
- Distribution channels
Supporting Different Needs

Design Files

Attribution Only Open Licenses

Non-commercial Open Licenses
Design Files

Pratham, Let’s Read, and World Vision
Kalimpong, India

Pratham – Created the books
Let’s Read – Translated the books
World Vision – Implemented the community program

33 Titles
9,000 books printed
Key findings:

• Not enough skilled creators, low return on investment, concern for name recognition, and risk of copyright infringement

• Suggested that NGOs work with publishers to produce children's books and give the publishers exclusive right to sell the books. This would free publishers to invest in marketing and branding the books.
Myanmar – Let’s Read & Third Story Project

• 15 children’s storybooks created in partnership with Third Story Project, local writers and illustrators

• Non-commercial, open licenses - CC BY-NC 4.0

• Free to read, download, share, and translate on Let’s Read

• Exclusive licensing agreement with Third Story Project to print, sell, and donate in Myanmar
Nepal – Let’s Read, Srijanalaya, & Safu

- 6 children’s storybooks created from within the Tharu ethnic language community
  - Non-commercial, open license - CC BY-NC 4.0
  - Exclusive licensing agreement with Safu to print and sell in Nepal
  - Authors and illustrators are written into the license agreement with the publisher
Ending Thoughts

• Publishers are a key component

• Not all publishers’ needs are the same

• Open licenses, particularly non-commercial, can be used to support both increased reader access and a market-based solution for publishers, distributors, and creators.