

ALC School Library Project New Books: The Burble of Joy



The excitement in the room was palpable. Students clamored from all sides to open the packages of new books that had been delivered to their library. Leaning on the table, sitting on benches and lying on the cement floor, children spontaneously started reading out loud. “I have a book on penguins. Here’s one on cricket. Gujurat, the state of Gujurat.”



When asked what books they like to read, students called out title after title: “Lion’s Howdah, Kaber the Weaver Poet, A Man called Bapu, the Smile of Vanuvati, Sister, Sister, Where Does Thunder Come From, The Day the Vegetables Came to School.” The students knew all of the books in their library. If only this burble of joy had been captured on video, listeners would be immediately motivated to grab a book and start to read—simply for the pure pleasure of reading.

The books are in Tamil, bilingual Tamil and English, and English. Since these are active libraries, books come alive in a variety of ways, including skits, where vegetables play leading roles.



In another village school, a student with arms raised high over her head exclaimed, “I am going to read books as high as the GROWBY banner — may be 37 or 38!” Vishnan said, “I am able to choose so many books, especially books with pictures. When I look at the pictures, I can make up my own stories in my mind.” In Thokkavadi, every Monday an older student tells a story from one of their library books to all of the others at the morning opening ceremony.

With the implementation of the Hippocampus GROWBY reading program in all 100 ALC schools, students proudly wear their library badges. They are identifying wholeheartedly with their library and their books. The badges help students select books they are comfortable with, so they can receive immediate reinforcement on the joy of reading.



The students and teachers are not the only ones excited about their libraries. Parents and educational officials are as well. “Our children are reading their library books at home and we are very happy to see this.” As an additional perk, younger siblings and parents benefit from students bringing their library books home. “Government officials from the Department of Education appreciate our library program and are eager to know about the books and how the libraries are organized. They often wish to visit our schools and encourage the students in their reading.”



At the most recent Hippocampus active library training, a beautiful kolam (a Tamil design created with rice powder) welcomed the library-in-charge teachers. With more books and activities related to them, ALC students, their teachers, families and villages will be welcomed into an imaginative new year of living libraries.

