

Paper Boat

A Request
for **your**
support

An Introduction

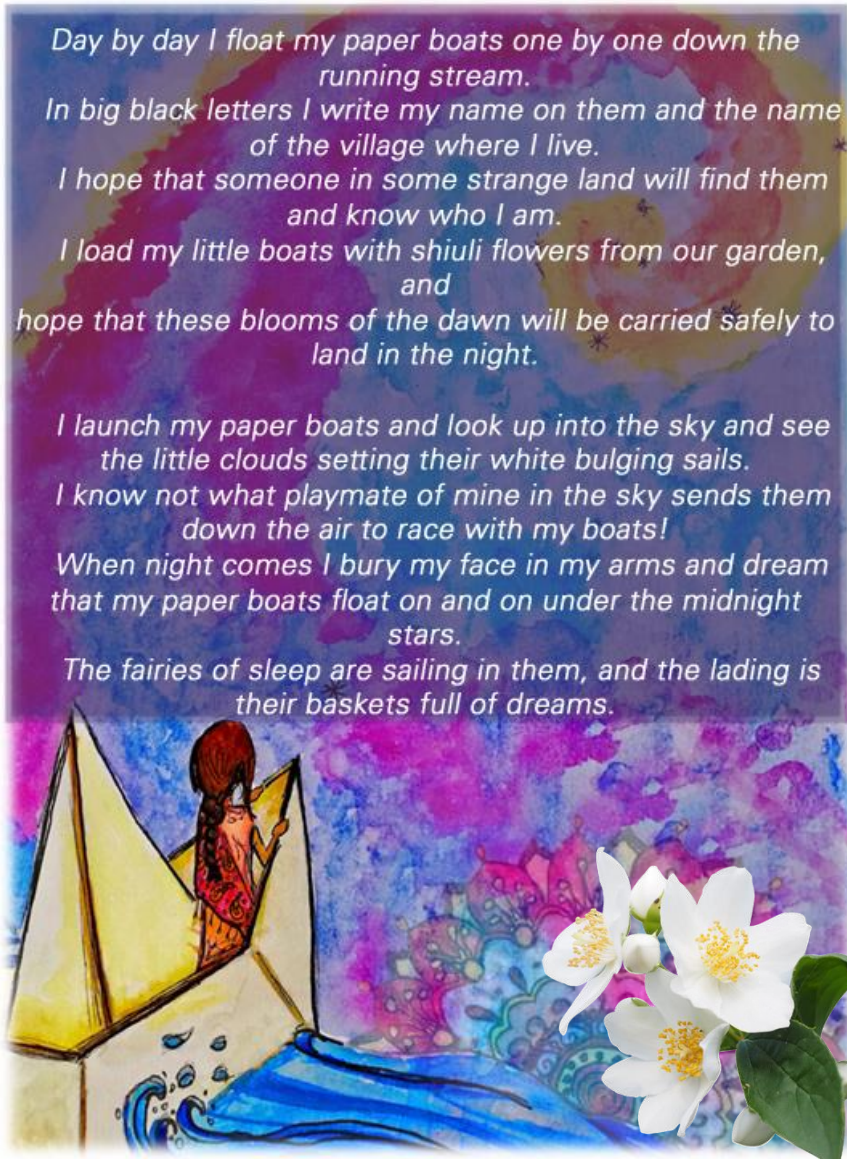


A world that unlocks the infinite potential of every child

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An Introduction



Ijaya is one of the many youngsters who explore creativity with us in our Children's Hubs. Before we met her, she believed that her whole world was limited to the confines of her village.

Alongside the poem by Rabindranath Tagore (see left), she was the inspiration for the little girl at the front of our paper boat, carrying shiuli flowers and baskets full of dreams towards a brighter future.

Shiuli flowers, or night-flowering jasmine, feature in many Indian stories about the cycle of life, hope and dreams for the future.

For over half a century, Paper Boat has worked in India and Thailand with more than 50,000 children. As with Ijaya, we have equipped them with the skills, experience and personal qualities needed for creative problem solving and leading change within their communities.

Our Children's Hubs are community owned spaces where photography, film making, art, sculpture and social drama can be discovered, unlocking the infinite potential of every child.

Inspiring and enabling children to change their world



Paper Boat's Children's Hubs

We work with local experts and grassroots community-based partners who help us to set up and run these hubs. Children's Hubs are community-owned spaces where children come to learn and play after school – helping to reinforce and, most importantly, extend what they learn in school.

We use a variety of 'creative entry points' (such as film making, photography, youth-journalism, art and social drama) so that children at the margins (from 'invisible communities') can find and amplify their voice – and so that they can increase their confidence and range of skills.

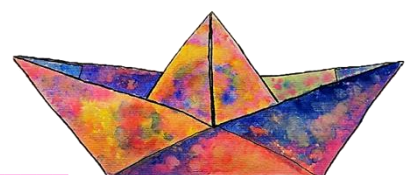
According to the World bank, India has the largest number of poor people in the world:

1 in every 5 people in India fall below the poverty line. They live off less than 50p per day, sometimes for the whole family.

From a population of over 1.3 billion, this is nearly 300 million people.



Paper Boat works with children and young people from the hardest to reach communities



Of more significance for our project, however, is the fact that India is one of the most unequal countries in the world – with the top 1% of the population owning more than 58% of the wealth.

Poverty impacts disproportionately on communities that have been most excluded from mainstream society, such as the ‘invisible’ communities that Paper Boat works with. These include those identified as ‘Scheduled Tribes’ and ‘Scheduled Castes’, like the Dalit communities (pejoratively referred to as ‘untouchable’ – therefore considered as impure, as a result of falling outside the caste system). Also the ‘denotified’ or so called ‘criminal tribes’ such as the Kuravar and the Irular – a Dravidian ethnic group/tribe whose name translates as ‘dark people’.

These communities are much more likely to experience extreme levels of poverty (in both rural and urban contexts) – with statistics suggesting that 43% of all poor people come from these highly marginalised groups.

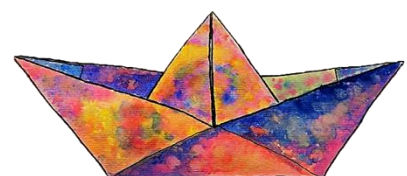
The children that Paper Boat work with are more likely than most to either have never have be enrolled in formal schooling, or experience disproportionate pressure to drop out.

A recent report from Human Rights Watch states:

“ Millions of children, particularly from vulnerable Dalit, Tribal and Muslim communities, facing discrimination, inadequate support in government schools, and pressures to earn money, soon drop out and start working. ”

Another Human Rights report highlighted some of the difficulties experienced by Dalit children:

“ During the year there were reports that school officials barred Dalit children from morning prayers, asked Dalit children to sit at the back of the class, or forced Dalit children to clean school toilets while denying them access to the same facilities. There were also reports that teachers refused to correct the homework of Dalit children, refused to provide midday meals to Dalit children, and asked Dalit children to sit separately from children of upper-caste families. ”



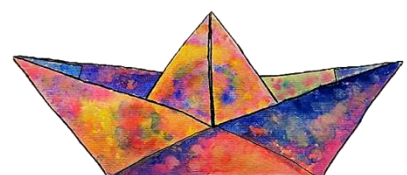
Paper Boat responds to this situation by providing improved access to inclusive community-based learning environments for children from these hard to reach communities. The primary beneficiaries are children and young people from Tamil Nadu where our projects are based. According to the latest census figures, they represent 21% of Tamil Nadu's 72 million population.



At the core of 'how we work' are child-centred creative learning spaces - called Children's Hubs - that equip young people with the skills, experience and personal qualities needed for creative problem solving and leading change in their communities.

Complex problem solving, critical thinking and creativity are essential life-long learning skills for every child growing up in a rapidly changing and unpredictable world. They are particularly important for the young people that Paper Boat works with (children who live their lives at the margins) all too often invisible and unheard. Our playful and inclusive Children's Hubs help them to harness their creativity so that are seen, heard, valued and empowered – and also able to contribute to their communities and change their world.

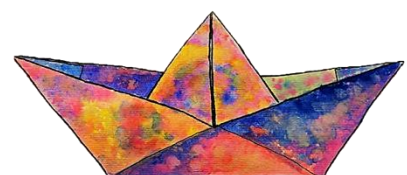
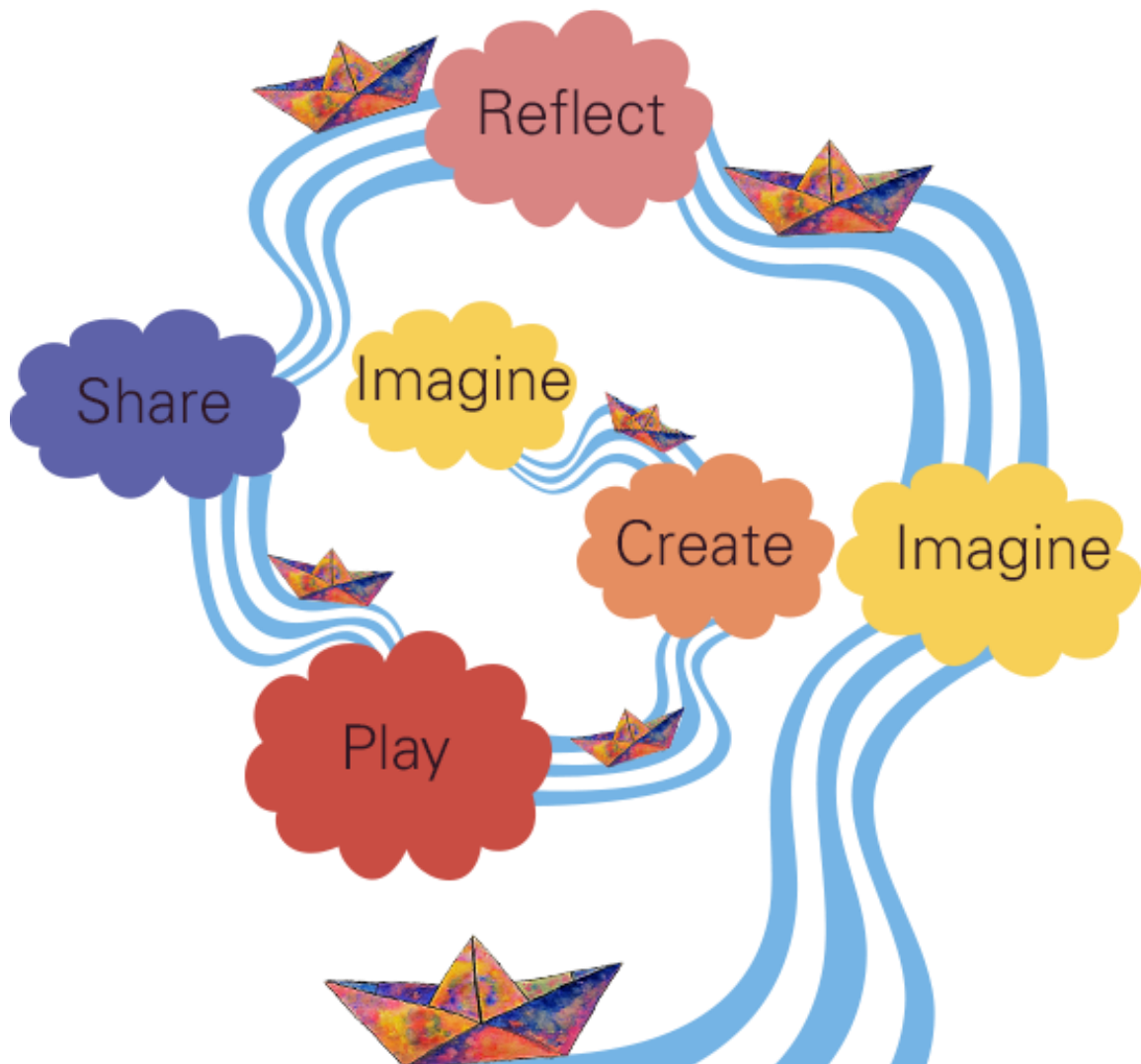
Inspiring and enabling children to change their world



We have developed innovative learning resources for use within the hubs that enable young people to engage in project-based problem-solving activities.

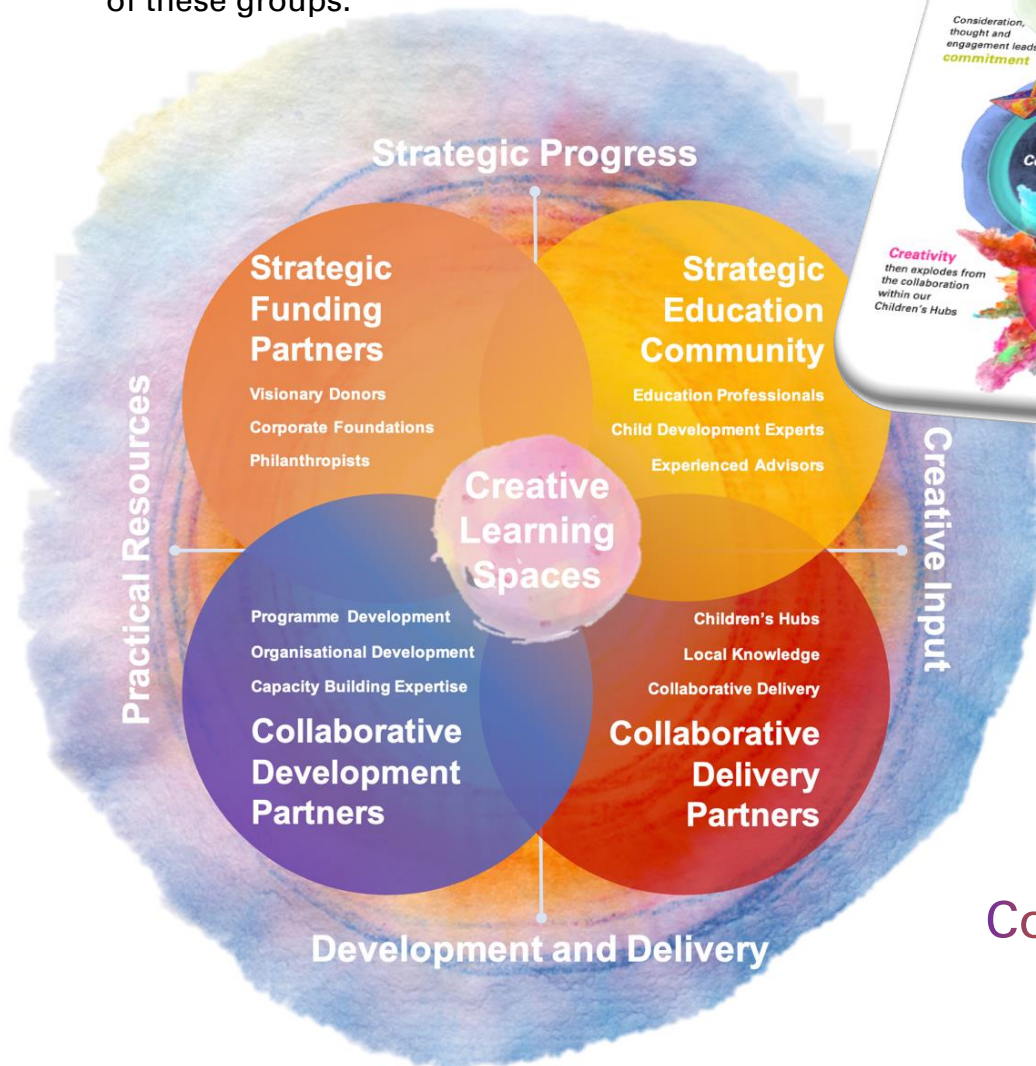
Our approach is inspired by MIT Media Lab's 'Learning Creative Learning' programme, which highlights a Creative Learning Spiral that invites children to:

- **IMAGINE**..... what they want to do
- **CREATE**..... a project based on their ideas
- **PLAY**..... with their creations
- **SHARE**..... their ideas and creations with others
- **REFLECT**..... on their ideas and creations with others...all of which leads them to...
- **IMAGINE**..... new ideas and new projects



Can you collaborate with us?

Could you, or your organisation, contribute to one of these groups:



Do you share our values:

Courage
child centred

Creativity
innovative action

Collaboration
stronger together

If so, please contact us at:

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