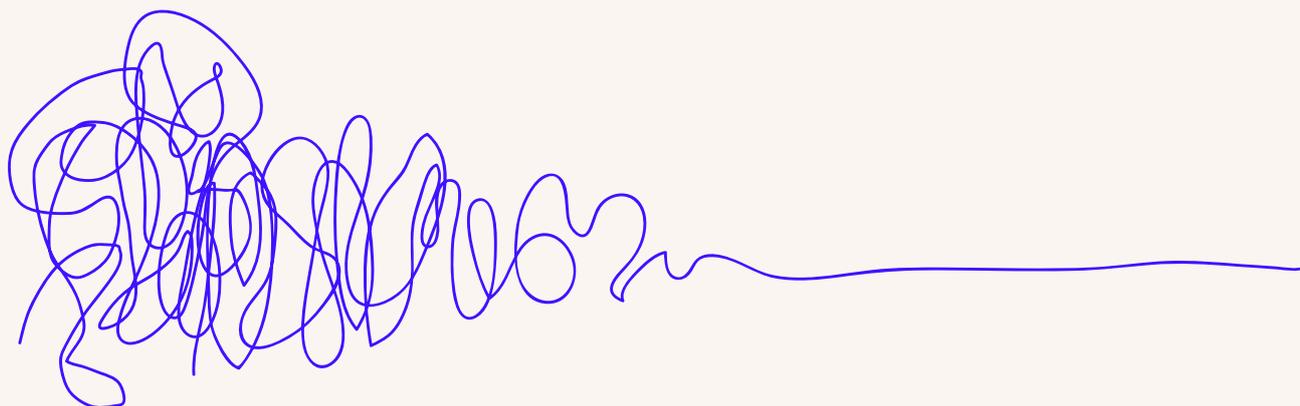


We are looking for children's book creators to produce a picture book, a graphic novel, a work of fiction, or non-fiction, that has the power to connect with young readers universally.


neev
literature
festival
2023



Information Booklet **NLF Fellowships** *for Children's* **Book Creators**

Fellowship of ₹6,00,000 awarded to selected book creators
neevliteraturefestival.org/fellowships

A story that's *rooted in India*

A story that *inspires*
imagination

A story that *transcends* lands
and oceans

A story that *fosters* emotional
connections

A story that *moves* the world

Can you bring that story to life?

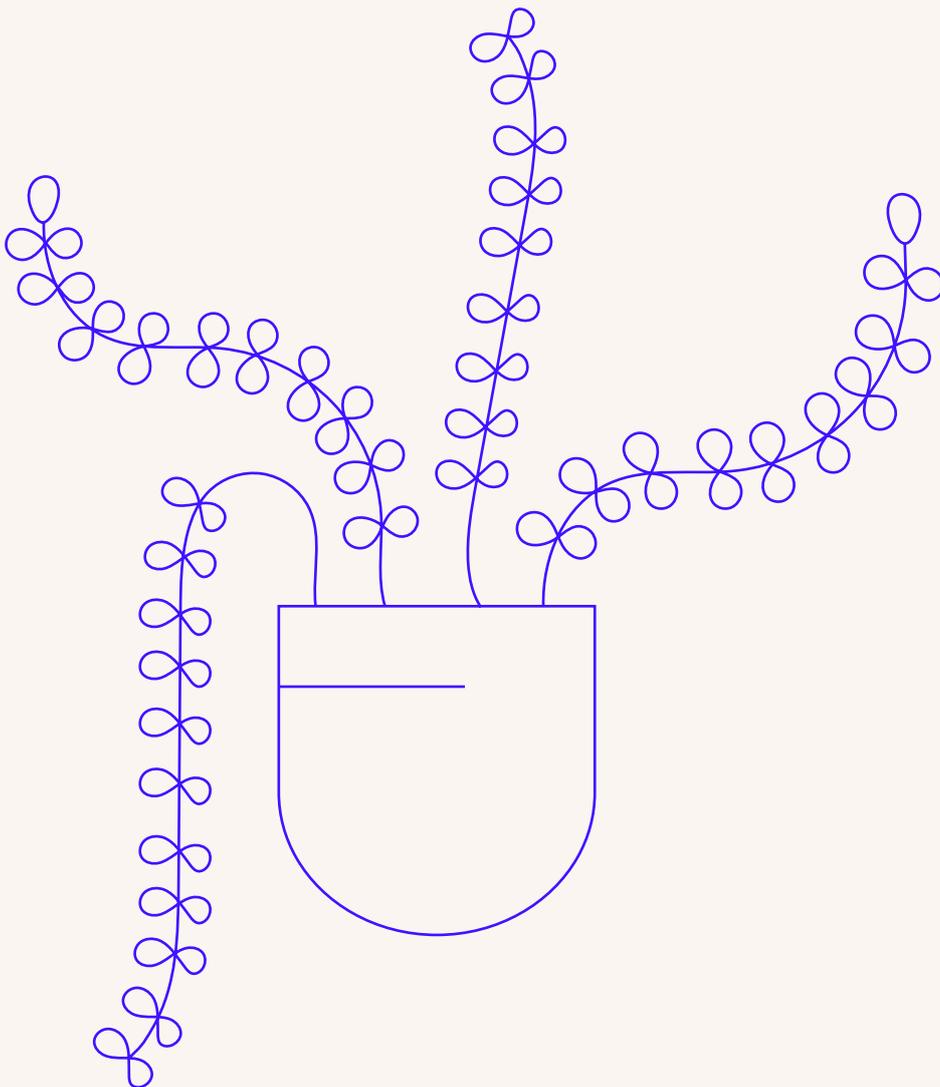
Overview

The Neev Literature Festival (NLF) is offering Fellowships of Rs 6 lakh to selected children's book creators (writers and illustrators) to produce richly-detailed manuscripts that authentically mirror Indian lives and require a significant investment of time and effort.

Who

You are a **storyteller; writer; illustrator; researcher; journalist;** who's looking to create an Indian Children's book that is evergreen, classic, and could well be one of the finest stories ever told.

You are so excited by the idea that you'd love spending time researching, writing, reviewing, and fine-tuning your work to create an Indian children's book that is on a par with national and global greats.





The project

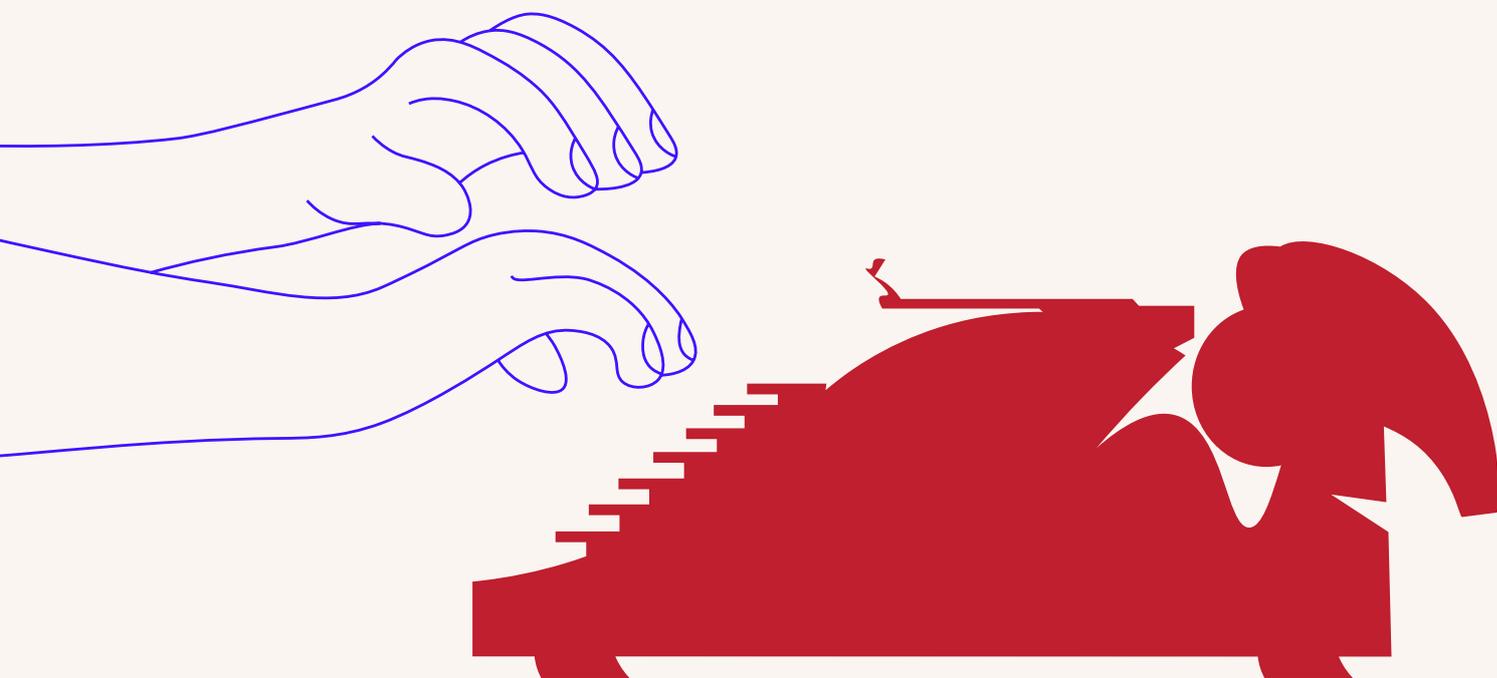
Write a children's book that brings alive a story that children, parents, and librarians fall in love with. A story that captures a slice of India or Indians (anywhere in the world) that is so deeply authentic, moving and immersive that it brings alive an aspect of India—pre- and post-independence—in an engaging book.

The work will be true to the era that it depicts, bringing alive people and place effectively.

You'll produce

A complete manuscript for a book—text (in case of a chapter book), or text and illustrations (in case of a picture book developed either by an author-illustrator, or a collaboration between an author and an illustrator).

The work will be expected to meet a global benchmark for children's literature.

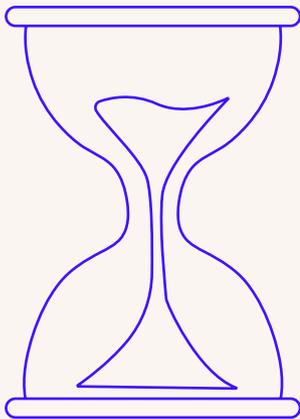
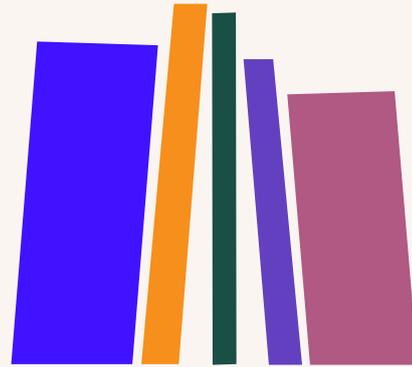


You'll receive

A grant of Rs 4 lakh to complete your manuscript in 1 year.

This will be payable as monthly installments over 12 months.

The balance of Rs 2 lakh will be payable once a publishing contract is signed.



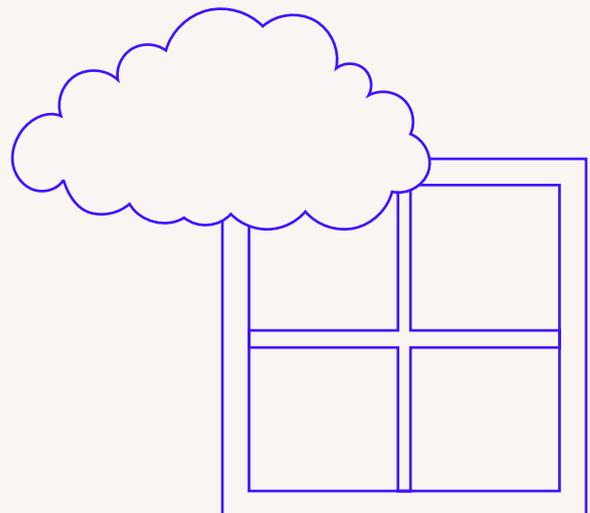
When

Launch of Fellowships:
March, 2023

Announcement of Fellows:
October, 2023 during the Neev Literature Festival

Where

This is a remote work-opportunity for Indian citizens and residents who are persons of Indian origin with mandatory check-in visits to Bangalore.



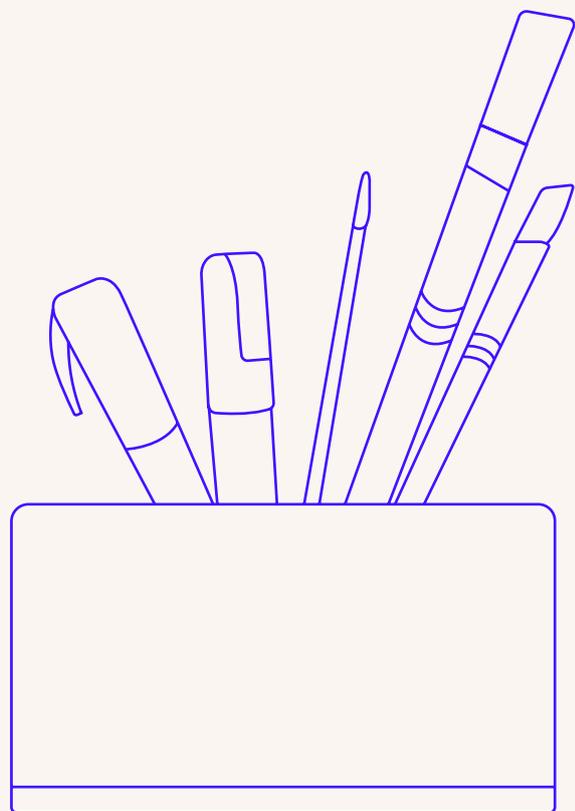
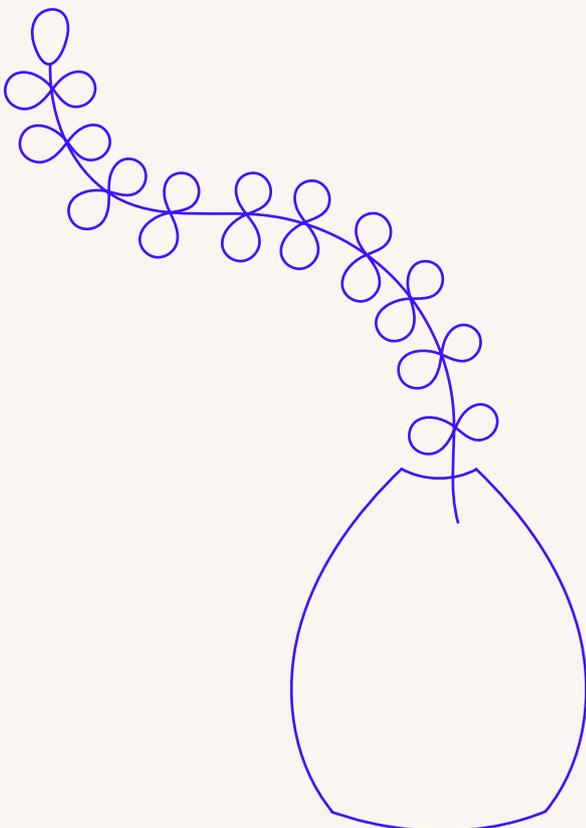
Our Perspective

Over the years, we have seen Indian books for young adults such as *Sultana's Dream* by Begum Rokheya Hussain being far ahead of their time, or works such as *Inga* by Poile Sengupta, *Year of the Weeds* by Siddhartha Sarma, and *Oonga* by Devashish Makhija, place specific communities and their stories front and centre of a narrative.

However, these wonderful books have little visibility in India when compared to works such as the *Harry Potter series*, the largest and most popular global series to sell across the country. There is no doubt that J K Rowling's work is engaging, provocative, wonderfully paced, character-driven, and makes for excellent writing all around.

While the marketing push is well deserved, this could easily also be applied to books by other great authors like Jacqueline Woodson and Kate diCamillo from the USA, Morris Gleitzman from Australia, The Fan Brothers from Canada, and so many others who are very popular worldwide, but not as much in India.

Could a children's book by an Indian author carve a space for itself in the market as the *Harry Potter* series has done?



Key Highlights about the Indian Children's Book Industry

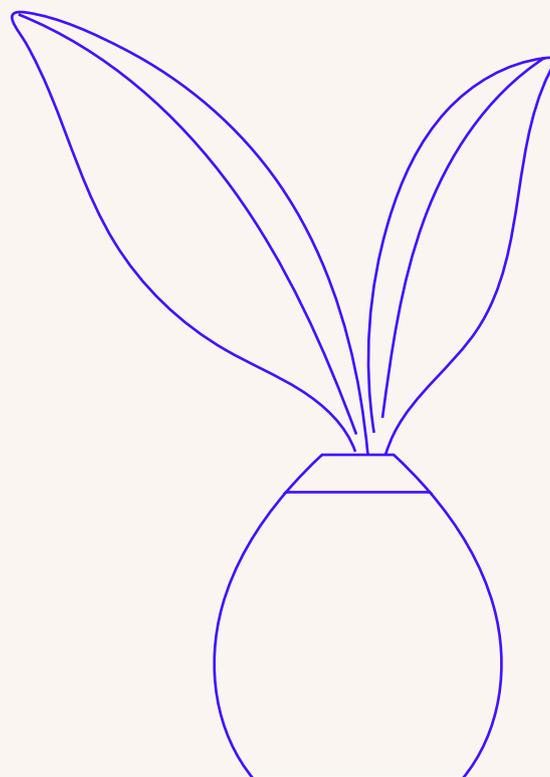
Literary agent Kanishka Gupta interviewed stakeholders across the industry when researching the obstacles to market and sell Indian children's titles internationally. In response to his queries, Shobha Viswanath, Karadi Tales' publishing director and co-founder, attributed one major challenge to the quality of content available.

"The international standard - especially for picture books - is very high. The international market usually expects illustrations that are often quite abstract and imaginative as opposed to literal. Indian books also tend to be a bit didactic which is something the international market has moved away from," she said.

Kanishka's research highlights the fact that there is little money to be made in the domestic children's book industry. Print runs tend to be in the range of 2000-3000 copies per title, which is significantly lower than the global standard.

The Indian children's market is also very price sensitive, and the advances for authors are quite low. This could start at a token sum of INR 5,000 to 10,000 and go up to INR 30,000 to 50,000; far lower than what is given to authors writing for adult audiences.

Indian children's and young adult publishing is estimated to be about 25% of the total trade market in India (INR 28.824 billion), thereby pegging its value to be INR 7.206 billion, as per the Nielsen India Book Market Report from December, 2022.



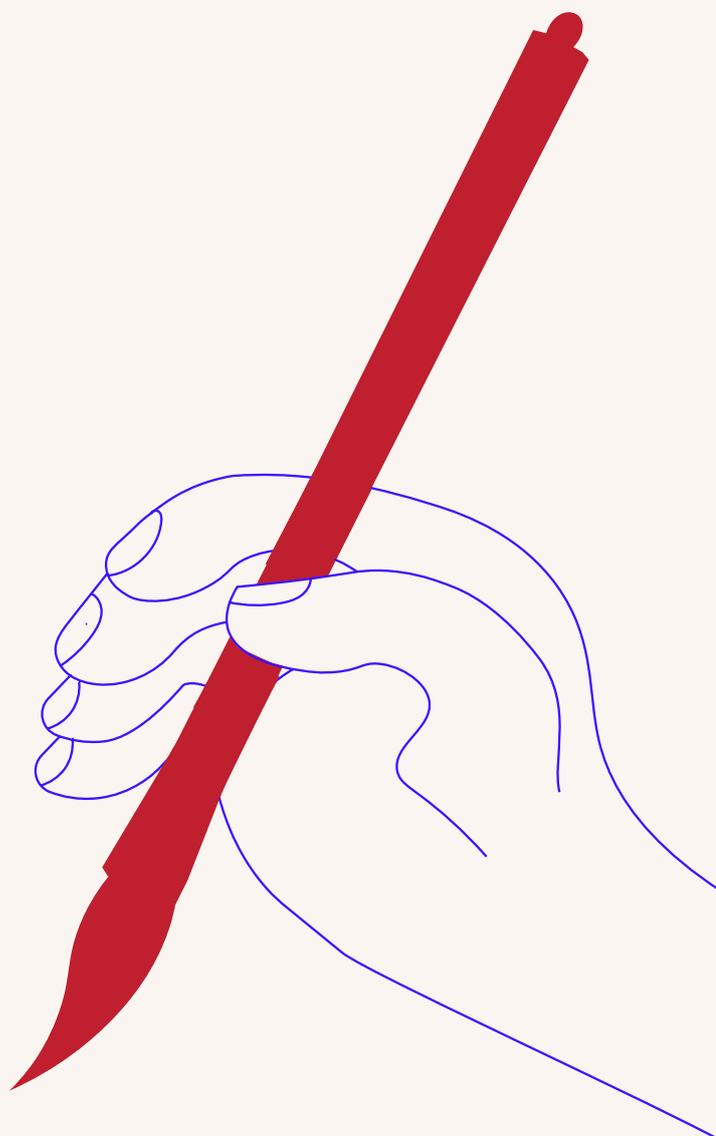
What we've seen

In contemporary Indian children's publishing, we have seen books that revolve around mythology, folk tales, historical fiction, urban lives, mental health, disability, activism, communalism, and marginalisation.

What we've not seen

We have not seen as much of visual narratives such as *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan; novels in verse; accounts of immigration from countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar; graphic novels, and richly illustrated books for middle grade; dystopia; or pairings of related fiction and nonfiction.

We would like great Indian stories to fill these gaps, and others that we may have missed identifying in the list above.



Our Motivation

We believe that India has the writing talent to create bodies of work that are comparable with the world's greats but we also recognize that it takes time for a great book to be written. We would like for readers today to have access to books where writers and illustrators are able to have the luxury of time to develop their manuscript at length.

NLF is looking to enrich Indian children's publishing by launching the **NLF Fellowships for Children's Book Creators**.

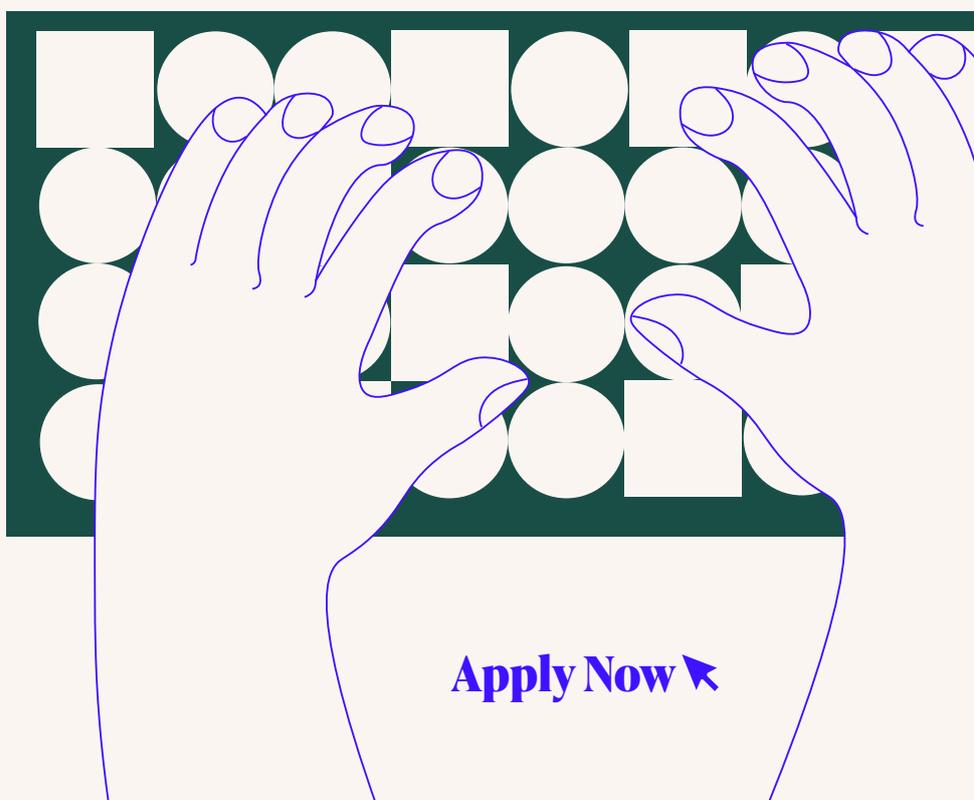
In a country as varied across territories as ours, our choices are dictated by a pluralism of values that may arise from our polytheism, heterogeneity of culture and geographies. Instead of one overarching value, might there

be a set of universal values that our children may absorb from the stories that they read?

We want children to have access to books that go beyond telling a single story of what it means to be Indian, that speak more honestly about our lived realities.

We believe our children need to see affirming images of themselves in a wide range of Indian stories in order to develop a strong sense of identity.

The desire to read Indian books is beginning to take off across the country, but we need a body of work that compels readers to share their shelf space accordingly.

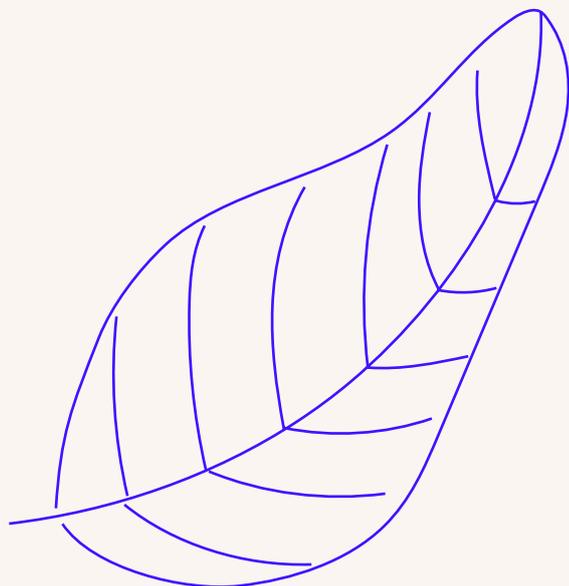
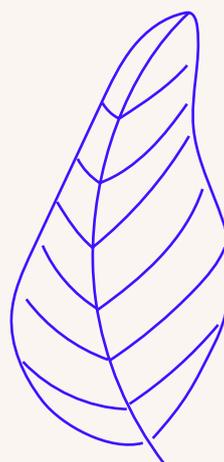


What we'll do

Provide mentorship and editorial support.

Greater visibility and appreciation for well-crafted books.

Explore realistic routes to take these books global.



Terms & Conditions

Fellows will engage with the NLF team at regular intervals on the manuscript's progress.

The Fellowship may be revoked or discontinued if a manuscript remains unfinished over the course of a year.

The NLF Fellowship may not be combined with another grant to produce a book.

Balancing Creativity & Discipline

There will never be a prescription for creators—writers and illustrators—to create incredible work, or an optimal way to do so that is set in stone. Each one's process is varied and inspiration rarely comes announced. Yet there is something we believe can only add to the process and that is 'discipline'. There is no substitute for discipline.

There could be days of no spark and some days that creativity gushes through you.

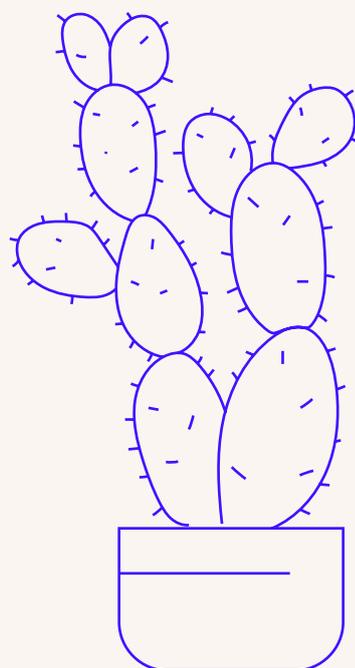
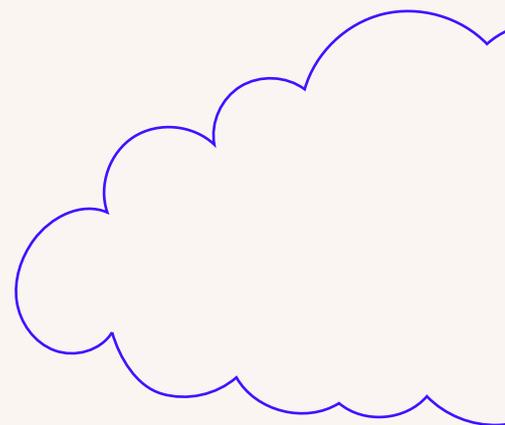
The point is to show up everyday as a creator and try. Allow for a clean slate and ample mind space to be inspired to tell your story.

We believe that writing or illustrating a good story is akin to cooking great food: both are cooked with immense love, tenderness and over a slow fire, with authentic and pure ingredients and both leave an after-taste that stays forever in your heart.

There are stories waiting to be told, of India and of Indians unseen, unheard.

We believe writing needs to be supported, celebrated, encouraged.

The NLF Fellowships are our commitment towards bringing our stories to life, and spotlight them on the world stage.



How to apply

Scan the QR Code below or [click here](#) to fill out a form on the NLF website



Finalists will have atleast one round of interviews with panels constituted by the NLF.

The public announcement revealing the names of Fellows will be made during the Neev Literature Festival in October, 2023.

Do write to us at literaturefestival@neevschools.com for any queries.