



# The Tree of Life

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The presentation starts with a story: Bitoo  
Srivi Kalyan

International Conference on *Rethink Redesign: Towards Socially Responsible Design*. Organized by Stella Maris College and Lalit Kala Academy

28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Imagine you are a 6 year old.

You want **someone/ something** to help you think. - A thinking Aid

**Draw** this character/ **write** a few sentences about this character

It could be a person in your life/ an imaginative character





a story...

Bitoo



by **Srivi**





Bitoo's parents loved him  
His teachers loved him  
His friends loved him  
He loved himself

And then everybody wanted to teach Bitoo...  
Ofcourse he loved learning, but they always told him what, when, how, why he should do the arts.

“We are helping *you* grow up into a wonderful young man, Bitoo”

is all they would say.





A wonderful young man!  
and how about me,

**Bitoo**  
the wonderful little kid?

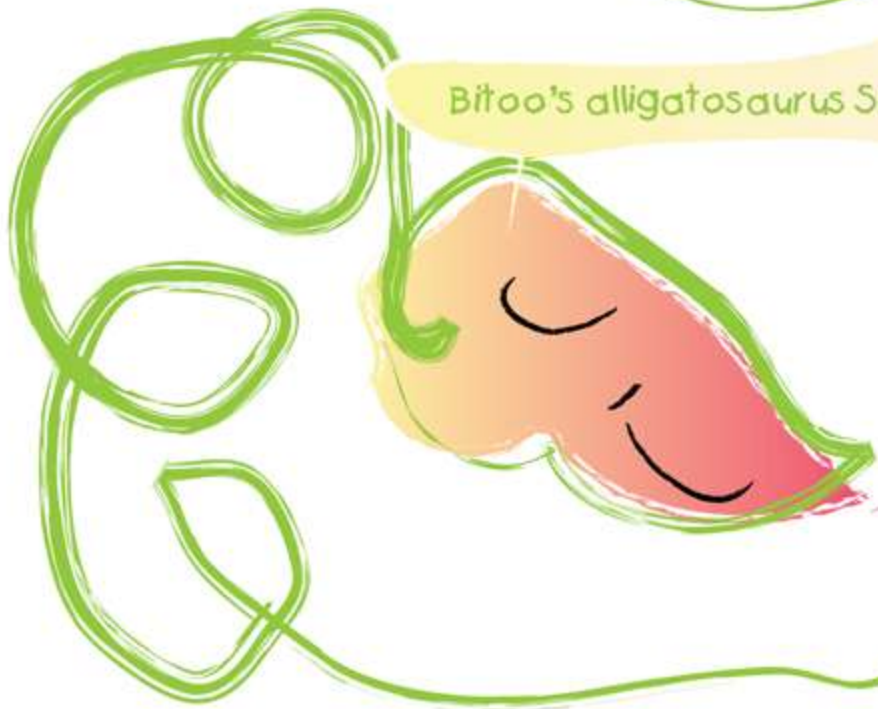




Of course I know the difference between an  
alligator, a dinosaur and a snake!

And him! - he is my friend,  
the great alligatOsaurus snake and he isn't even scary!

Bitoo's alligatosaurus Snake



They are helping me.  
I must grow up.  
I must go to the museum and  
watch the paintings.  
I must not laugh when I know that the artist

**squished**

his painting tube to paint  
that picture on the wall.

Oh them paintings,  
they are very serious things!

Ofcourse! I am growing up!



Oh! But I am **GRO**WING **U**<sub>P</sub>

Can I look at the rainbow tailed  
monster book just  
once more?



Maybe Little Bitoo doesn't have to speak anymore.  
Maybe it doesn't matter!

Oh! But I am **GRO**WING **U**<sub>P</sub>

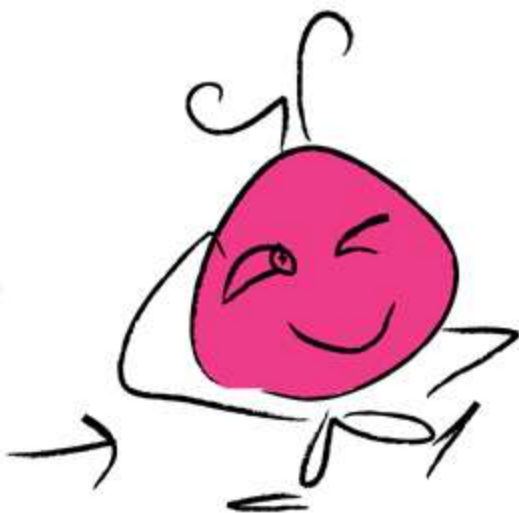


And then Bitoo was just a tiny spot;  
Little Bitoo who could think of winksinktinkoos that help him think...



Bitoo's

the winksinktinkoos →

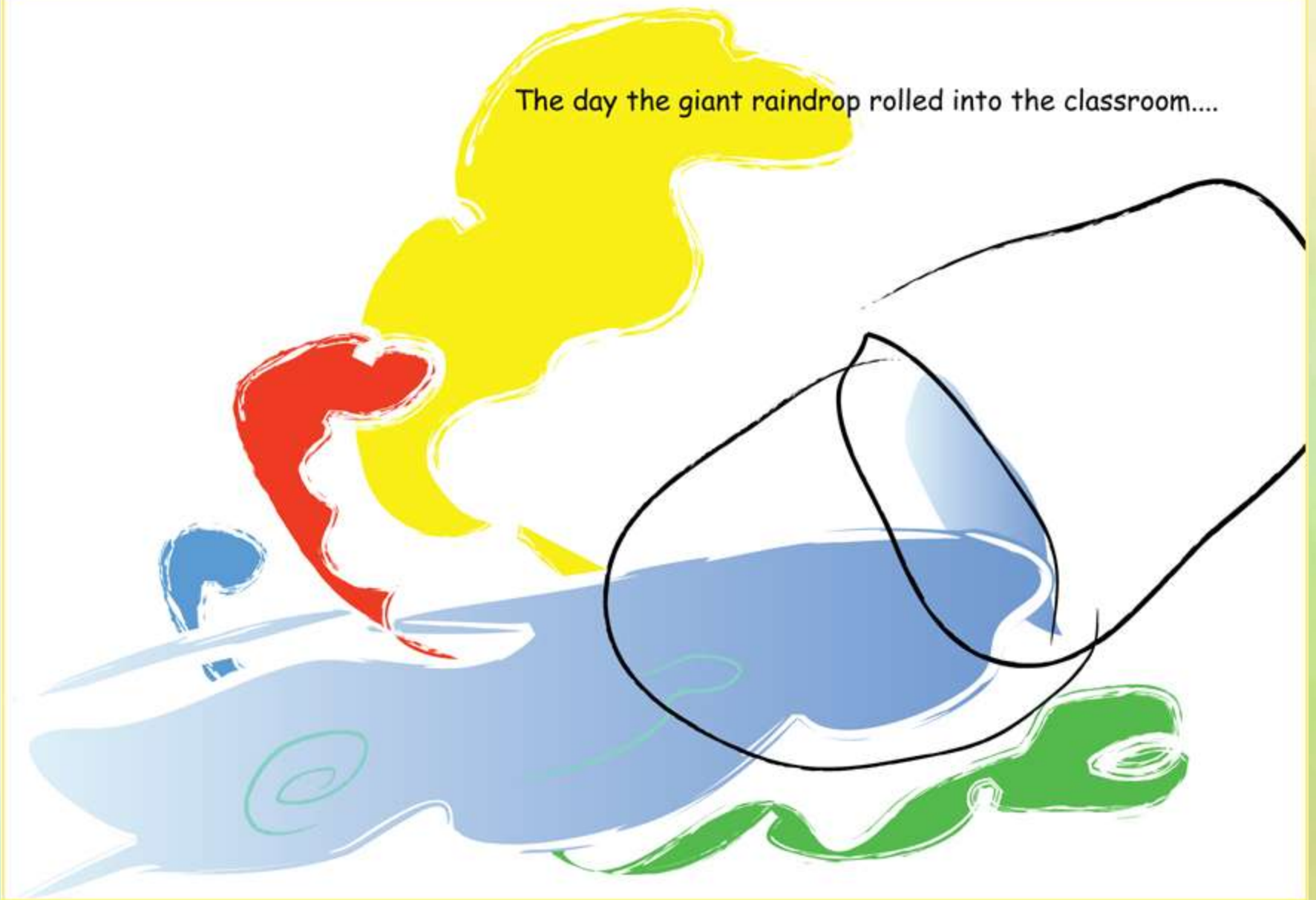




Little Bitoo,  
who could think of giant raindrops  
that rolled him into an art class...  
was now an even tinier spot.



The day the giant raindrop rolled into the classroom....



And then Little Bitoo  
was no more...

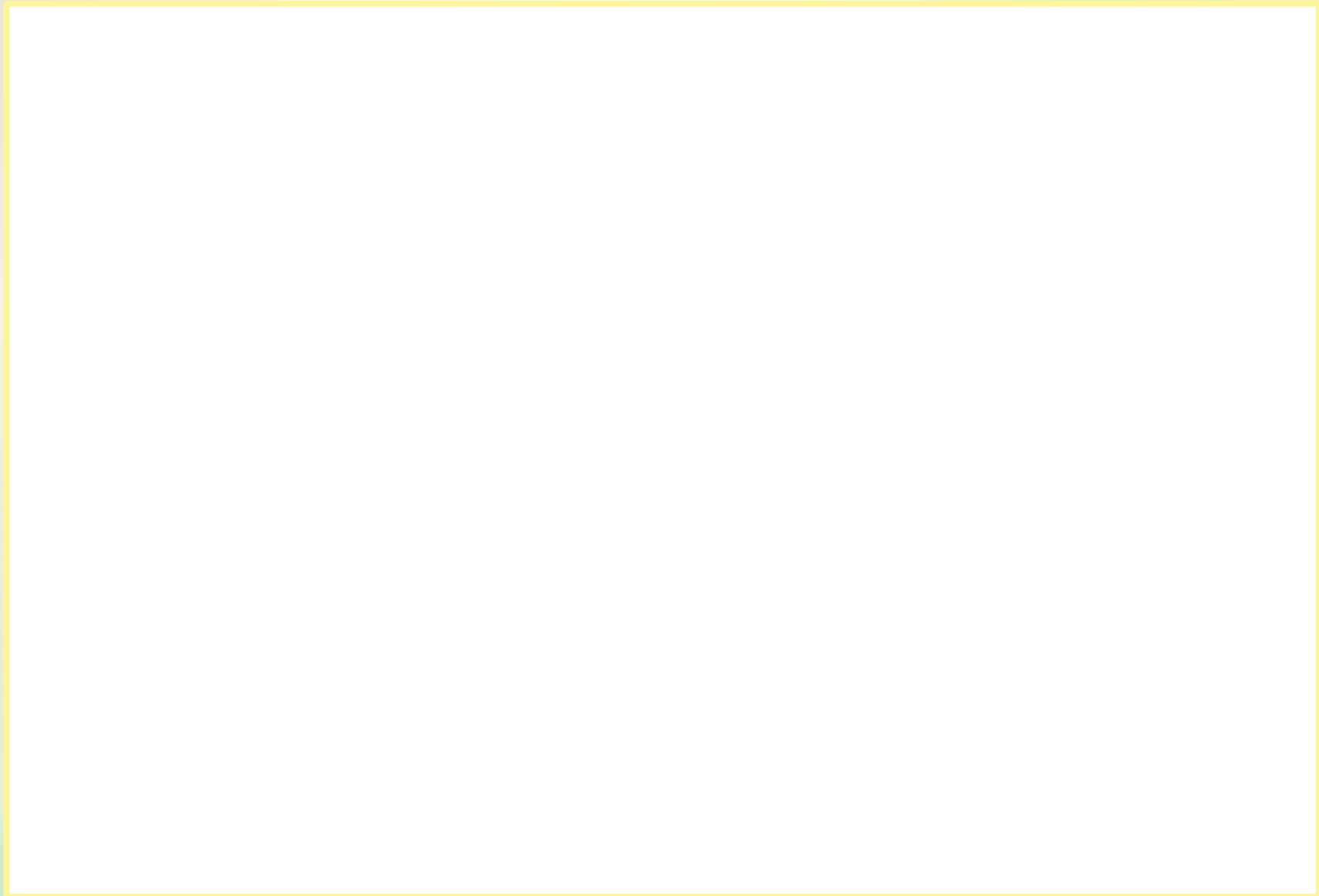
He had

Grown  
up

into a perfect wonderful young man...

# Bitoo





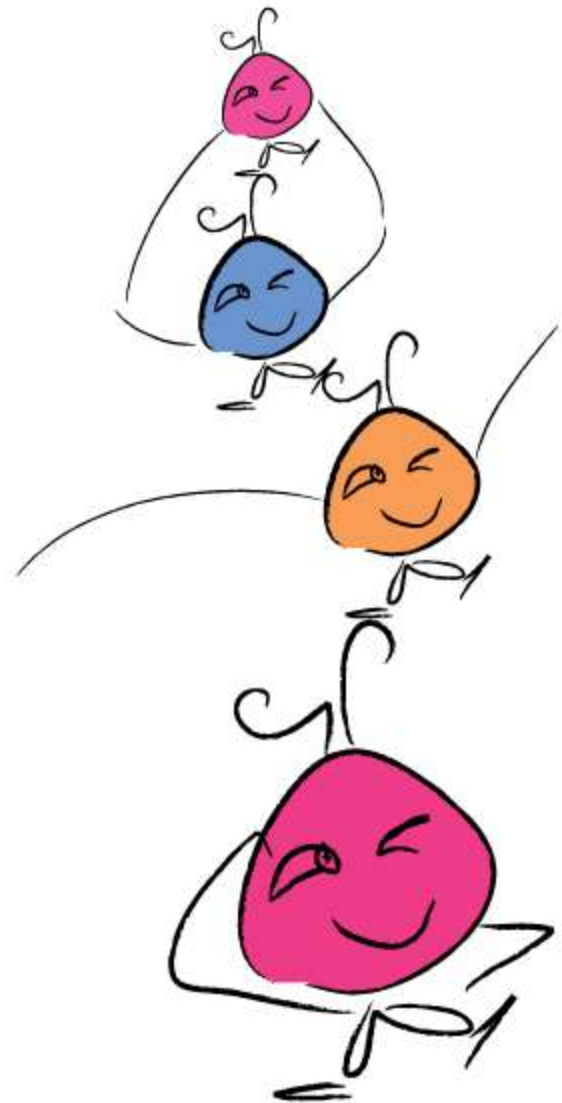
Are we listening to children's  
ideas as we plan for them?

Are we listening to their  
thinking?

Perhaps their think processes  
are called

**WInksinktiNKoos**

and it's time for us to learn  
just that!





# The Tree of Life

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**Making learning a thoughtful, fun and lifelong journey**  
**Srivi Kalyan**

29 January 2010



Change the Viewpoint!

*Between the self  
and the universe, a  
tree grows and it  
encompasses us  
all. And if I had not  
fallen in love with  
that tree, I may not  
have found my  
vocation, my song,  
my story or my  
art...*



- Designer, Illustrator, Educator, Artist, Thinker, Writer, Student, Dancer ... Entrepreneur ... I have always fumbled when someone asks me to define what I do in some known formal terminology/career path.
- I think I have been climbing the tree of life, sitting under the shade of its branches, listening to the rustle of the leaves, building tree houses, lying down on the strong branches, counting stars through countless leaves and drawing strength and joy from the tree as I fall in love with it time and again.



I love the tree  
the song tree,  
the dancing tree eee,  
green purple, yellow,  
autumn  
and  
many  
coloured  
fruits  
i love the tree  
branch,  
trunk,  
bark,  
dream  
and me

And it is  
from trees  
that I have  
learnt  
much  
about

Design,  
education  
and life.

Can we write a curriculum for life?

- Some learnings from students



Maybe a curriculum for life, but definitely no lesson plans and definitely not today! We want to climb the tree!





But Srivi Ma'm, why should we learn history and why should we draw these? They are so difficult...





And that is my elephant! MINE, I will paint it blue!



Let's rethink human existence, life and the philosophy of living!





Each petal holds a deep philosophy, each design has been carefully thought out!

We are very proud of our work!





**Why does this have to end?  
Can't we paint everyday... and  
not have classes?**







Do you mean to say we can really scribble? Really?





And what have you hidden in your scribbles?... Perhaps the curriculum for life...

Freedom,  
Space,  
Time,  
Energy,  
Democracy  
Trust  
And  
Leadership

As tough as it gets along the way, children have constantly encouraged me to create a classroom culture with these.

In each of my classes/workshops, there have been moments of pure fun, serious mischief, mistakes, dedication to work, escapades, exasperation, lots of joy and learning.

“According to Indian folklore, a child taught without taking its instincts into consideration is like a caged parrot which has forgotten its own language, but can go on repeating the words taught to him by his master.”

Devi Prasad

Prasad, Devi. Art: The Basis Of Education(1998),National Book Trust, New Delhi, p.43.



*Loris Malaguzzi, architect of the pedagogical and philosophical thinking that permeates the Reggio experience, once said that we need a teacher who is sometimes the director, sometimes the set designer, sometimes the curtain and the backdrop and sometimes the prompter. A teacher who is both sweet and stern, who is the electrician, who dispenses the paints and who is even the audience who watches, sometimes, claps, sometimes remains silent, full of emotion, who sometimes judges with skepticism, and at other times applauds with enthusiasm.*

Rinaldi, C., Reggio Children & Project Zero (2001). Documentation and Assessment: What is the Relationship. In *Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners*. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children srl, 78-89.

- Can such a teacher and such an exciting set of students become a Design product/ Design experience?
- Can such a design experience create new meanings in diverse classrooms?
- Can such classrooms move towards fun, thoughtful and lifelong learning?
- Can students of such classrooms design new and more holistic ways of living?

## The Sesame Experience

- The Michael Susan and Dell Foundation program
  - Design of interactive educational products for Slum children in the metros
  - Teachers who are often eight grade pass-outs
  - Low budgets, Training programs, Partnership building

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# The Story Pond

- Literacy, language, diversity
- A kit for 3-6 year olds to learn basic vocabulary, construct sentences and develop narratives as part of play













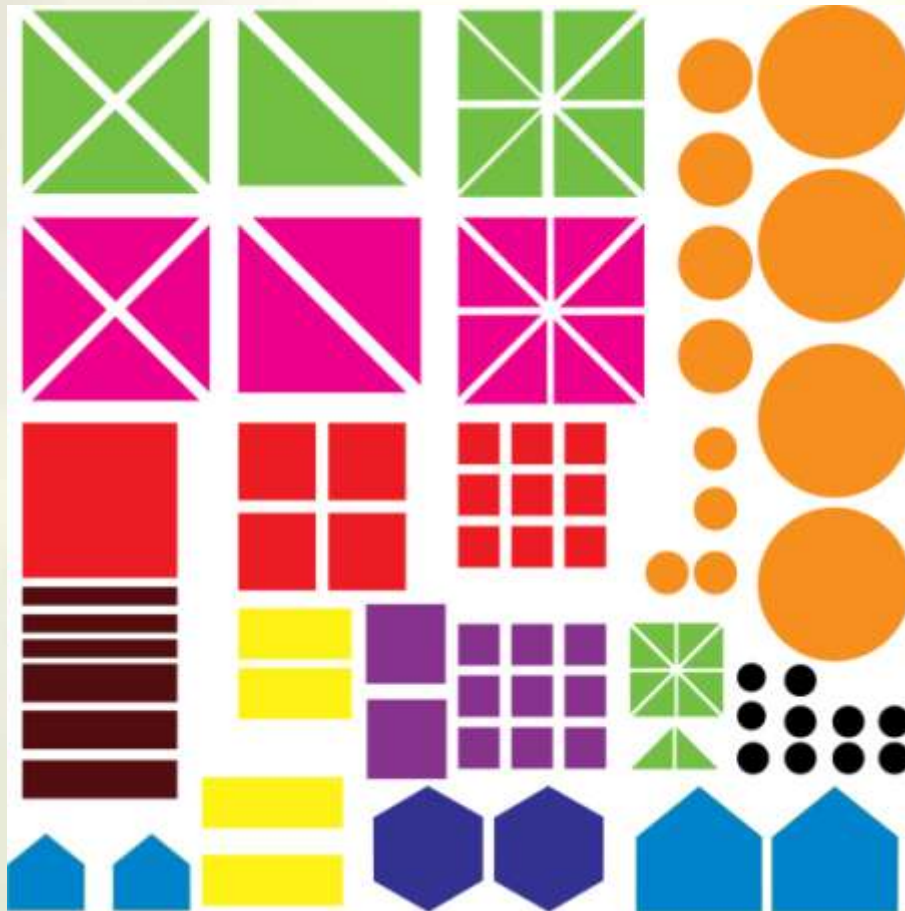






## Googly's World of Shapes

- Math kit to teach about basic shapes, using shapes to construct forms, and wondering about the role of shapes in everyday life



















## The Scribble Kit

A kit for children to enjoy pre-writing, and understand the connection between their scribbles and their emotions.

1

123

## GALLI GALLI SIM SIM.

Funny scribbles

V&lt;h&amp;e|&lt;h ydhj|



She said, "My chalk becomes a car and goes zigzag, zigzag, zigzag, zoom!... on the blackboard."

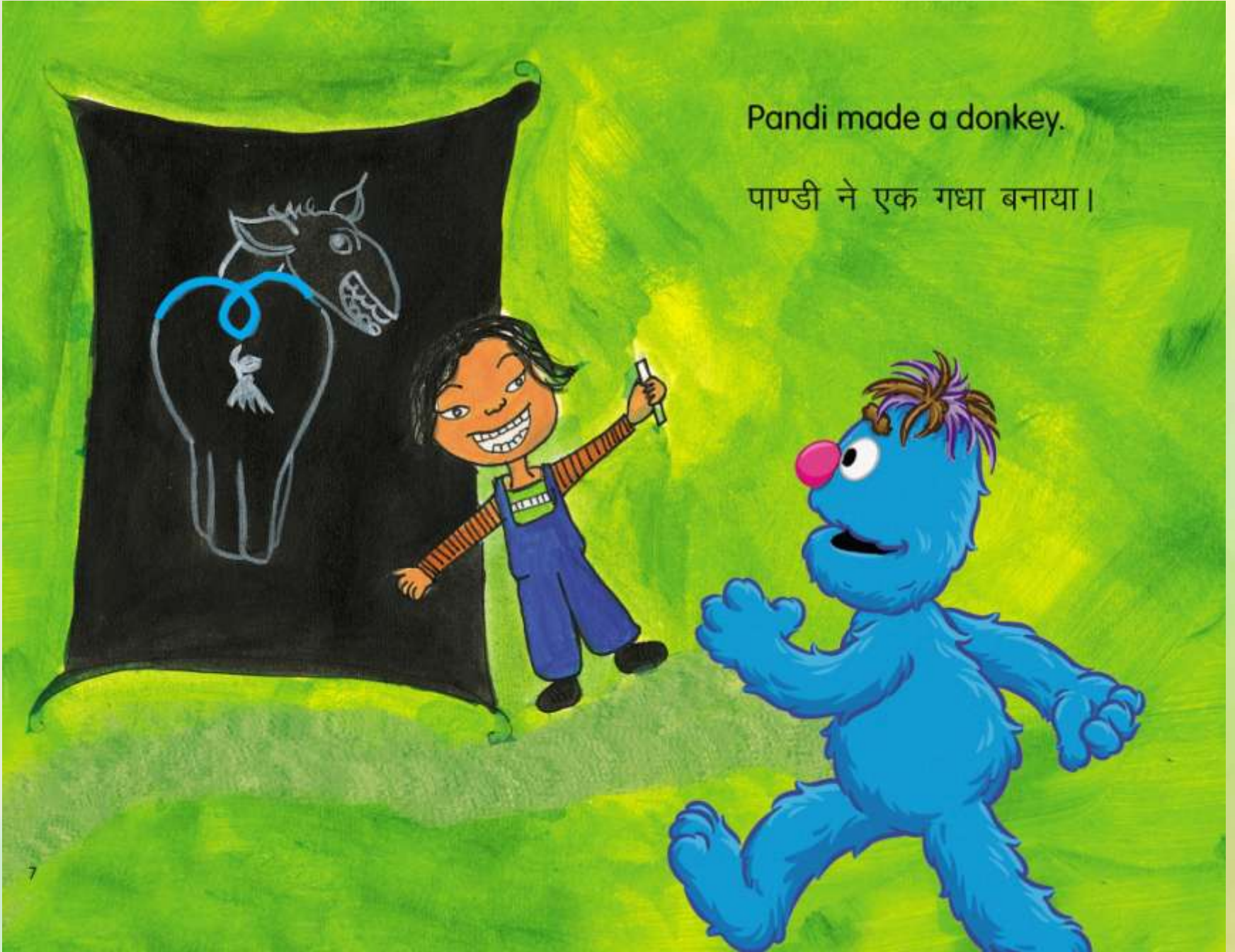
उसने कहा, "मेरी चॉक एक कार बन जाती है और ब्लैकबोर्ड पर टेढ़ी-मेढ़ी, सरपट भागती है।"





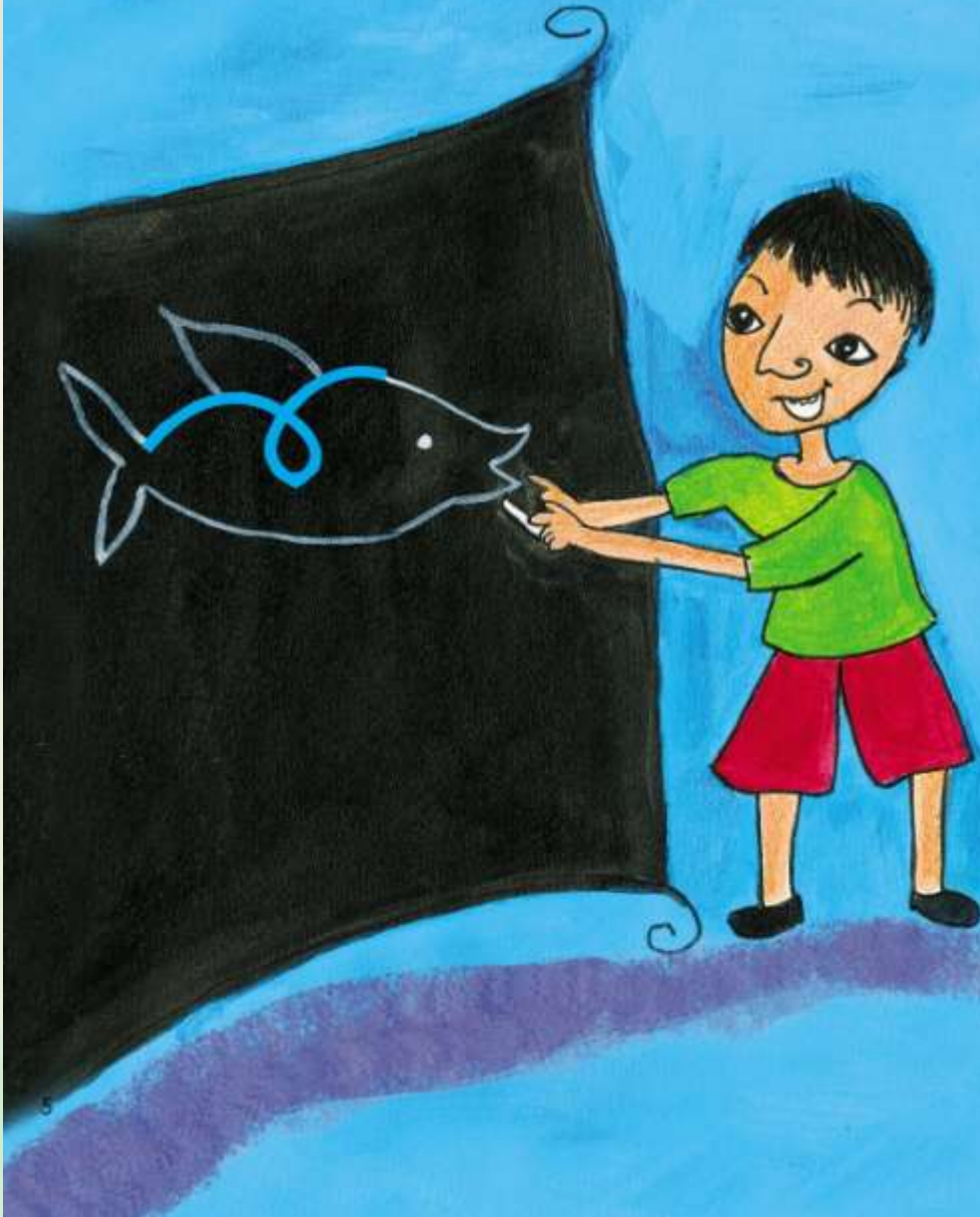
Pandi made a donkey.

पाण्डी ने एक गधा बनाया ।



Golu made a fish.

गोलू ने एक मछली  
बनाई।





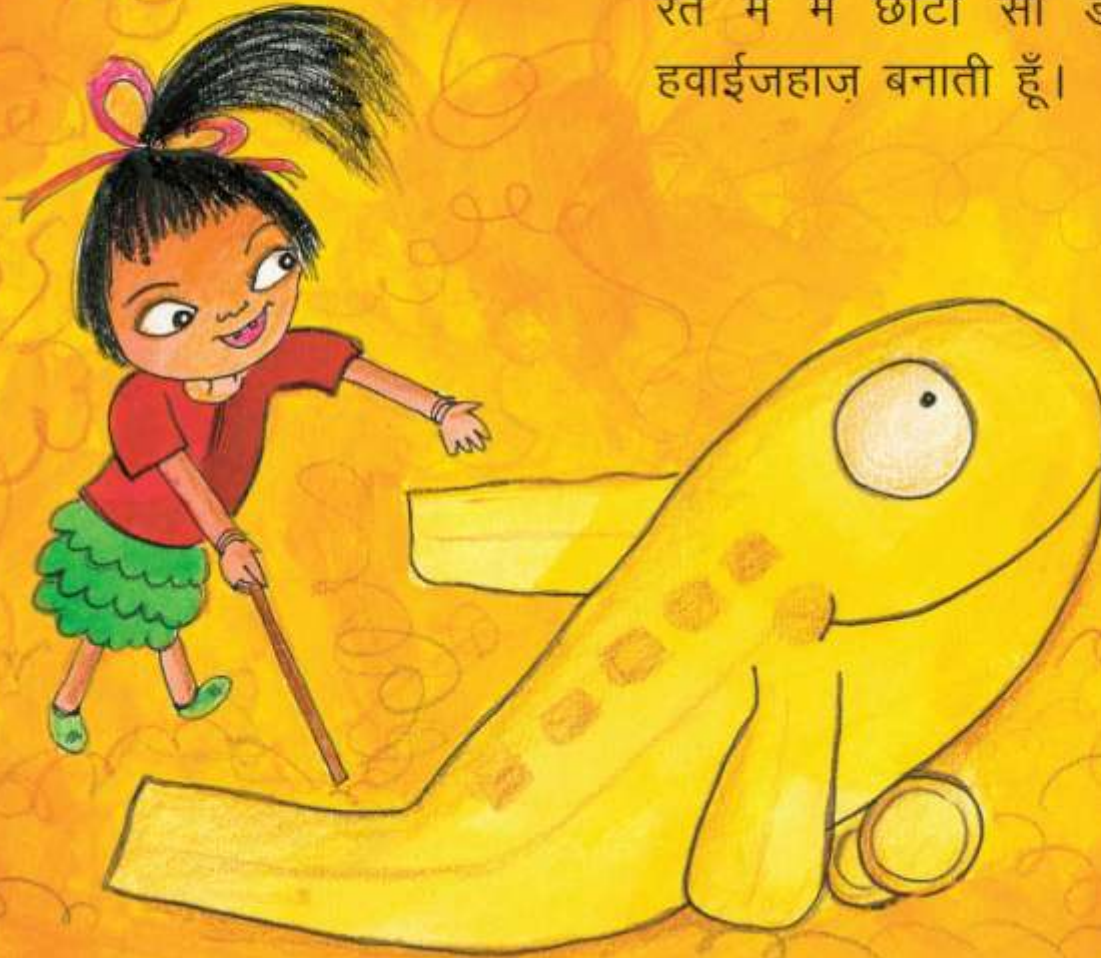
I love to scribble.

मुझे टेढ़ी-मेढ़ी लकीरें खींचना बहुत पसंद है।

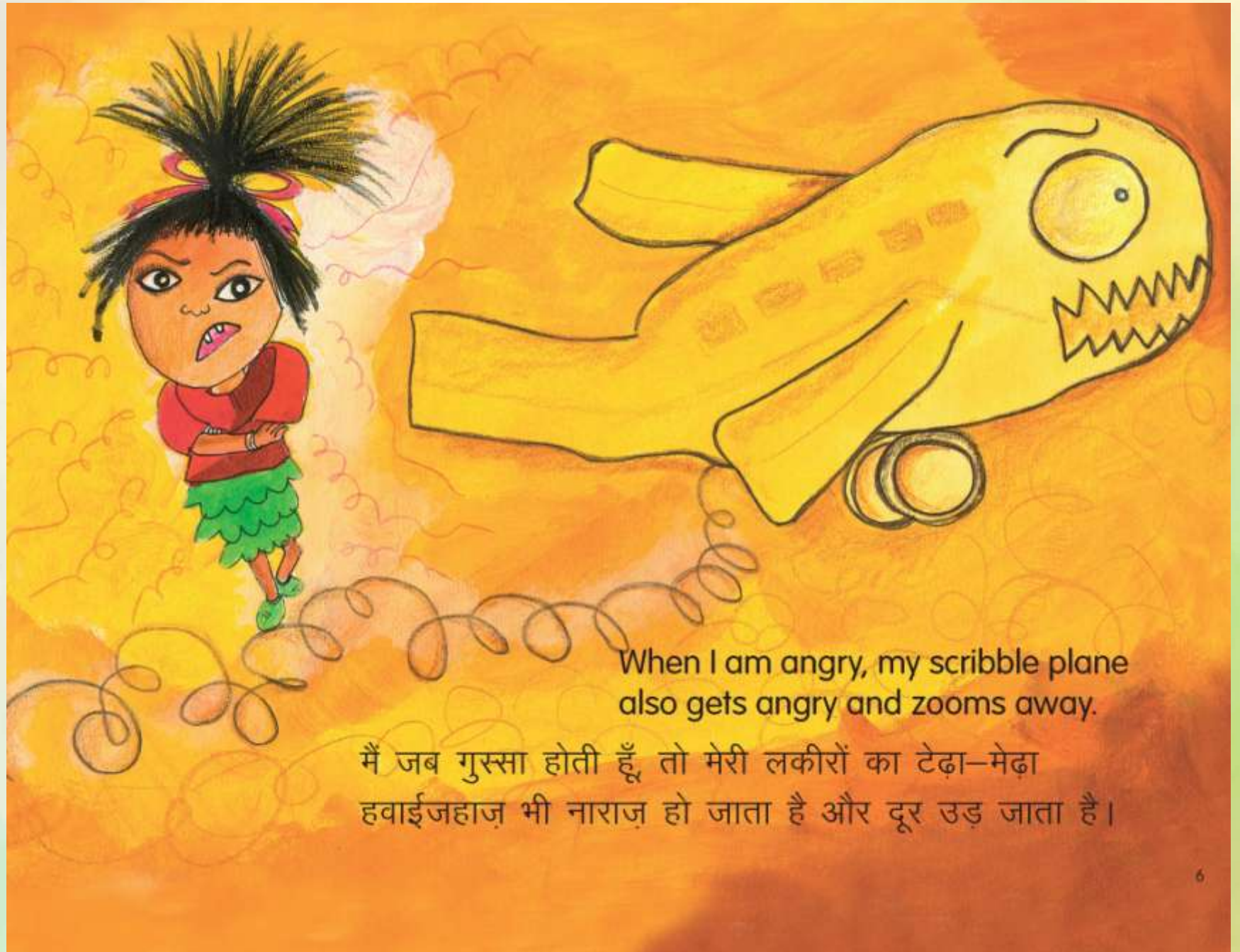


In the sand I make a scribble aeroplane  
with a little stick.

रेत में मैं छोटी सी डंडी से टेढ़ा-मेढ़ा  
हवाईजहाज़ बनाती हूँ।







When I am angry, my scribble plane  
also gets angry and zooms away.

मैं जब गुस्सा होती हूँ, तो मेरी लकीरों का टेढ़ा-मेढ़ा  
हवाईजहाज़ भी नाराज़ हो जाता है और दूर उड़ जाता है।



# Sesame Mobile Community Viewing Program

Using a re-modified vegetable cart, aTV-DVD, CD's and print material bringing together

- Audio-visual experiences for children
- Advocacy for early childhood education with parents and teachers













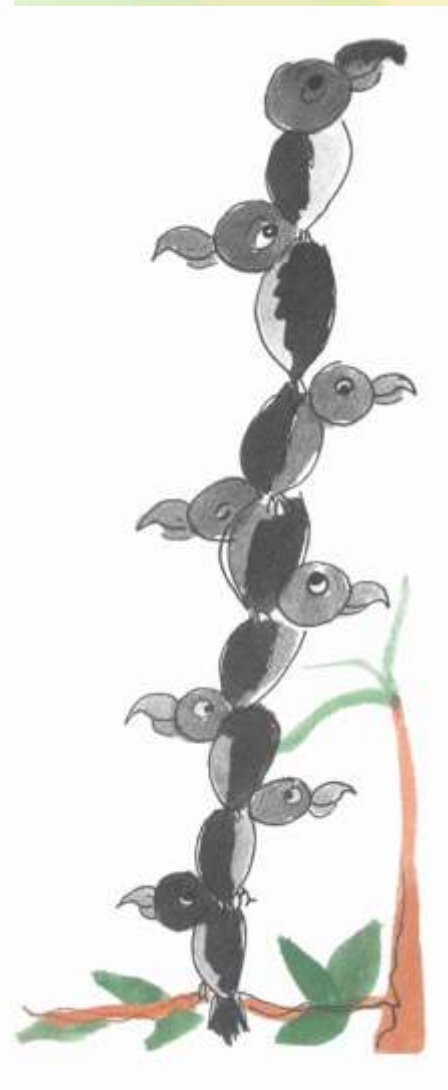


# The NCERT Experience

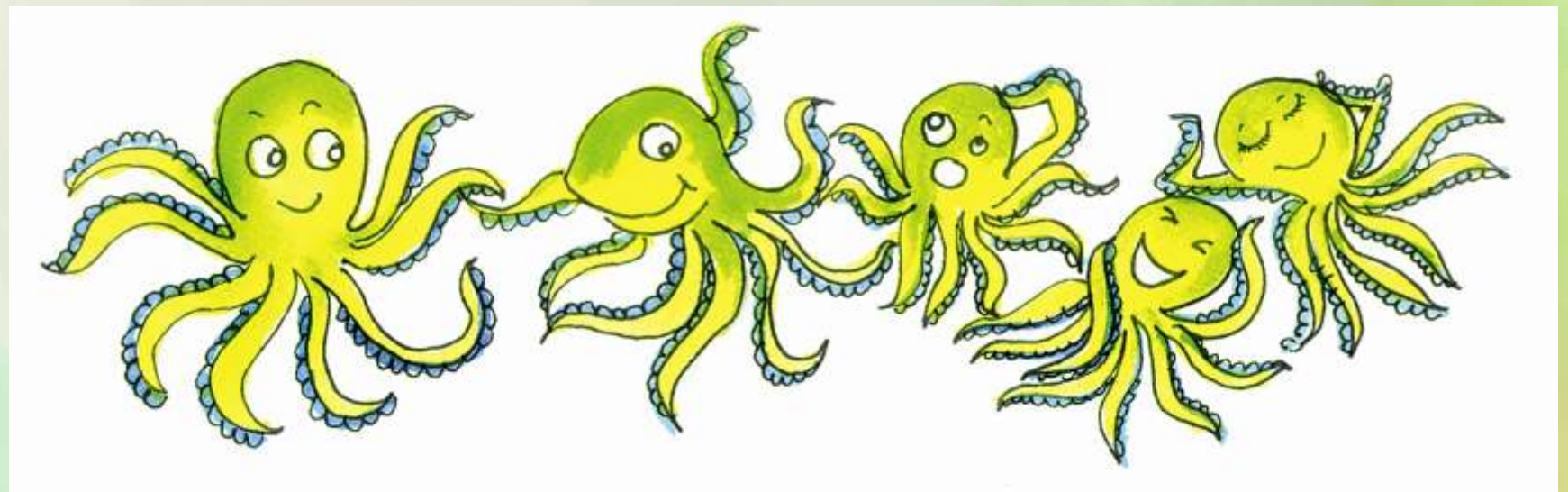
## Redesigning Math Textbooks

- To reflect math with a sense of design and illustration
- To bring in the diversity of culture through art and design









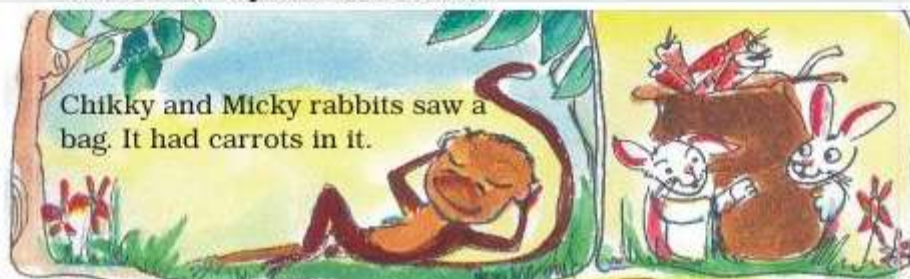








## Chotu monkey and the carrots



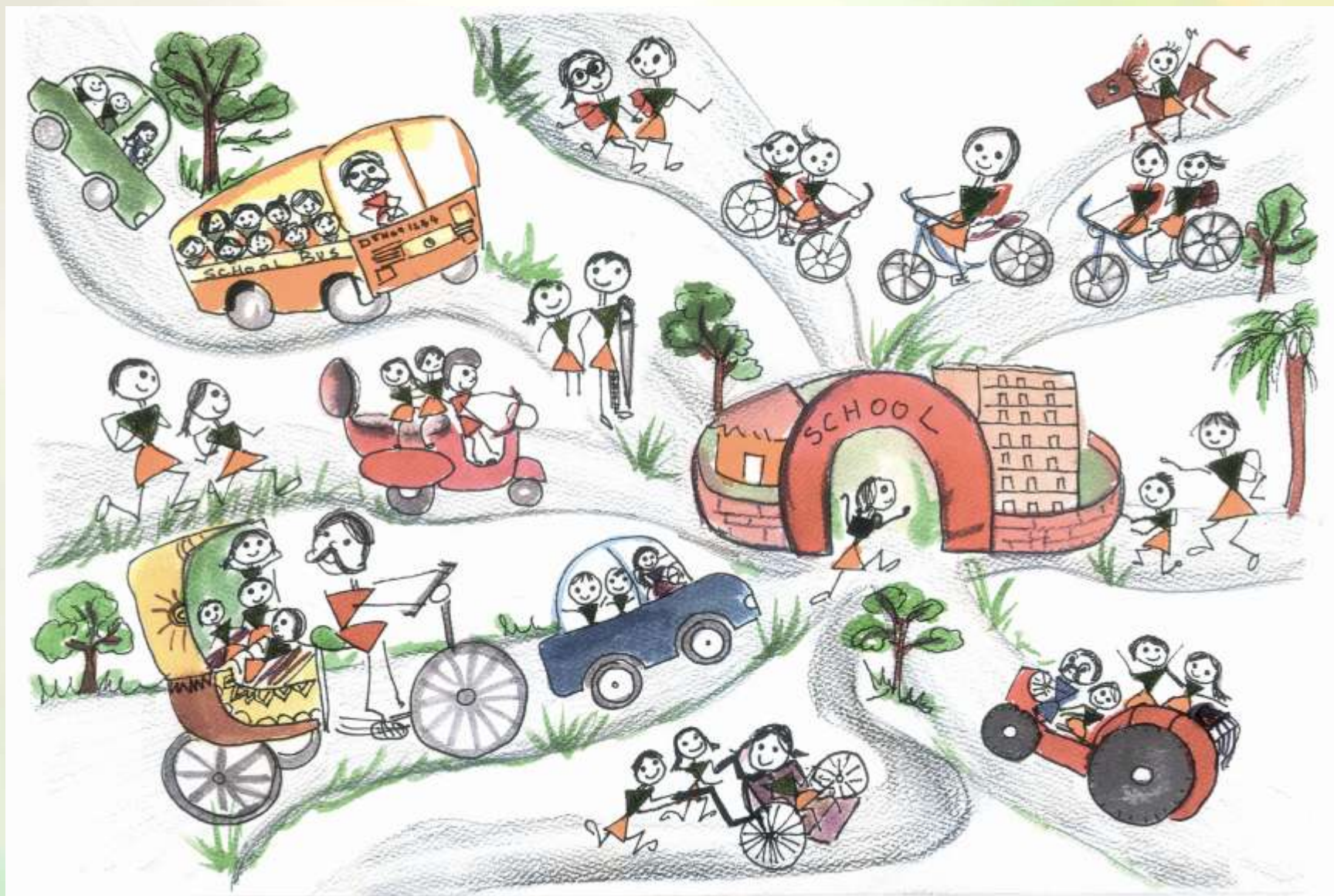
Chotu monkey came to help them. Chotu monkey brought something to help them. Guess and tell what did Chotu monkey use to help Chikky and Micky. Draw a picture of it.

Find out: Your parents buy carrots for the family. How much do they buy at one time?

How does the vegetable seller weigh the carrots?











And from trees I learn to let my roots dig deeper into the earth, and my branches spread further into the sky...

- Where does a curriculum begin -
- a curriculum for life; a curriculum that teaches someone to look within and begin to savour the taste of one's own being, one's mind, the amazing intricacies of human life?
- Where does a curriculum begin - a curriculum that teaches how to make relationships with people, with the earth, with the worlds within oneself?

Where does this curriculum begin within me?  
Where are the roots of this curriculum I want to write? What do the branches hold? What is the network behind the twenty pages of any curriculum design that I might ever write? What is its width, span, height? How measurable and how visible is this network? How deep, how profound and how integrated is it with all of life?

And when I finish writing it, will it be a  
storybook, a puzzle, a music CD, an  
animation film or an evening with a  
student?

I wonder...



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*Thank You*



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Change the Viewpoint!