Creating reading resources for children in the indigenous languages of the Global South

Amna Singh, Pratham Books
The Book Crisis

- Globally, 617 M children are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading, despite attending school

- Poor availability of local language reading materials in low-middle income countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America

Urgent response needed if we are to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for universal literacy
Catalyzing the creation of quality reading materials
1. Publish open content
2. Create ease of use pathways
3. Provide tools for translation and localization
4. Build Communities of Practice

The StoryWeaver Model
#1 The Core: Quality, open licensed content

- Over 5000 original publisher titles
  - All books are licensed under CC BY 4.0
- Pioneered the open content movement among children’s publishers

*StoryWeaver is the fastest growing platform for quality open licensed children’s books*
#2 Build Communities of Practice

Educators and librarians across Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda participating in the StoryWeaver Translation Sprint

AFRICA
250+ storybooks, including STEM storybooks translated for #ReadAfricaRead promotion in 9 indigenous languages

INDIA
200 storybooks in a short span of two years

Suchana’s team of Santali and Kora translators and reviewers trained to build indigenous language libraries, including bilinguals.

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#3 Collaborate with Universities and MOEs

**AFRICA**
340 books created, translated, reviewed and published by students of Uganda Christian University, Uganda in 15 indigenous Ugandan languages

**INDIA**
100 bilingual books created in Kolmai, a Definitely Endangered indigenous language in collaboration with MOE

Uganda Christian University (UCU) collaborated with StoryWeaver to support early literacy initiatives by translating storybooks on StoryWeaver and making them freely available to the local communities.

Indian Multilingual Institute supported by the District Institute for Education and Teacher Training (DIET) collaborated with StoryWeaver to create #firstbooks in Kolami.
The first-ever digital storybook in an indigenous language spoken in North-East India and Bangladesh, created & published on StoryWeaver

Archiving an indigenous language from West Bengal, India, to preserve a fading language

From taking years to develop a book by pasting paper strips to creating books from a violence stricken region in northern Mexico, by using StoryWeaver

Storybooks in Chocholeco, an indigenous language from Mexico, were among the first written texts in over a decade
#5 Leveraging technology

For nuanced translation
Dictionary Assist

To enhance skill and quality
Crowdsourced Suggestions

For low resource environments
Offline Translate

Digitization of under-represented languages
Open source input tools
Simmi is Listening
सिम्मी सुनि रहल अछी
StoryWeaver Impact

**Sep 2015**
- 800 Books
- 24 Languages

**Mar 2020**
- 19,400 Books
- 233 Languages

- 21M Readership
- 2.6M Users
- 500,000 Downloads
- 195 Countries

Downloads
Catalyzing book creation in indigenous languages

- 2700 storybooks in indigenous languages
- Mainstream language libraries serving as source to create indigenous language content

~60% of all languages on the platform are indigenous
Goal: Create a network of local language libraries globally

North America: 162 books / 12 languages
South & Central America: 29 books / 9 languages
Europe: 2,314 books / 32 languages
Asia: 2,820 books / 44 languages
Middle East: 133 books / 4 languages
India: 7,336 books / 72 languages
Africa: 1,741 books / 91 languages

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