FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

Stories, Voices & Confidence: Reading for Meaning

Took part	**37**	Facilitators	**2**
Where	SDPY Girls High School, Palluruthy	Club	Reading Club
Run by	Olimalar Foundation		

Input

Materials	Copies of Matilda and short reading extracts.
Outside help	The school teacher in charge of the programme helped support the groups.
Time	2 hours

Activity

Stories, Voices & Confidence began on 10 July with Standard 7 girls at SDPY Girls High School. We raised funds to buy 50 copies of Roald Dahl's Matilda, with Penguin India giving us a discount. The books will be used with future groups too. Through the story, we are helping the girls understand what they read and share their ideas.

Between monsoon rains, Onam, exams and the youth festival, it had been some time since we last met. During the break, we encouraged the girls to read for 15 minutes a day and note difficult words.

In our first session back, the girls were at different points in the book; some had finished it. We planned for 37 girls to read short extracts in groups and then act out scenes or show them through still pictures. Many could read the English words but struggled to understand the passages. Olimalar

facilitators and the school teacher moved between groups to help them work through the meaning. With support, the girls understood their extracts, but we did not move on to the performances.

The session showed us where to focus next: helping the girls pause, ask questions and understand the story before presenting it.

Outcome

The girls initially struggled to understand their extracts despite being able to read the words. With support from facilitators, they worked through the meaning and understood their parts of the story. We have not yet checked whether they can do this independently.

(We observed it)

Learnings

Reading aloud did not always show understanding. Short passages, pair discussion and checking meaning in Malayalam helped us see what the girls understood. We need to spend more time checking meaning together before moving to acting or presentation.

The text of this report is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). To view a copy of the license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/. Photographs: all rights reserved.