

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2026

Books, buddies and growing confidence



Took part **21**
Where aikyam space, Fort Kochi
Run by Olimalar Foundation

Facilitators **3**
Club Reading Club

This Saturday, 21 children joined us for our first structured, level-based reading session.

Before the session, we reviewed the available reading assessments, completed using the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach developed by Pratham. We selected three storybooks from Pratham Books that were broadly suited to the children's different reading needs, printed several copies and arranged the room into three small reading areas, with a facilitator supporting each group.

We deliberately removed the visible level labels from the books before giving them to the children. The levels remained useful for facilitators in planning the right support, but they were not presented as fixed identities for the children.

For around 15–20 minutes, the children read together. Some needed more assistance to work through the text, while others read with a buddy. The buddy-reading approach worked particularly well. When one child struggled with a word, another would often step in to help.

It was also encouraging to see how comfortable the children were asking for support. Several raised their hands when they could not read or understand a word rather than remaining silent or disengaging.

One unexpected challenge was discovering that a handful of children attending that day had not completed the earlier reading assessment. We placed them provisionally using our previous interactions and observations. At the end of the activity, the children completed a short reflection to tell us how manageable they found their book.

Our main learning was that assessment records need to be checked against the children who actually attend each session. Next time, we will confirm everyone's assessment status, assess anyone who was missed and adjust the groups where necessary.

A positive first session, with books and buddies helping children participate at their own pace, support one another and grow more confident about asking for help.

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