

Bookwallah

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

TURNING STORIES INTO STRENGTH. TOGETHER.


PINK WATER LILIES
Fairy Nan
THE GIRL WHO NEVER MADE MISTAKES
Hooray for You!



Bookwallah Organization
heals
children of trauma
through the
power of stories.





TURNING STORIES INTO STRENGTH. TOGETHER.

In 2024, our community turned stories into strength.

Together, we reached more than 1,000 children living in children's homes and special schools across India—through 17 Bookwallah Imagination Havens (libraries) filled with storybooks, color and courage. Week after week, these spaces came alive with laughter, hope and belonging.

We opened The Library of Flowers in Mumbai—thanks to generous donors like SobaCares and celebrated a young girl's journey from the streets of Mumbai to the international stage.

We piloted a Leadership and Internship program for children who grew up with Bookwallah. Volunteer Story Ambassadors brought compassion to even the darkest corners.

Our psychology research assessment continues to evolve and show measurable gains in hope and self-perception, providing evidence that stories don't just inspire—they transform …and…with more time, more children will heal through this safe, positive method.

From my new home in Porto, Portugal (more central), I've observed how far this spirit travels—across continents, cultures, and hearts—reminding me that imagination and stories know no borders.

Through it all, one truth remained: when a community shows up, it tells a child of trauma, that the world still holds kindness—and that they too are worthy of love.

Thank you for believing in children's dreams and helping us build an Empire of **Hope** -that reaches beyond borders.

With gratitude,

Seena Jacob, Founder

2024 AT A GLANCE

17

Bookwallah 2024 Locations
(Imagination Havens)
1,055 children
+1,950 children (MCLs)

513

Story Sessions & Story Sparkler Activities – weekly in 16 Bookwallah locations

93%

Children Happy or Very Happy with Story Sessions

57%

Children of trauma increased in Hope after *just* 30 story sessions

96%

Volunteer Run Organization



Photo: Volunteer Story Ambassador, Ananyaa Joshi , at Bookwallah's Library of Flowers – in a home for girls. Library established in 2024.



THE CHILDREN WE CHAMPION

Healing trauma through the power of stories.

Across the world, more than 175 million children live with the deep, invisible wounds of trauma.

Through your support, Bookwallah reaches those most vulnerable:

- Children who have survived abuse and neglect
- Victims of trafficking and exploitation
- Children orphaned by conflict, disease, or disaster
- Children of farmers who died by suicide
- Children of struggling single parents
- COVID orphans
- Children with HIV/AIDS &/or with disabilities

Trauma reshapes a child's developing brain, making it harder to learn, trust, or regulate emotions. Left unhealed, it can follow them into adulthood — shaping a lifetime of struggle not only for them, but for the world around them.

Bookwallah turns ***stories into therapy*** to rebuild self-belief and self-worth**.** Stories like *Beauty and the Beast, Giraffes Can't Dance, and Angry Aku* do more than entertain. They inspire children to see courage, find resilience, and slowly rebuild & rewire- to shift from victim to survivor to victor.

Our data show this works:
57% of children who experienced trauma show measurable improvement in **hope and/or self-perception** after ***just 30 story sessions***.

Each time a child begins to imagine again — to laugh, to dream, to believe — we see the world shift a little closer toward hope.
Hope leads to a future filled with new possibilities.

*140 million orphans per UNICEF and 35 refugee children per UNHCR

OUR PROGRAMATIC PILLARS – FROM HEALING ⟶ TO FLOURISH IN SOCIETY

IMAGINATION HAVEN PROGRAM- LIBRARY STRUCTURE

Our primary objective is to help children of trauma heal through the power of story. We create safe, beautiful, and story-filled spaces, each designed as a sanctuary of color and calm, forming the foundation of their healing journey.

STORY & STORY SPARKLER PROGRAMS

After establishing an Imagination Haven, we bring stories to life through interactive storytelling and activities. Each session explores themes such as courage, self-acceptance, and love. These messages and values are reinforced with art, crafts, skits, and play, all conveying the message that children can be the heroes of their own stories.

THE GIVING TREE PROGRAM- FIRST LEVEL INTERVENTION

For children in crisis shelters, hospitals, or child-friendly police stations, storybooks serve as a gentle first step toward healing. Through mini–**Magic Crate Libraries (MCLs) and Happiness Parcels**, we deliver imagination where it's needed most. For many, a single storybook filled with illustrations becomes the first step toward safety, comfort, and hope.

BOOKWALLAH ADVENTURES PROGRAM

This program allows children to experience the world outside their libraries and orphanages through the lens of imagination. Each field trip connects stories with real-world experiences, introducing new happy memories and building confidence, empathy, and joy. It helps children see a world beyond their walls that can be beautiful, safe, and full of wonder.

STORY AMBASSADOR-BUDDY PROGRAM – BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER

We engage and train a variety of local volunteers from diverse backgrounds to lead our initiatives. Our Story Ambassadors are more than just facilitators; they embody the roles of mentors, elder brothers, and sisters. Their involvement sends a powerful message of inclusivity, affirming to the children that they are worthy of attention and love and can be significant contributors to our community.



Photo: FIVE Year commitment via Bookwallah Theory of Change – "The Cinderella Methodology".

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT – EVALUATION PROGRAM

Our IRB-approved research studies utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess how storybooks aid children in healing from trauma. We monitor changes in hope, self-perception, and behavior over an 8–9-month period of story sessions. These insights not only demonstrate the impact of our programs but also enable us to tailor Bookwallah's initiatives for each child and location, thereby strengthening outcomes and ensuring the effectiveness of every story session.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM & INTERNSHIP

Through our Leadership Program and Internships, children who demonstrate multi-dimensional progress in hope scores and other qualitative and quantitative measures are given the opportunity to manage and lead story sessions. They can also intern for Bookwallah in various departmental roles, fostering their development and engagement.

Note: Disney images used in our theory of change.

BOOKWALLAH INDIA- IMAGINATION HAVENS (Libraries) in 2024

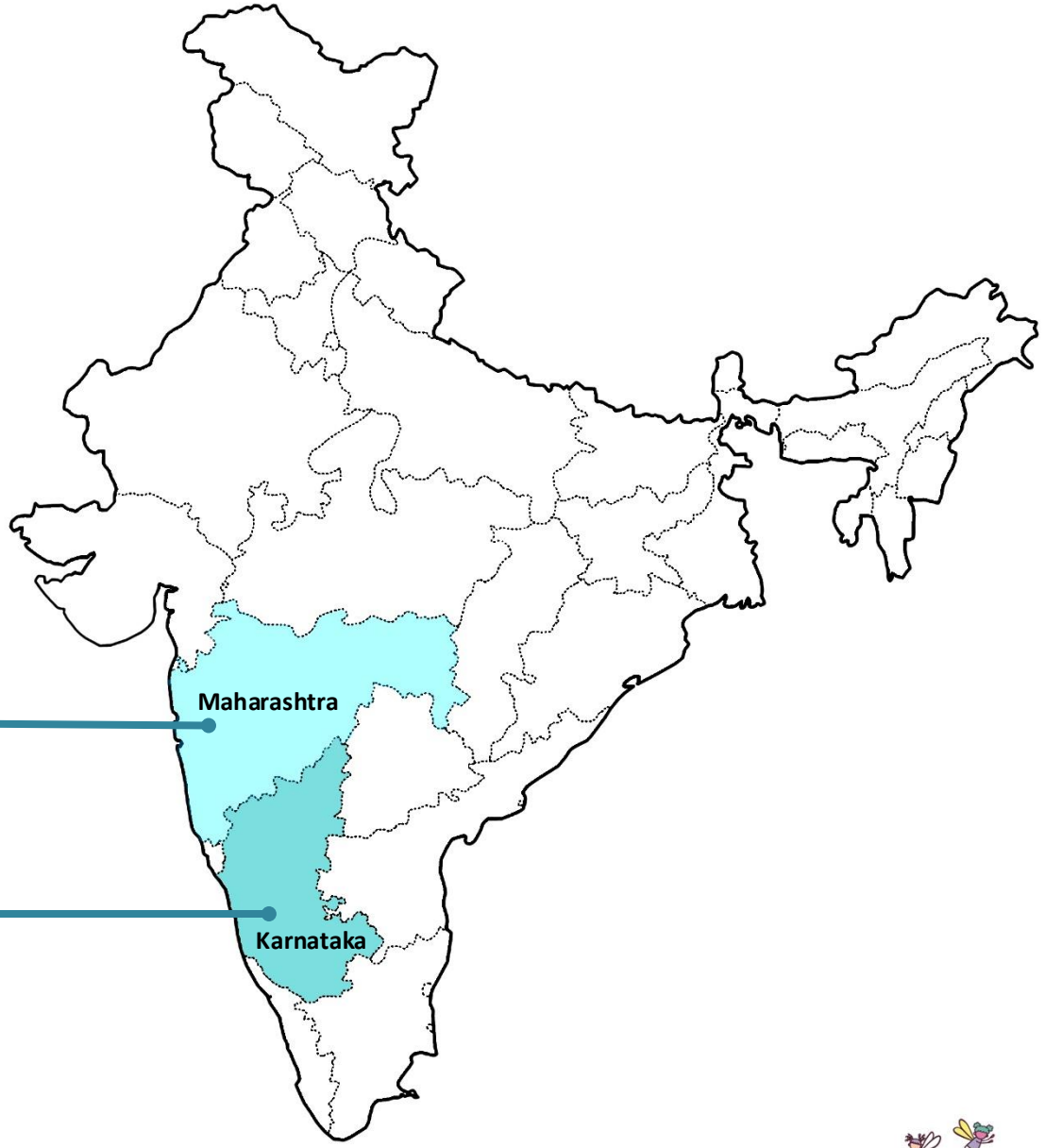
Bookwallah 2024

Maharashtra- Mumbai & Pune (13 Locations)+ 18 MCLs

- Navjeevan Children's Home - Peacock Library
- St. Francis Boy's Home - Kings of the Castle Library
- Amcha Ghar Girl's Home -Library of Hope
- Snehasaden Gorai - Secret Garden Library
- Children's AID Society Boys Home - Library of Wishes
- Stephen School for the Deaf - East Meets West
- BKN -Library of Flowers
- Faith Children's Home – The Giving Tree Library
- BJS- Lotus Library
- Sanmati – Library of Dreams
- SOS Balgram Children's Village- Jungle Book Library
- Snehwan- Library of Journeys
- Manavya- Rising Phoenix Library
- + 18 Magic Crate Libraries (MCLs)- Giving Tree Program

Karnataka – Bangalore & Mangalore (4 Locations)

- St. Patrick's Boys Home- Hungry Caterpillar Library
- Kolar Girls Home- Noah's Ark Library
- CARDTs Girls Home –Sunshine Library
- CARDTS Boys Home –Kung Fu Panda Library



BEFORE: IMAGINATION HAVEN (LIBRARY) TRANSFORMED

Bookwallah 2024



Before

AFTER: IMAGINATION HAVEN (LIBRARY) TRANSFORMED



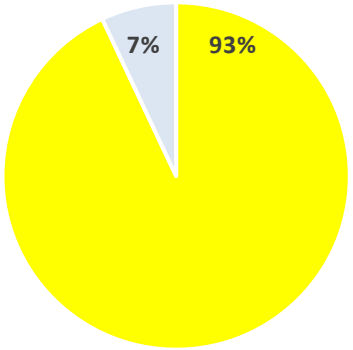
THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE STORY

Between July 2024 and February 2025, Bookwallah assessed **267 children across 11 Imagination Havens** *(libraries),* measuring each child's progress **against their own baseline** after **just 30 story sessions.**

Our research, conducted through IRB-approved surveys, indicates that stories have significant potential to promote healing and rebuild emotional resilience and hope in children who have experienced trauma. These findings are also instrumental in helping us enhance the effectiveness of our story sessions.

Why this Matters: Research show that higher Hope scores are strongly correlated to positive outcomes for the child and for society.

- 57% of children maintained or increased their own Hope Scores — showing measurable emotional stability and growth in a short span.
- 43% improved their Hope Scores, with the average rising from 27.32 to 27.56 — an upward shift in belief and optimism (positive outlook for life) even within complex trauma contexts.
- 14% showed gains in both Hope and Self-Perception, reflecting emerging self-belief and inner confidence with more time.
- Across 2,473 post-session check-ins, 93% of children reported feeling "happy" or "very happy" immediately after storytelling sessions — a powerful indicator of emotional engagement and joy through stories.



93% Very Happy or Happy with Story Sessions- out of 2,473 post check-ins.



Photo: Bookwallah East Meets West Library- School for the Deaf. With Bookwallah R&D (Psychology) Manager, Omkar Sawant. A special thank you to our 25 Psychology volunteers who helped with data collection.

VOLUNTEER STORY AMBASSADOR- NAGARJUN V.

"Every Sunday, as I step into the vibrant world of the libraries, I am greeted with beaming smiles and eager eyes—children who have faced more hardship than their years should allow. Yet, in those moments, as I open a book and let stories unfold, we escape into realms where pain is forgotten, and possibilities are endless.

For three years, it has been more than just a storytelling experience to me, the unconditional love that the kids shower as if I'm their brother is beyond any luxuries in life. In their laughter, I find joy; in their hugs, I feel warmth; and in their growth, I see hope. **These stories are not just about fairytales or distant lands; they are bridges—connecting broken hearts to healing, loneliness to belonging, and despair to dreams.**

Giving my Sundays to them has never felt like a sacrifice; rather, it has been the most fulfilling part of my life. In their trust, I have found purpose; in their resilience, I have learned strength; and in their unconditional love, **I have discovered peace. Perhaps, in teaching them to believe in magic, I, too, have begun to believe in it myself.**"- Nagarjun V.



Photo: Nagarjun (Arjun)- Senior Engineer at ElasticRun.

BOOKWALLAH STORY- PARTNER ORPHANAGE

"It has been a profound blessing to partner with Bookwallah, an organization that is not only transforming children's imagination, but also nurturing their emotional wellbeing, confidence, and inner joy. Through their thoughtful storytelling sessions, creative activities, and heart-led engagements, Bookwallah has touched the lives of our Amcha Ghar daughters in the most beautiful way — helping them feel seen, heard, loved, protected, and empowered.

Books have become windows of hope and doors to possibility for our children. We have witnessed shy girls find their voice, anxious hearts find comfort, and curious minds discover dreams they never thought they could dream. **This impact is not just momentary — it is shaping resilient, joyful, confident young women of tomorrow.**

I hold immense respect and gratitude for Ms. Seena Jacob, whose vision and compassion continue to light the way for thousands of children across the world. *To Seena and the entire Bookwallah family* — thank you for filling our space with stories, smiles, and so much love. Your work is building a more kind, creative, and sustainable world, one child at a time.

From the bottom of our hearts — thank you for being part of our journey, and for allowing our children to believe in the magic of their own story."- Agatha Sushila Dias



Photo: Testimonial by Agatha Sushila Dias, Founder Amcha Ghar NGO.



Photo: Bookwallah's Jungle Book Library in a children's home. With volunteer Story Ambassador, Malvika Lal.

BOOKWALLAH LEADERSHIP & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Photo: Bookwallah Leadership & 3-Month Internship Program: First Internship for Girls who grew up with Bookwallah programs. Seen here in our Mumbai, office with Mumbai Program Manager, Vaishali Ravaria.

OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM – 96% OF OUR FORCE

In 2024, our volunteers lit the path forward with extraordinary heart. 158 individuals from local communities came together to share their time, creativity, and care—some for a year, and others who've stood beside us for more than 13 years. They are not simply part of Bookwallah; they are the heartbeat of this movement.

Because of their dedication, **our mission is powered by 96% volunteer team members**, allowing us to channel every dollar/INR with precision and purpose to areas we need most.

It takes soul to keep showing up in the face of challenges, especially in places where resources, environment can feel fragile. When we witness our dedicated volunteer teams stepping forward—ready to read, build, and bridge divides—it reminds us that what we are creating together is more than a program. It's a community of compassion shaping a brighter world, one story at a time.

In 2024, our volunteer team members' **Net Promoter Score was 81%** which is industry excellence. Our annual retention rate was 78%.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize our high performing volunteers. Volunteers who represent the values our organization- Empowerment, Value Creation, Optimism, Creativity & Imagination, and Happiness (EVOCH). THANK YOU!

2024 EVOCH Honorees: Noel Dason, Aditi Bajaj, Dolly Darbar, Flevy Menezes, Vidhi Makwana, Rishika Talesara, Preethika KM, Anushka Shankar, Lhasay Youtso, Sre Mathuram RG, Aakansksha Jogdekar, Manoti Agarwal, Shama Suryawanshi, Shrutika Gadekar, and Anjali Jadeja.

*Net Promoter Score measures customer experience based on the question- How likely are you to recommend Bookwallah to family or friends.


Pune, India


Bangalore, India


Mumbai, India


Mangalore, India

FROM VOLUNTEERS TO STAFF: A JOURNEY OF PASSION

Seena Jacob- Founder- FTE Chicago, U S A & Porto, Portugal (*not pictured here*)

CENTRALIZED OPERATIONS OUT OF MUMBAI

Priyanka Roy-Outreach/Partnership & Programs– FTE Mumbai, India

Vaishali Ravaria- Program Manager, Mumbai- FTE, Mumbai, India

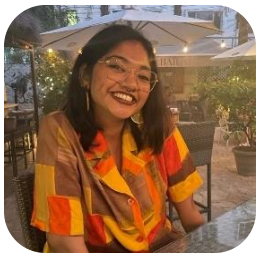
Sharen Achangadan- Program Design & Development Manager- FTE Mumbai, India

Omkar Sawant- R&D Psychology Manager- FTE Mumbai, India

Deena Daisy Shibu- HR Coordinator– FTE Mumbai, India

Rashmi Parab- Marketing Coordinator- PTE Mumbai, India












PROGRAM PRESIDENTS- FELLOWSHIP

Kunal Pawar President- PTE Pune, India

Smriti Menon- President- PTE Bengalaru, India

INTERN- FELLOWSHIP

Saish Shetty- R&D Psychology Intern- PTE Mumbai, India

OUR 2024 BOARD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kumar Thason- Chief Innovation Officer & Co-Founder @ Helios | @ Trillisent

Preethi Maroli- Founder, Stretching Goats

Ranjeet Nambiiar- Co–Founder, URJA Communications; Founding Board Member

Seena Jacob- Founder, Bookwallah

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Lopamundra Mohanty- Founder, BBW Education OPC Pvt Ltd .

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Muneet Kakani, C.A.- Founding Partner, VitQube Consulting





Photo: Bookwallah's East Meets West Library a children's school for the deaf. With volunteer Story Ambassador, Dr. Swati Samaleti.

AN INTIMATE "EVENING IN WONDERLAND" IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS U.S.A.





















IT TAKES COMMUNITY- BOOKWALLAH ADVENTURES PROGRAM

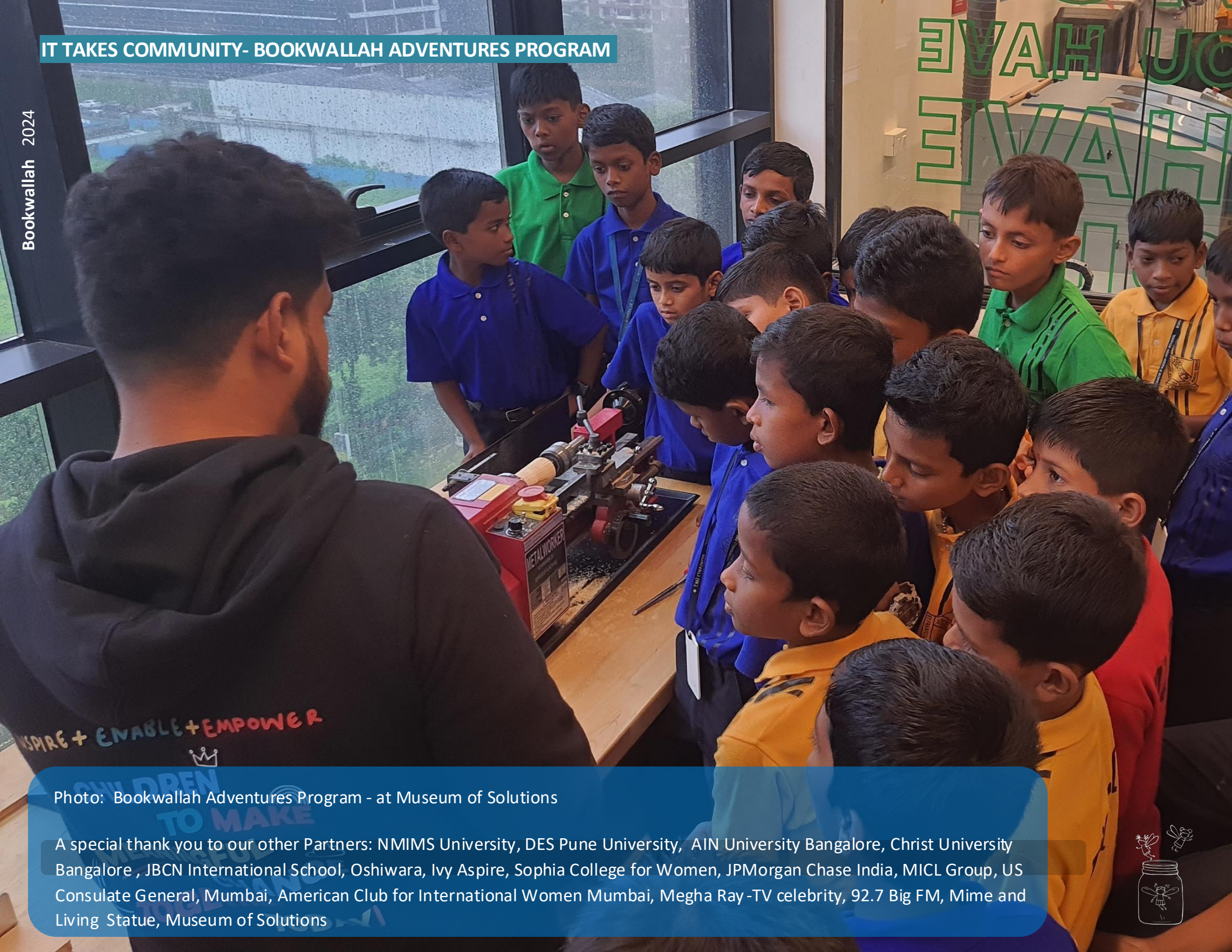


Photo: Bookwallah Adventures Program - at Museum of Solutions

A special thank you to our other Partners: NMIMS University, DES Pune University, AIN University Bangalore, Christ University Bangalore , JBCN International School, Oshiwara, Ivy Aspire, Sophia College for Women, JPMorgan Chase India, MICL Group, US Consulate General, Mumbai, American Club for International Women Mumbai, Megha Ray-TV celebrity, 92.7 Big FM, Mime and Living Statue, Museum of Solutions

WAYS TO SUPPORT

We are so grateful to those who led us to this point. Here are some ways you can support the mission at Bookwallah.org.

The Lotus

The Lotus is a group of *donors* who fund (cash, stock) *for staff* allowing us to keep the public *100% model*. Becoming a member of this group provides the foundation to scale our impact and reach many more children of trauma.

Once Upon a Time

The Once Upon a Time group is for *donors who love to raise funds* through crowdfunding, parties, running, climbing, lemonade stands, crafts-adventures for a purpose.

The Round Table

The Round Table is inspired by King Arthur's legend and consists of *monthly supporters* -both donors and volunteers.

The Nightingale

The Nightingale is a our *"planned giving"* program where you can leave a legacy that continues to inspire.

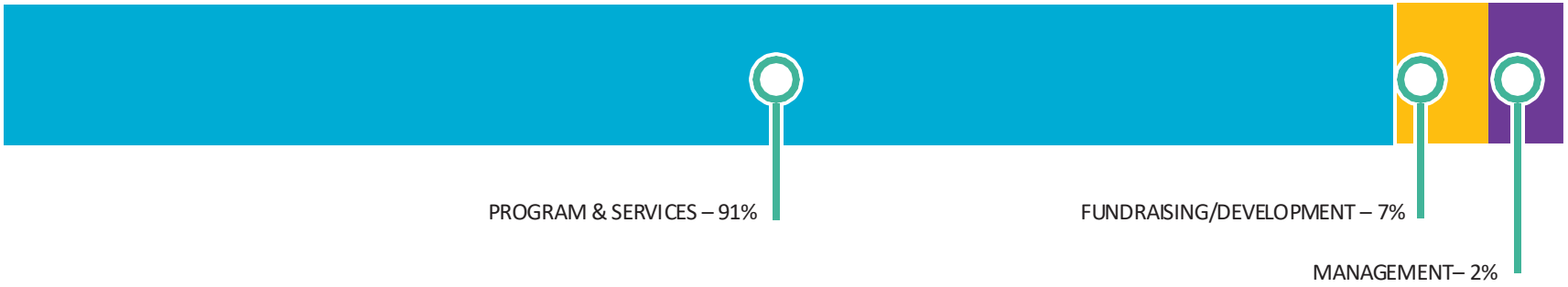
Inspired by the late Dr. Bren Ortega Murphy.



BOOKWALLAH FINANCIALS 2024 Year ending December 31, 2024

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Cash Donations	$197,836
In Kind Donations	$197,536
Total Revenue	**$395,372**



EXPENSES

Program Services Expenses

Donated Volunteer Service Hours (Community involvement)	$178,936
Library Supplies, Construction, Activities, Books	$47,950
Donated Gifts in Kind (Travel, Warehouse for Books, Office)	$12,600
Administrative Expenses	$1,809
Travel and Meeting Costs	$1,050
Program Personnel Expenses	$119,001
Professional Fees and Bookwallah Publishing	$0
Information Technology	$7,725

Total Program Services	$369,071	(91%)
Total Management and General	$9,168	(2%)
Total Fundraising and Marketing	$27,105	(7%)
Total Expenses.	**$405,344**	(100%)

Note: Private donors including Board (Bookwallah Lotus members) covered 100% of U.S. Personnel

BOOKWALLAH STORY- JYOTI'S STORY

From orphanage to international runways.

We met Jyoti when she was just 12 years old, living in an orphanage (girls' home) where we have the "Swan Lake" library. Even then, she had a quiet strength and a spark in her eyes that hinted at something extraordinary. She was the "model" many of the younger girls at this orphanage looked up to. Our story sessions needed to be a little "controlled" with the girls bouncing around. Jyoti was there to help despite her own tough journey of having lived in the streets.

Today, that same girl is modeling internationally thanks to her supporters such as Amin Sheikh who employs her at the Bombay to Barcelona Library Cafe.

She's walking runways, breaking barriers, and showing the world what resilience looks like. But more than that—she's living proof of what happens when children are seen, believed in, and given the space to dream and imagine.



TOGETHER, with the POWER OF STORIES.

Bookwallah is supported by global citizens — dreamers, doers, and believers who know that imagination belongs to every child, everywhere.

When a child of trauma experiences the power of story, fear gives way to wonder. That spark of imagination is the first step to healing.

Because when one child imagines a better world, the rest of us remember we can, too.

Your support doesn't just fund libraries — it fuels a new way of life. With hope, anything is possible.

Together, by 2030, we can build *and run* 100 new Imagination Havens for 10,000 children — spaces of color, belonging and hope.

This is more than charity.
It's the story you tell a child — that they are worthy of love.
And in doing so, it becomes an adventure and an investment in rebuilding the human spirit.

Bookwallah is a reminder that their story is not the pain of past, but a new story of hope for the future.

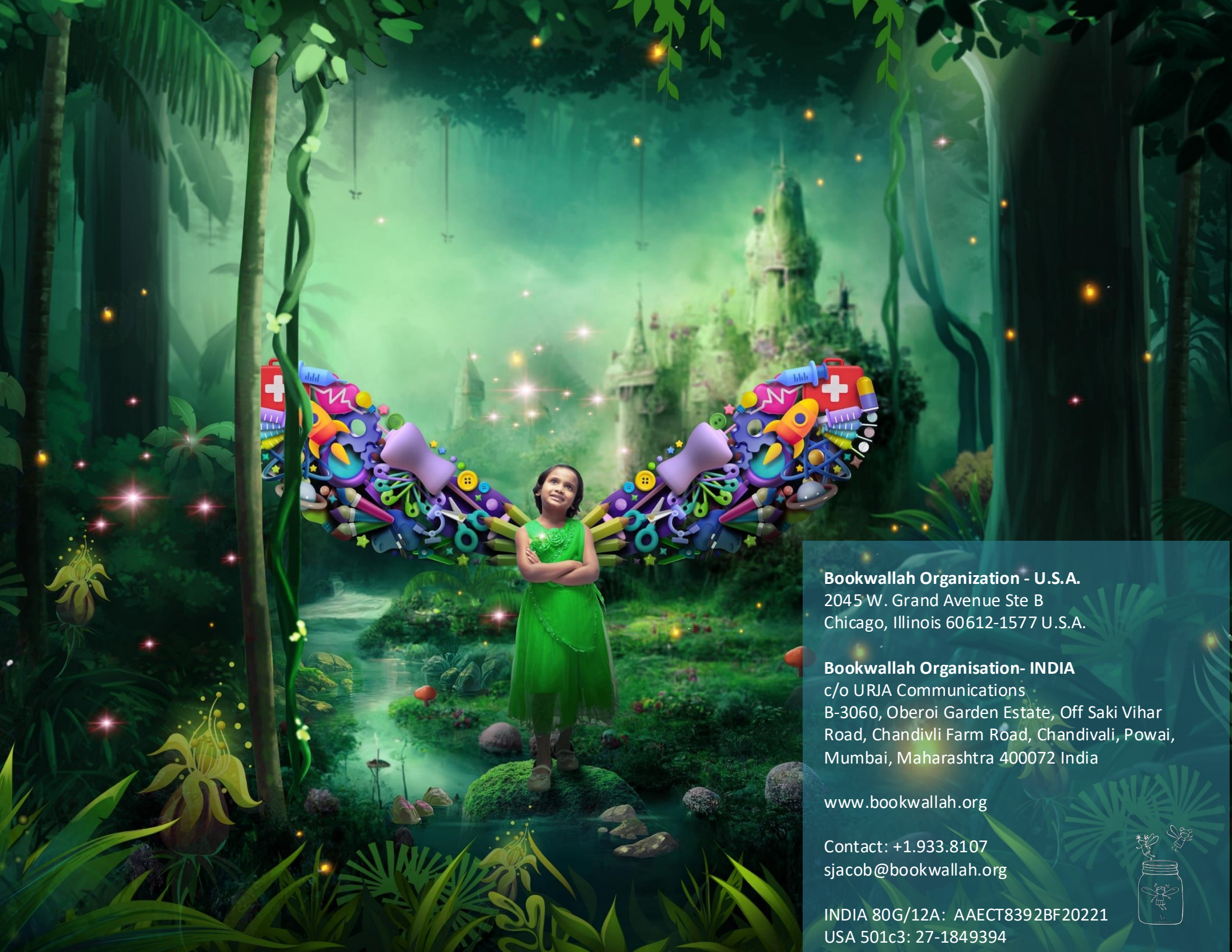
Join us as we build an Empire of **Hope**— a world where every child believes in the power to dream again.

Join Us.
Be part of the story.

Bookwallah.org | #bookwallah



Photo: Library of Hope in a girl's home.



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