



EDUCHANGE BOOK CLUB REPORT 2023 - 2024



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ABOUT US

Saltlakeeduchange Foundation is a Section 8 not-for-profit organization based out of Kolkata, West Bengal. Our work encompasses creating long-term and sustainable impact by closely working with educational institutions, low-resourced and government schools in and around rural and semi-urban areas. The primary work of our organization is to enhance reading levels, comprehension and all-around literacy among children and young adults through a unique method of learning known as “Curriculum through Co-Curriculum” so that they are able to learn, and not just read and write. The uniqueness of the organization lies in its method of facilitation, teaching and working with children which is participatory, experiential, holistic in nature. We want to reach more and more children through this tried and tested method of learning designed and devised by our Founder and our primary aim is to spread joy through learning.

VISION

To ensure that every child learns school curriculums with joy.

MISSION

To foster holistic learning in children’s educational and learning environments through a unique “Curriculum through Co-curricular method.”

FOCUS AREAS



FOUNDER'S DESK



'Like a young sapling, every child needs the right environment to grow!' We can come together to provide them that!'

Manjir Ghosh



Manjir Ghosh is the Founder and Executive Director of Saltlakeeduchange Foundation, a Section 8 organization based out of West Bengal, India. Her primary motivation for establishing this NGO was to direct her life's work with children to design a unique, experiential, and participatory 'Curriculum Learning through Co-Curricular' method.

She holds over 3 decades of experience as a Teacher, Administrator, Educator and Author who has closely worked with children and young adults throughout her life.

She has occupied prominent positions as Principal in schools such as Ashok Hall Girls' Higher Secondary School, Delhi Public School, and also served as the Academic Advisor of Usha Martin Group of Schools.



45,000+

Children reached

50+

Schools involved

12

NGOs and Shelter
Homes impacted

2

Years of
Educhange



PROJECT BOOK CLUB

Educhange Book Club is a project that promotes students' love of literature in a positive, playful, and nurturing environment that broadens their horizons about what literature can entail. It aims to improve reading abilities, develop reading habits and creative confidence among students.

Through the course, they develop:

- Familiarity with the different genres of English literature.
- Familiarity with the different creative adaptations of English literature.
- Skill, confidence, and the ability to work as a team.

Currently, our Book Club is successfully running at **DPS Howrah, Saltlake and Koptulpur, Bankura.**

PROJECT BOOK CLUB

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

In an age where children are heavily dependent on and are thus alienated by heavy engagement with social media, it is important to establish a sense of community around books and with other readers.

Book clubs promote the love of literature, and allow a child to experiment with genres, whereby they can uncover the story independently and as a team. Actively engaging with literature, and being provided a safe space to discuss their feelings will stimulate a child intellectually as well as personally.

We provide a holistic approach and a unique model of reading books through an experiential learning book club project to help amplify the **3 C's** in each student:

- **Comprehension**
- **Creativity**
- **Confidence**



PROJECT BOOK CLUB

METHODOLOGY

Curriculum Learning through Co-curriculum

We engage students in a range of experiential activities like cosplaying, making and listening to music, dance movements, writing poetry and skits, doing arts and crafts alongside reading the books which induce students' interest in a play-based, arts-based, holistic approach to literature.

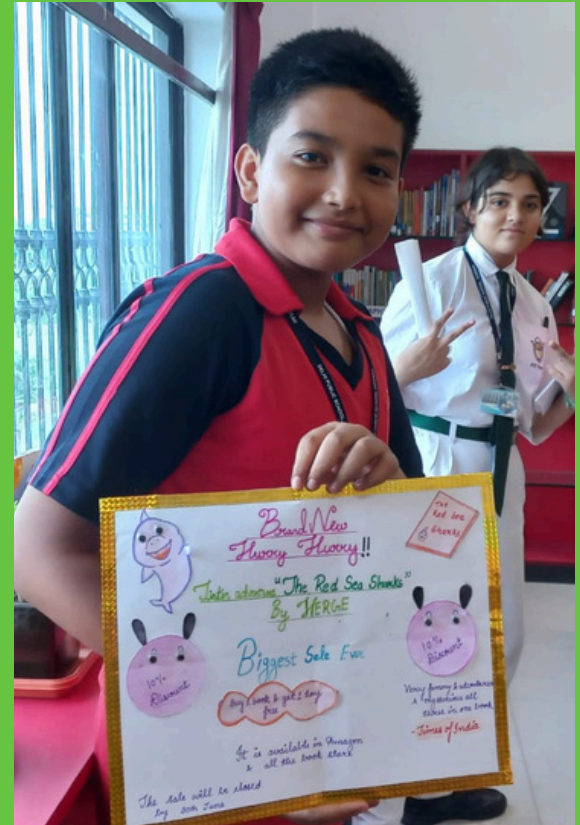
BOOK CLUB 📌 DPS, HOWRAH

Here is an overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Book Club at DPS Howrah, Domjur in the academic session 2023-2024.

Batch details:

Number of students enrolled in Book Reading Club activity (classes 3-5): 27
Average daily attendance (classes 3-5): 22
No. of lesson plans implemented (classes 3-5): 20

Number of students enrolled in Book Reading Club activity (classes 6-9): 22
Average daily attendance (classes 6-9): 15
No. of lesson plans implemented (classes 6-9): 20



The **selection process** for books and genres in the Book Club at DPS Howrah was a collaborative effort involving the Educhange facilitator, senior and junior librarians of the school, and the rich collection of the school library. We aimed to provide a diverse range of reading options to cater to the interests of the students.

The genres of science fiction, fantasy, adventure, mystery, and detective novels, including works by Indian authors were emphasized during the session 2023-2024. Age-appropriate books were carefully chosen and recommended by the facilitator based on their literary value and relevance. Additionally, students were encouraged to explore the library collection and select books of their choice, pertaining to the ongoing genre.

To encourage a broader understanding of different authors and literature, we implemented a book-swapping system. After finishing a book, students had the opportunity to exchange it with their peers, allowing for a better and comparative understanding of various authors and genres. This approach ensured that the students had access to a wide variety of engaging and thought-provoking reading materials throughout the year.

Challenges faced during the selection process and how they were addressed:

Challenges faced were majorly in the junior batch (classes 3-5) due to the following reasons-

1. Classes 3 and 4 do not have permission to issue books to take back home and as a result, couldn't read/finish allotted books during the week. So we had to readjust our lesson plans in a way so that they at least read a substantial amount of the books in the first 30-45 minutes of the club session and then engage in the activity.
2. The junior students tend to go for books with more graphic, visual, and commercial/entertainment content that requires less attention rather than novels with little or no illustrations but more literary content. So when they were asked to choose books from the junior library, they usually repetitively wanted to choose books with superheroes like DC and Marvel, Krishna and Hanuman cartoon comics, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Disney Princess (motion picture books), etc., So we revised our selection process where we allotted pre-chosen books or gave them a condition as to which books cannot be taken from. It turned out to be an effective means to develop an interest in literature among students by the end of the session where they actively started reading better literature.

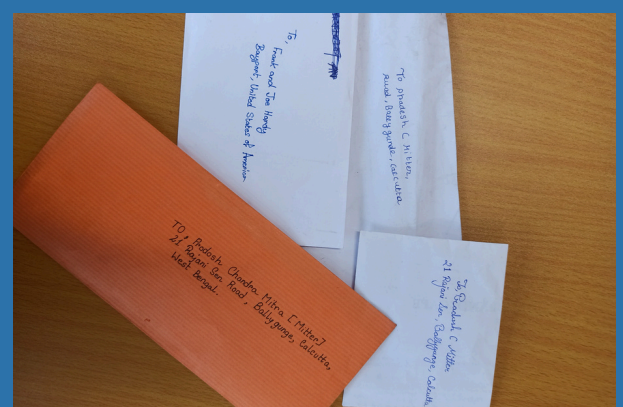
There were no challenges faced among the senior batch (classes 6-9), they were extremely cooperative throughout the session!



OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES:

Here are, briefly mentioned the range of art and play-based activities covered in the Book Reading Club during the session 2023-2024-

- Painting the 'set up' of the plot, making bookmarks, learning basics of zine making, bookmark making, picture comprehension, drawing a map of fantasy and adventure stories, making cover designs and illustrations from the book to spark creativity.
- Script writing, dramatic reading of the text, role-playing, and prop association through character analysis to engage with the characters!
- Understanding narrative styles, researching authors, thinking of alternative titles for the book, making comic strip/graphic summaries, and writing a letter to the author/character to develop a natural connection to literature!
- Making playlists, and writing poems and songs to fuel imagination.
- Participating in various crafts and indoor games like Scrabble, clay modeling, mask making, word hunting/word association, etc to grasp the nuances of sentence construction, rules of grammar, and creative writing.



BOOK DISCUSSIONS AND SEMINAR

A Book Seminar was organised in the senior batch (classes 6-9) where all the students in the Book Reading Club came together to showcase all the activity materials they produced throughout the session like poems, book reviews, zines and posters, maps, cover designs, and plot illustrations, etc. There was a presentation round and a discussion round where all students equally and enthusiastically participated. Some of the best works were selected by the librarian and put up on the soft board in the library for display!



The junior batch (classes 3-5) took part in a **discussion about 'Protagonists'** session where they were given books with little or no illustrations and were asked to read and identify the protagonists, then draw them based on their descriptions in the first few chapters. It was found to be more challenging as the students had difficulty visualizing it on paper (given the digital distractions they are always surrounded with otherwise that curbs both imagination and attention span), though they thoroughly enjoyed the process.

This is where we gently push them to boost their imagination and express themselves creatively! Some of the students who could finish their assignments presented and described their characters. One of the students from class 5 drew a tribal girl who was the protagonist in her book. We discussed first who a tribal was, to which a student from class 4 replied excitedly, that tribals formed the 'weaker and backward' communities of our society.

When asked, she said that this was the definition given in their SST textbook. It provoked a very interesting **debate** where the student, who was reading a book about the tribal protagonist logically argued how they were not weaker or backward but a very strong, self-sufficient, independent community whose way of living also promoted love and protection for nature, which the so-called 'stronger' sections of the society i.e the urban population were destroying causing harm to the environment. All the students engaged in the debate and contributed actively! This was a remarkable example of how discussions about characters' experiences can foster empathy and understanding by encouraging **open dialogue** and **reducing stigma**. It also develops foundational academic skills like reasoning and debating from their formative years in school!



READATHON

A Readathon was organised among the students in the junior batch (classes 3-5), where each junior student was paired with a senior student and given a 70-80 paged, 10-chapter adventure series book to complete within 1.5 hours, and the outcomes were surprising!

There was increased peer engagement and peer-assisted reading between the junior student and a senior student, where they were observed to help each other out by explaining meanings, reading out loud and motivating each other to finish reading by taking turns!

They also went beyond their tendency of this age-group to only talk to specific friends and groups (which is a very natural occurrence at this age) and socialized with other classmates, and learned cooperation and working as a team..

It was one of the sessions with 100% attention and zero disruption. There were no repetitive washroom breaks, little to no talking, or unnecessary distractions among the talkative students as they were carefully distributed.

All the students finished reading the books within the given time which gave a huge boost to their confidence!

5 out of 9 teams completed writing summaries of the books they read.

SAFE SPACE, MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Book Reading Club activities have the potential to play a vital role in promoting a sense of belonging, fostering mental well-being, and strengthening community bonds. Discussions about characters, and research on the author's background and experiences can foster empathy and understanding, promoting mental health by encouraging open dialogue and reducing stigma among students. For example, at a session where we asked students from to bring one prop to discuss its representation with the books they have chosen, a student from class 8 brought a cricket glove (following R.K Narayan's *Malgudi Schooldays*).

While discussing its significance, he also shared how he loves cricket but is not as good at studies so his parents don't allow him to play, which made him upset. But he also discussed how, while reading the book he felt seen and heard as he related with the character! A student from class 9 was reading Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and brought a toy train to talk about the symbolism in the story. We had a touching discussion on the consequences of Partition and the significance of communal harmony!

We observed a remarkable transformation in one of our students in class 8, who initially was talkative and easily distracted and disturbed others, but as the sessions progressed, he began to engage more with reading. In particular, their choice of Ruskin Bond's "The Room on the Roof" proved to be a turning point. The student personally shared their connection to the story, expressing how he, 'like the boy in the story' felt lonely and had no friends. He also shared the distressing experience of their former best friend suddenly ending their friendship without any explanation. Additionally, the student revealed the challenges he faced in their daily life, such as his parent promising but frequently being late to pick them up after tuition classes, causing them to wait on the street for hours which made him anxious.



It was during these waiting periods that he finished reading the book for the book club, and related to the character's struggles. These small incidents can seem insignificant but can be really important for a student's life. This student's experiences exemplify how book club discussions can provide a safe space for students to open up about their personal challenges, fostering empathy and supporting their mental well-being. especially teenagers to express their thoughts, opinions, and emotions related to the books they read.



FEEDBACKS!

Our Book Reading Club has received an overwhelmingly positive response from the students! They have expressed how much they enjoy the activities over the period and 80% of the students have reported having actively reading back at home as well! They keep sharing book summaries and drawings reflecting on their readings on holidays and vacations!

The youngest member of the club is in class 3, who is known to have ADHD and is very difficult to manage in class. Initially, at our Book Reading Club, he would be very distracted and would only pick Peppa Pig books and had a tendency to fixate on them. But over the session, we were able to shift him from Peppa Pigs and he has finished two small adventure and mystery books by himself. He never missed the club and finished all the activities diligently unlike a lot of other senior students too! His class teacher **Sonia ma'am** had expressed that she has been really impressed with his improvement in his classes as well. " earlier he didn't listen to the instructions, but now at least he tries to understand as instructed by his teachers".

Feedback from **Jayita ma'am, senior librarian:**

"The book reading club gave wings to the imagination and creativity of students. And expanding their knowledge horizons. They delved into captivating detective stories, drew connections between fantasy and reality, and explored the fascinating worlds of different genres. Authors and characters came alive as students delved deeper, learning to craft their own plots and even penning letters to their favorite writers. Science fiction ignited their imaginations. The students made vibrant posters, treasure maps etc. The students enthusiastically participated in Book seminar, discussing about their activities and book talk. Witnessing this transformation was truly impactful. Students who once viewed books with indifference were now captivated, embarking on literary journeys. The reluctant readers wholeheartedly developed the love for literature through the year round programme and activities."

Feedback from **Simi ma'am, co-incharge, Book Reading Club (3-5):**

"Though the book reading club started with great zeal and enthusiasm amongst students yet it ended really very well with a lot more curiosity and urge to know many new things. The students really came across many good books and characters which they were once unaware of it. But gradually through book reading club activity children gained a lot of knowledge about different characters, tried to find out new words and learnt them by heart. They also drew different pictures related to the characters and genre of a particular book; it helped them to go deep beyond their thinking and imagination. The children found interest to learn more and more books and could relate themselves with the characters. Hence it was really a very interesting, knowledgeable and useful session for the children as well for all of us and I hope to look forward for another fruitful year ahead."

BOOK CLUB 📖 SALT LAKE

The Saltlake Educhange Foundation Book club started its first session in December 2023.

In the first month, we made our own books, collages and sock puppets and presented them in our own creative ways. Through these activities we learnt to establish relatedness with nature, character and plot association, story weaving and participating in group activities.

As the new year began, one new member joined us, throughout the month of January we read books of different genres, did activities based on the stories we read in club, performed a skit, sang and danced our hearts out. We learnt creative narration and expression. We comprehended stories in our own way.

It is February and we are a group of five members now, playing and learning everyday, forming stories with words chosen by our friends, dancing to the beat of a poem about a river, we are growing and learning everyday.

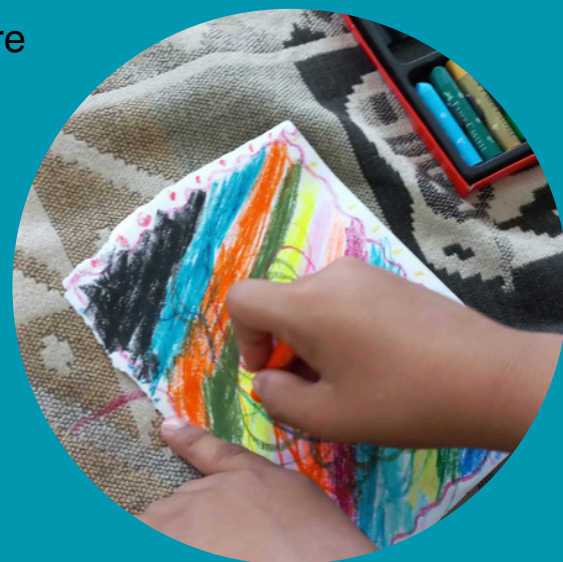




BOOK CLUB 📍 KOTULPUR, BANKURA

Educhange began Book Club and library development project at Subhabrata Pathagar, Kotulpur, Bankura in 2023. Retired professor Pronoti Bandopadhyay, 82, with her indomitable spirit has developed a space for a library in the middle of the village. Around 30 students from several schools come together to read and share the space after their school hours!

We organise monthly visits along with interactive story telling sessions, play and art based book reading sessions! We have developed their libraries by donating fresh set of story books, reading materials, art materials and much more. We plan to develop the library as a colorful, safe space and engage the children into the magic of reading in the coming months.



CONCLUSION AND MOVING FORWARD



01 Book Club Level 2

At Level 1 of our book club, we have placed a strong emphasis on art-based interactions to attract, captivate, and hold the students' attention, fostering a sense of comfort in reading which has been a huge success and received great response from students as well as teachers in charge!. In Level 2, we aim to delve deeper into enhancing students' reading skills, addressing comprehension, critical analysis, and developing their writing abilities. This will be accomplished through a diverse range of activities such as extempores, debates, quizzes, storytelling and story-weaving sessions, poetry workshops, interactive group discussions, review and editorial sessions, and more. These activities encourage students not only to read but also to express their knowledge through written or verbal delivery, honing their literary skills.

02 Book Camp at Schools!

We have plans to organize a two-day **Book Camp** within the school premises. This certification program will enable students to engage in active reading and participate in various activities, competitions, and workshops in the world of literature. Additionally, we will invite renowned authors for meet and greet sessions at the end of the camp. Our objective is to encourage not only the members of the Book Club in school but also students from across the entire school to actively participate in these reading workshops and competitions, fostering a culture of wider readership within the school community.

03 Strengthening relations through books.

We will be expanding our outreach by beginning with Book Clubs at two more schools in the upcoming session 2024-2025. We aim to grow the students reading community more and more every year! We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the support and encouragement we receive from the school and communities both in terms of monetary assistance and initiatives. Your support not only sustains our organization but also enables us to operate various other programs for underprivileged children. It is through such collaboration and shared vision that we can make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of young learners.