

book stations



book stations

Ideas for the future of books



Welcome

to the book stations tour

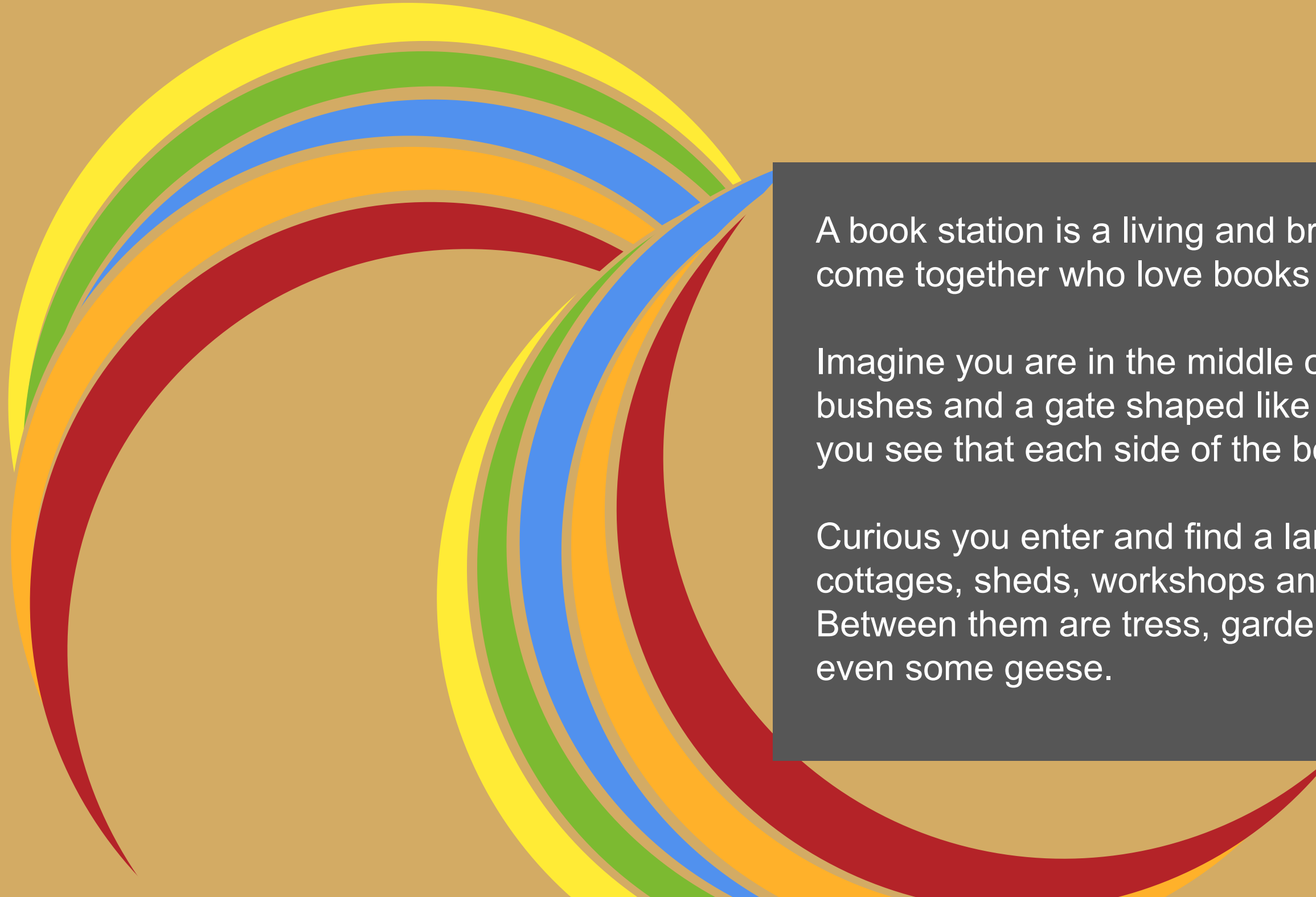
Ideas for the future of books, authors, publishers, craftspeople, communities and the environment

So far, book stations are an idea. An idea for places that are all about books, the local community and the future of the planet.

Take a tour of the possibilities and features, and along the way you will be introduced to new business approaches, pepper books publishing, the bespoke books network, book stations worldwide and a lot more.

Inside a book station

Anywhere in the world



A book station is a living and breathing space where all sorts of people come together who love books and stories.

Imagine you are in the middle of a city, and suddenly you see trees and bushes and a gate shaped like a standing open book. As you get closer you see that each side of the book has an archway.

Curious you enter and find a large garden, dotted here and there with cottages, sheds, workshops and pavilions, in all shapes and colours. Between them are trees, garden patches, wild growth, winding paths and even some geese.

As you follow the main path, a central area comes into view, a building comprised of several buildings, all forming something of a vegetated mountain with people working and walking on the roofs. This building mountain is partly surrounded by houses which look like the backs of books, all lined up in a semi-circle, the titles punctuated by round windows.

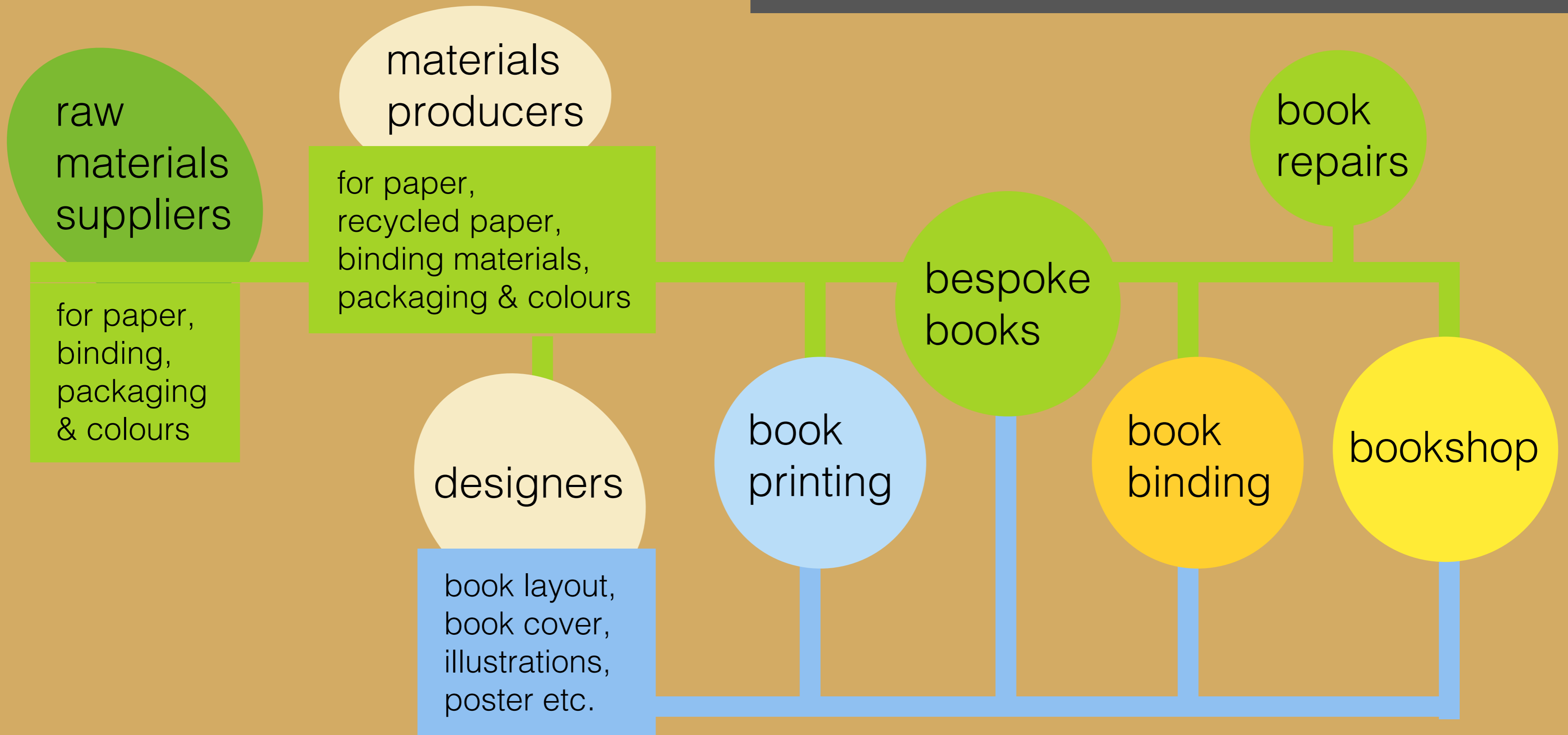
As you get closer to the centre of the book station, you are amazed to see that life is buzzing everywhere as people print, repair and recycle (visible through large windows in the workshops), others read (lying in a hammock, lounging on straw or sitting in the reading café), rehearse (for the communal theatre or for an audiobook recording), recite (for the patients of the neighbouring clinic or for visiting pupils of the local school), garden and farm (for the book station and the neighbourhood), go for a stroll (visitors and staff alike), or like you, follow the main path to the centre of the book station.

Just before the entrance to the central building you see a map, indicating what you can find at the core of the book station.



The core of a book station

At the core of a book station is everything that is needed to produce and present a book, from the raw materials supplier to the bookshop.





book
printing

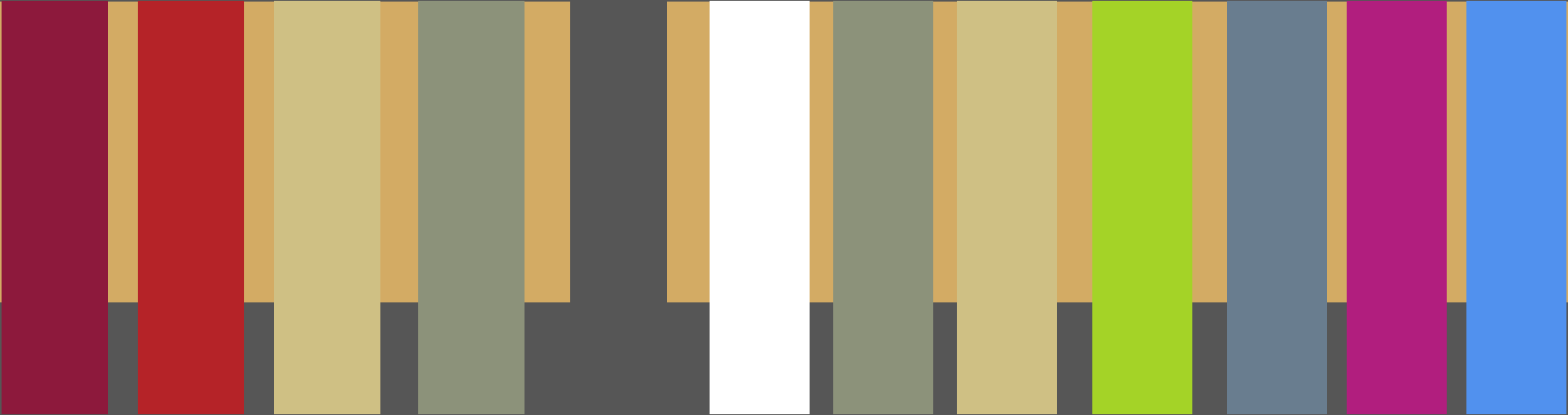
book
binding

customer
area

In more populous regions, book stations work with a network of book workshops so that more communities can get involved in producing books and thereby benefit from the book trade.

A small book workshop usually includes printing, binding and a customer area, and it can be extended to include some or all other core elements of a book station.

Printing books



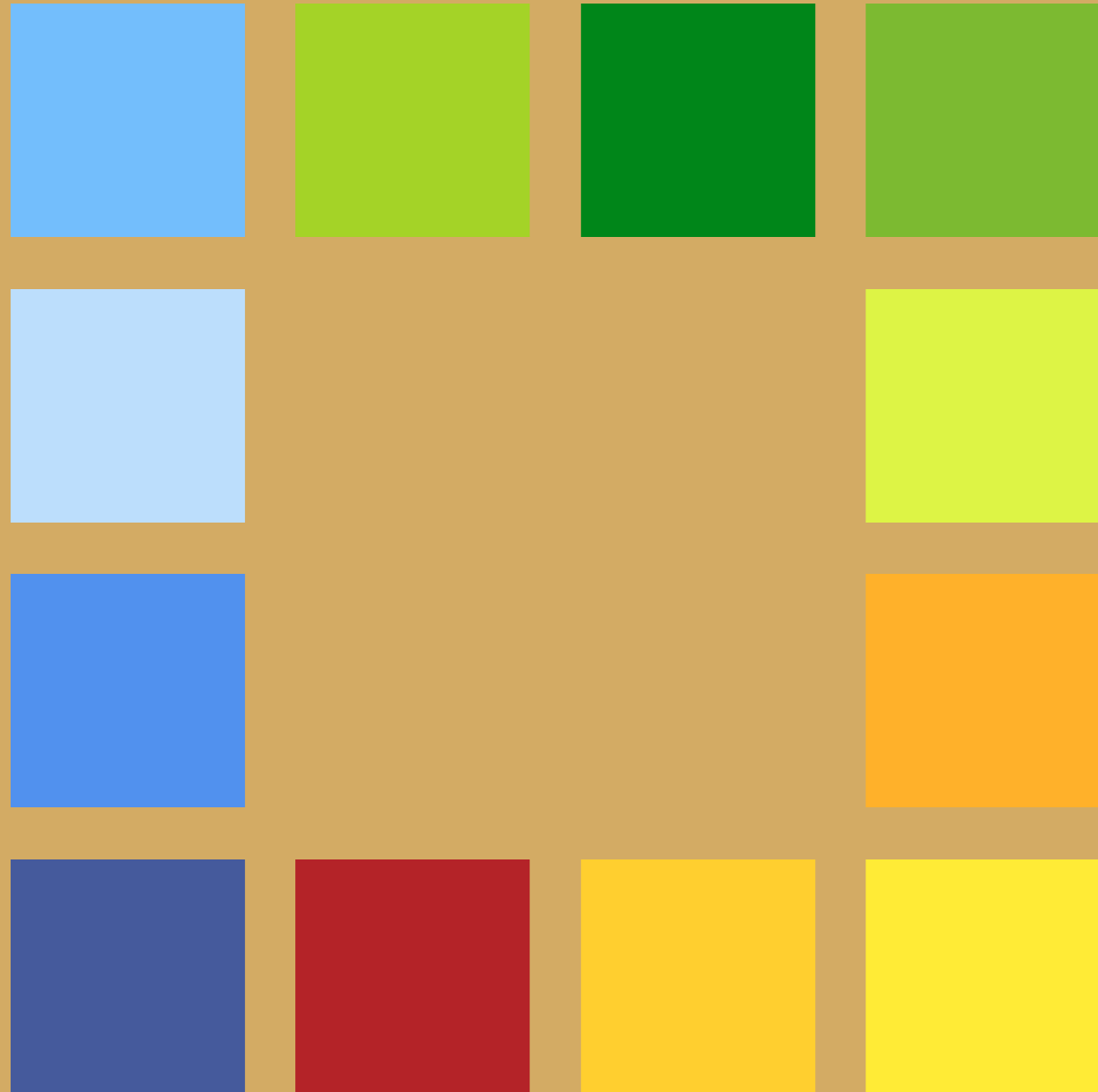
At a book station many ideas for printing books will be tested with the primary goals of saving resources and avoiding waste while at the same time giving a multitude of stories a stage, and a multitude of people access to stories.

Each book station serves a specific region, and it only prints for the local market, and only when enough orders for a book have accumulated.

The size of a region will be determined by how much business a book stations needs to run smoothly.

In order to make this possible, book stations will need to have contracts with publishers & authors. These contracts would allow book stations to print publications in local editions. This means, instead of trading in printed books, publishers would trade in licences for book editions.

Book cycles



About 80% of the books I own gather dust, and I am actually too embarrassed to reveal how many of those books I have read.

But I grew up with the notion that having walls full of books is the only right way to live. In fact, my mother advised me as a small child that I should only be friends with children whose parents have a lot of books. Everyone else was not to be trusted.

And I was told that there are unforgivable crimes against books, such as drawing or writing in books, earmarking, throwing away books, or worse burning them.

But what if we shook off those nice sentiments and reintroduced books back into a cycle? At least those books we don't read any more?

Alternatively, we could take them to a book station, and let those ignored books become new books.

And for the future, pre-books might be a solution to reducing the number of unnecessarily printed books.

Pre-books

What is a pre-book?

- A pre-book is the cheap printout of a book, just sheets of paper which can be put into a binder.
- There are several reasons to opt for pre-books:
 - A pre-book doesn't have to be handled with care, and no one will wrinkle their nose if notes are added to the pages or if a paragraph is cut out.
 - A pre-book is also for undecided readers who want to find out first whether they like the book well enough for some re-reads.
 - Pre-books give more people access to stories, thanks to the lower costs. And this is also interesting for school texts and university publications.
- It is easier to recycle printouts than books.
- Resources are saved because less energy is needed for a pre-book than for a complete book, and neither colours, covers or binding materials are used.
- Pre-books could give binders a great revival. When editing, I work with handmade binders made by Fairklemmt. And I love it.
- Using pre-books could substantially reduce the number of books printed while potentially increasing the number of stories sold.

Alternatively someone could read the e-book or listen to the audiobook. In all cases the reader can decide afterwards whether the story is worth it to get it as a printed book.

To make sure that the printouts are cheap, it is probably best to develop a simple black and white, plastic-free printer with a refillable ink container.

This pre-books printer could be used at any book station, book workshop or bookshop.

The reader could get a voucher for using pre-books and

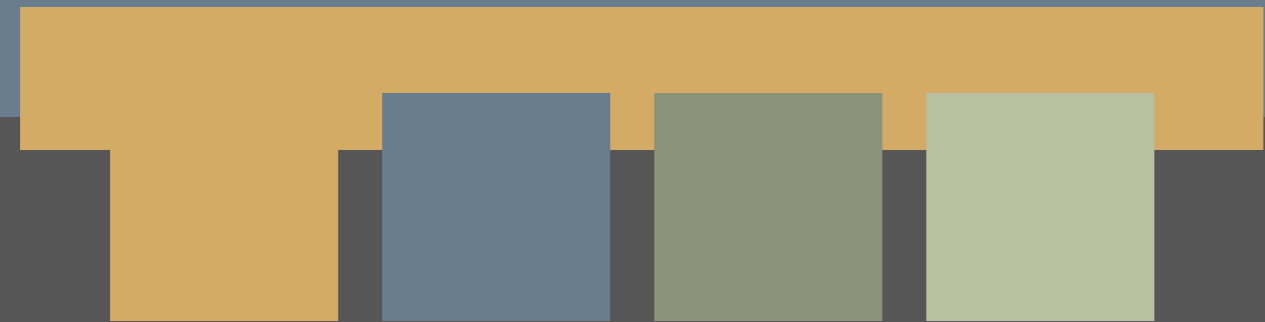
for returning the paper to a book station. And whenever the reader buys a printed book, they can use the credits they collected.

Also, a reader might decide not to keep a story, but would still like to support the author with a donation, which should be simple via a website or a QR code.

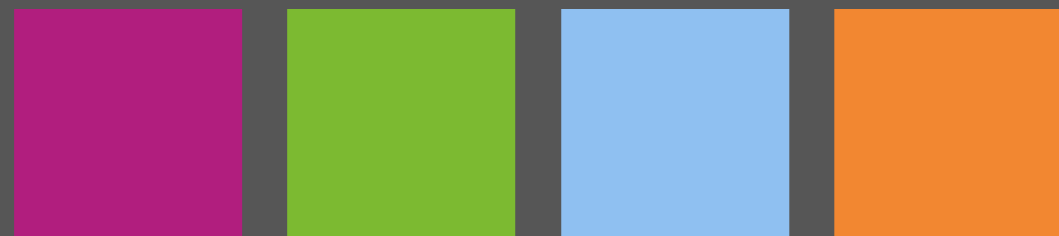
Someone could argue that some books are already offered in cheap editions. But those copies are not about getting paper back into the recycling bin. Nor do these copies ask whether or not you would like to buy this story as a printed book next.

bespoke books

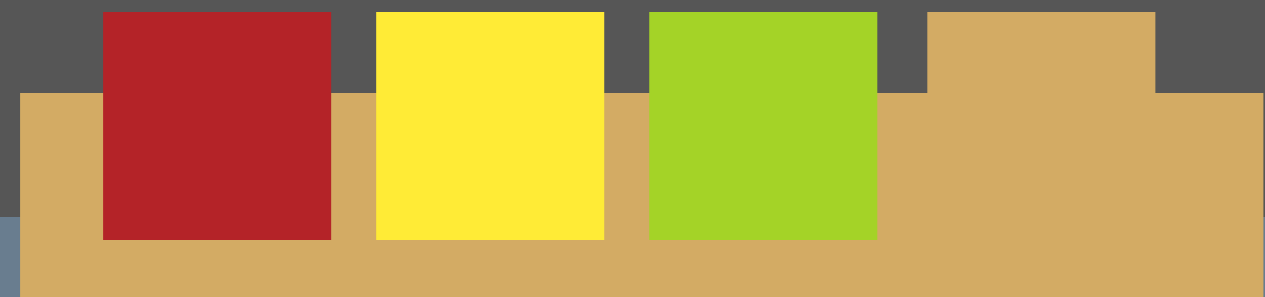
A peek into the easy town books



CHARLIE ALICE RAYA



easy town books



What are the easy town books?

The easy town books tell the story of a town project which aims at rethinking — well, everything.

The following paragraphs are some text messages from book 2, travelling.

18:48 We should set up book workshops, like in The Great Library of Sitseaf. Then a customer could take their favourite poems, plays or stories to the book workshop and get an edition with a unique layout, cover and binding, maybe even with illustrations. Such an edition could be offered to other people too, and someone could buy an edition designed by Mr Jack Harris /-) Though that sounds a bit too cheesy. But if you think about it, it's unsustainable to print as many books as we are printing today. Besides, how many books does a person really care about? I mean long-term. I'd be happy to pay a lot to have my favourite books printed and illustrated in a special edition. An edition I like as much as the content. For Wilde's Ballad of Reading Goal, and Aitmatov's Jamilia, and Socrate's Apology, I'd definitely get special editions. And, of course, for the Lord of the Rings.

18:50 Actually, I just remembered, the Hub Station Team in Cape Town suggested something like that. And even better. They are building a writer's studio which includes a workshop for bespoke books.

18:51 Maybe you could read a story on a cheap printout first, or on an e-reader. Get to know the story. And only if you like the story, you buy an actual book that's meant to stay with you.

18:54 And we could have a book station. A place where you can take your old paper, the cheap printouts and the books you don't need or want any more, and then your new bespoke book gets printed on your recycled paper. Or at least on part of that paper. That way you have a connection to the recycling process. You put something old in on one side, and get something new out on the other. I think having a connection to production processes is important. And if it is, then that's another good argument to go for local smallish businesses.

book 2/2, travelling, Berlin

bespoke books

How could it work?



A customer could approach a book station and ask for a bespoke edition of her favourite book.

The book station would then get in touch with the author and with the publisher, informing them of the opportunity, and negotiating the terms & conditions for the bespoke edition.

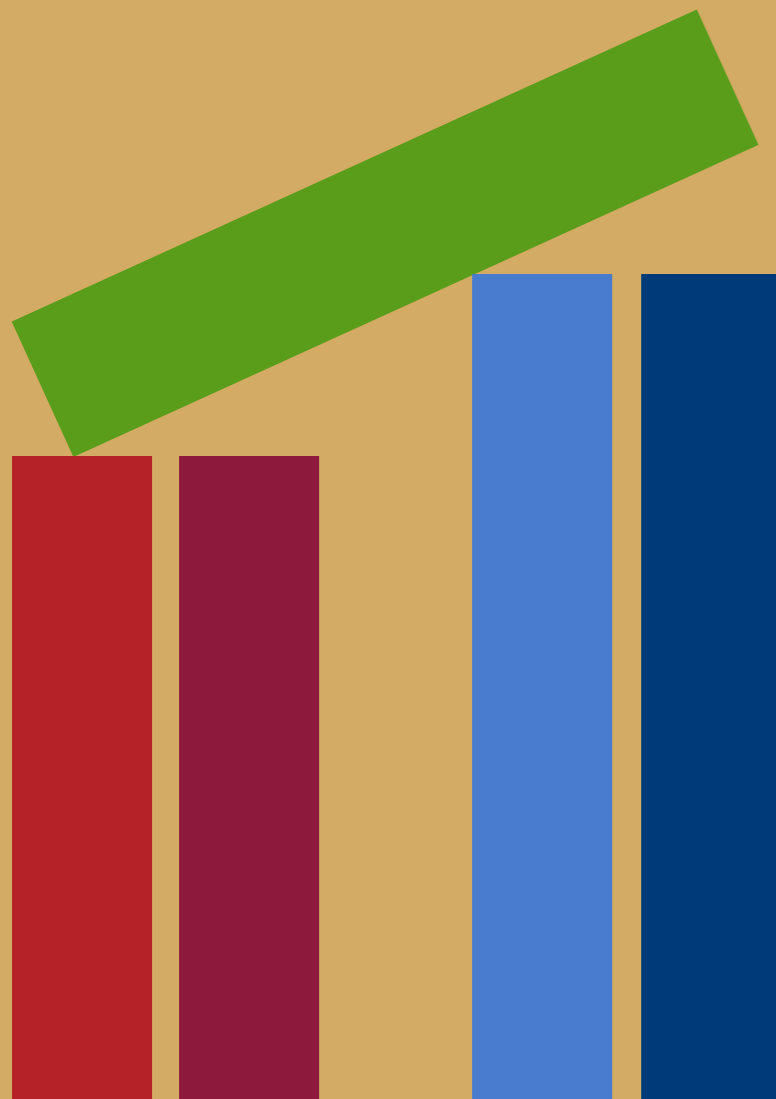
Or the author and the publisher could already be part of the bespoke books network, in which case all legal and financial details would already be agreed on.

In either case the customer would be informed about the costs for the bespoke edition and could then decide whether or not to buy it.

In order to avoid fraud, each book would be registered under a specific number, and a certificate of authenticity would be issued along with the edition.

There will be more on bespoke books later.

durable books & book repairs



Bespoke books are likely to be crafted in a way and with materials that ensure durability.

But keeping the future of the planet in mind, it makes sense to generally produce durable books, books which can pass through many hands, and are easy to repair. Which is also why, every book station will have a workshop for book repairs.

But how to make durable books and repairing books work for customers, authors and bookshops alike?

durable books

& book repairs

How could it work?

There are a number of possibilities to make durable books work. My favourite is books with a history.

This idea is best presented in an example.

Madi decides to buy the book Chen's Dream in a book with a history edition.

The bookshop registers the date and place of the purchase, thereby creating an online profile for this individual book.

Madi has access to this book's profile and can add any information he likes, either about who he is, or what he thinks about the book.


After reading the book twice, Madi decides to hand it on to his friend Timo.

When they meet, Madi goes online, via the QR code inside the book, and checks himself out as the owner of the book and enters the date and the location of the transfer.

Madi receives a small credit voucher for the registration, and Timo pays a percentage of the original price for receiving the book.

No one has to register their name, but the more people who add details about where and when they read the book, and what they thought about it, the more a single book gets a history of its own. And that makes every copy of the book unique.

And anyone who ever read this copy can log into the profile and see what happened after they passed the copy on.



A former owner could even contact the present owner if they felt like reading their former copy of the book again.

And then there is the case of losing a book. The finder could register the find, the book could be returned, and another piece of history could be added to the copy of this book.

You could even go so far as to keep track of the raw material after the book has been recycled.

And who knows, one day the group of (former) owners of the book might meet up for a cocktail, or for a little festival for books with a history.

E-books could become unique copies with a history too. There is only the question of how to best transfer the e-book file from one owner to the other. But maybe that is solvable if the transfer runs via the history page. In that case one owner checks out, their file dissolves, and when the new owner registers, they get their copy on the history page.


It will be interesting to calculate the price for a book that is being passed on, and maybe that price declines over time. Or maybe the first two or three times are nearly for free and then the price curves up for a while before falling again.

The basis for such a calculation is how much a story needs to earn to keep authors and book stations thriving.

Customers and authors profit from this model, and so does the environment. But what about bookshops?

The bookshop which sold the original book with a history could receive a small percentage whenever the book is passed on.

A simple version of passing books on would be to give each durable book a code, and each time the book is resold, the author gets a share. And bookshops could offer to buy books back for a small sum or for a voucher, arguing that the reader paid for the story not for the book, therefore the amount paid out only represents a small token for the return of the raw material. The next reader pays for the story again.

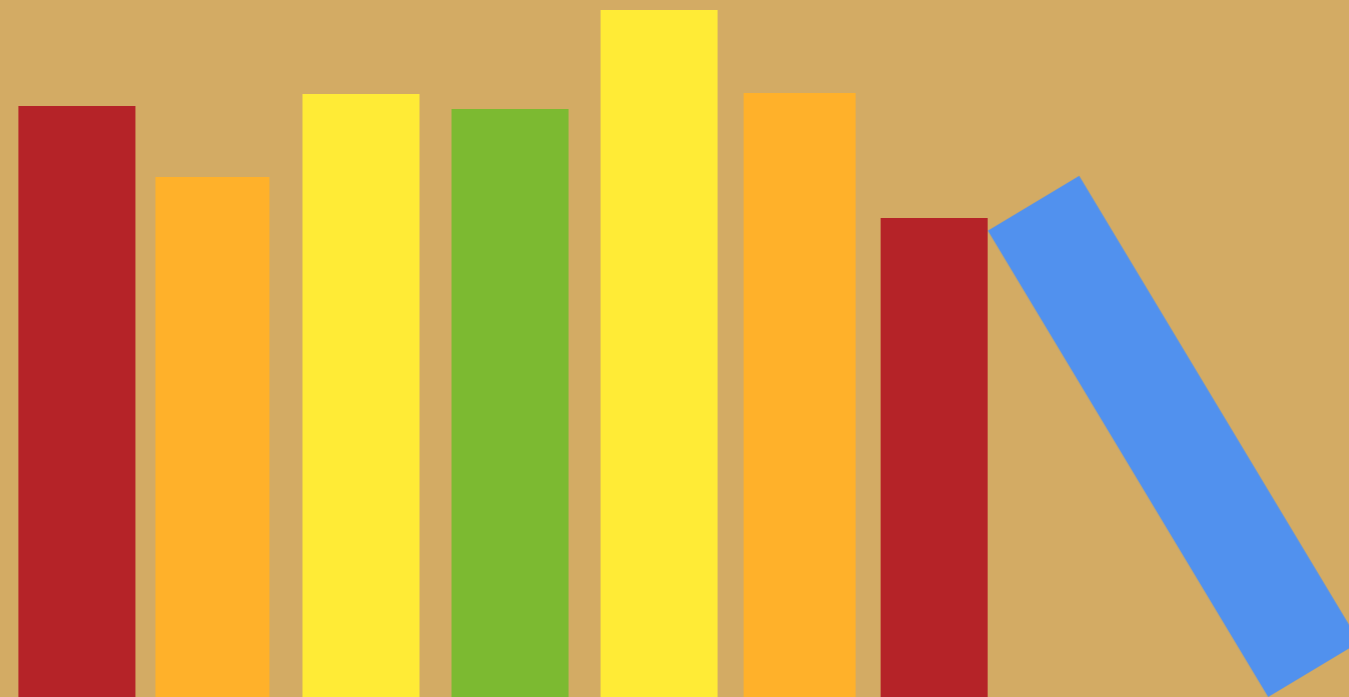


Beyond the core of a book station

At the core of a book station you find everything from the sapling of a tree to the paper bag for a purchased book. But book stations can be extended way beyond that.

Part of those extensions focus on books and stories, but as a book station grows the focus shifts towards supporting the community by adding spaces for education, healthcare, arts, small businesses, and whatever else the community might need, and that in a way which makes coexisting with nature possible.

Part of a book station's revenue is used to finance such extensions.



E-books at book stations

Digital points = digi ps

Apart from an e-books team and an e-reader recycling and repair service, there are one or more digital points (digi ps) spread across a book station.

These digi ps serve as purchase and transfer points for e-books, digital stories, video recordings, movies and audiobooks.

The digi ps can also be used for on-location online-shopping of stories in their various forms.

Digi ps are in pavilions with several monitors, and with an assistant who uploads all purchases to the customer's device(s), and who installs additional software if necessary.

audio at book stations

stories, news, podcasts, music and more

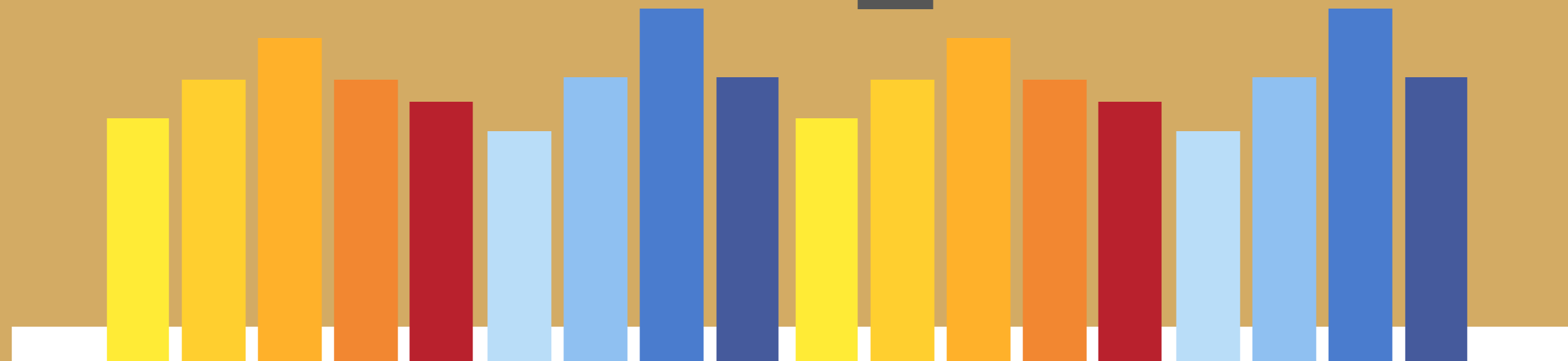
The main focus of the audio studios is to create audiobooks with local actors.

The idea is to create multiple audiobooks of a story rather than recording just one version which is then sold around the world. This approach gives more people a chance to earn an income.

Whenever the audio studios are free, local artists, podcasters and musicians can use them.

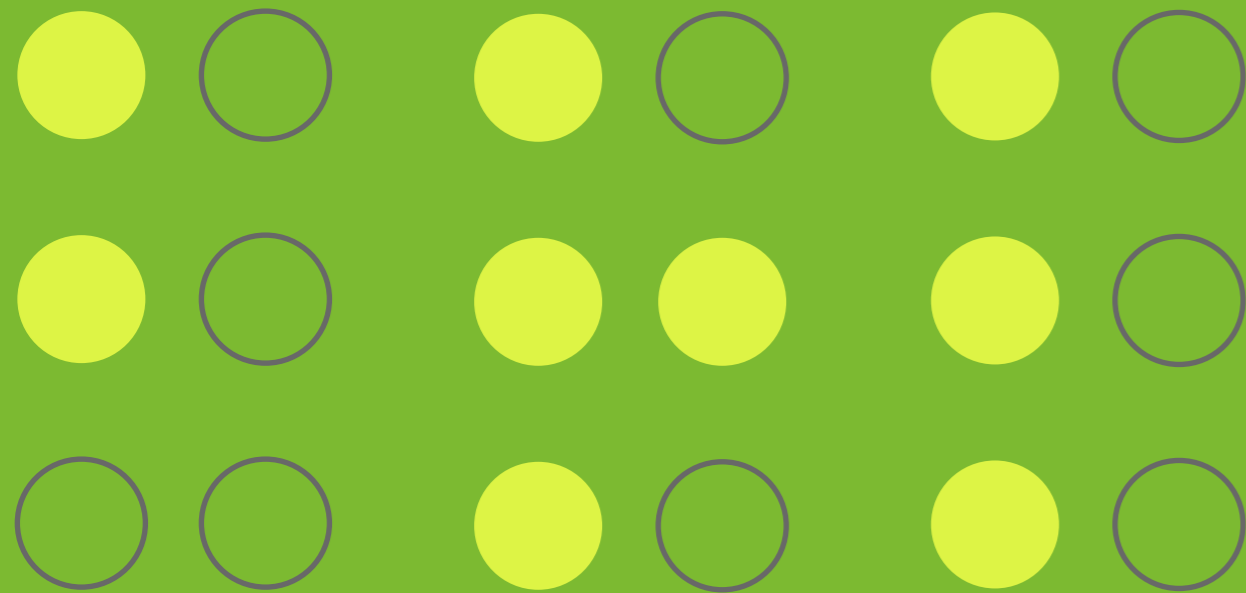
An open question:

How often does a customer (have to) pay for a single story if the customer decides to get this story in different releases such as a printed book, an e-book and an audiobook? Could there be a voucher system which reduces the price of a story if it is bought in different releases?



Braille at book stations

Worlds shared & senses honed



At book stations books are transcribed into Braille, and printed whenever enough orders for a Braille book are in. Customers can also request the transcription of their favourite books.

The book station offers courses for anyone who wants to learn Braille, either blind people, or those who are losing their eyesight, or for seeing people who wish to sharpen their senses by learning Braille, or for those who want to share this experience with their blind partner or with a friend.

Book stations use an echo sounding guide system for blind people, a system which can be directly connected to their phones. Or the blind visitor can use one of the book station's echo phones.

A school for guide dogs would be an interesting additions for a book station as well.

Sign language & film productions



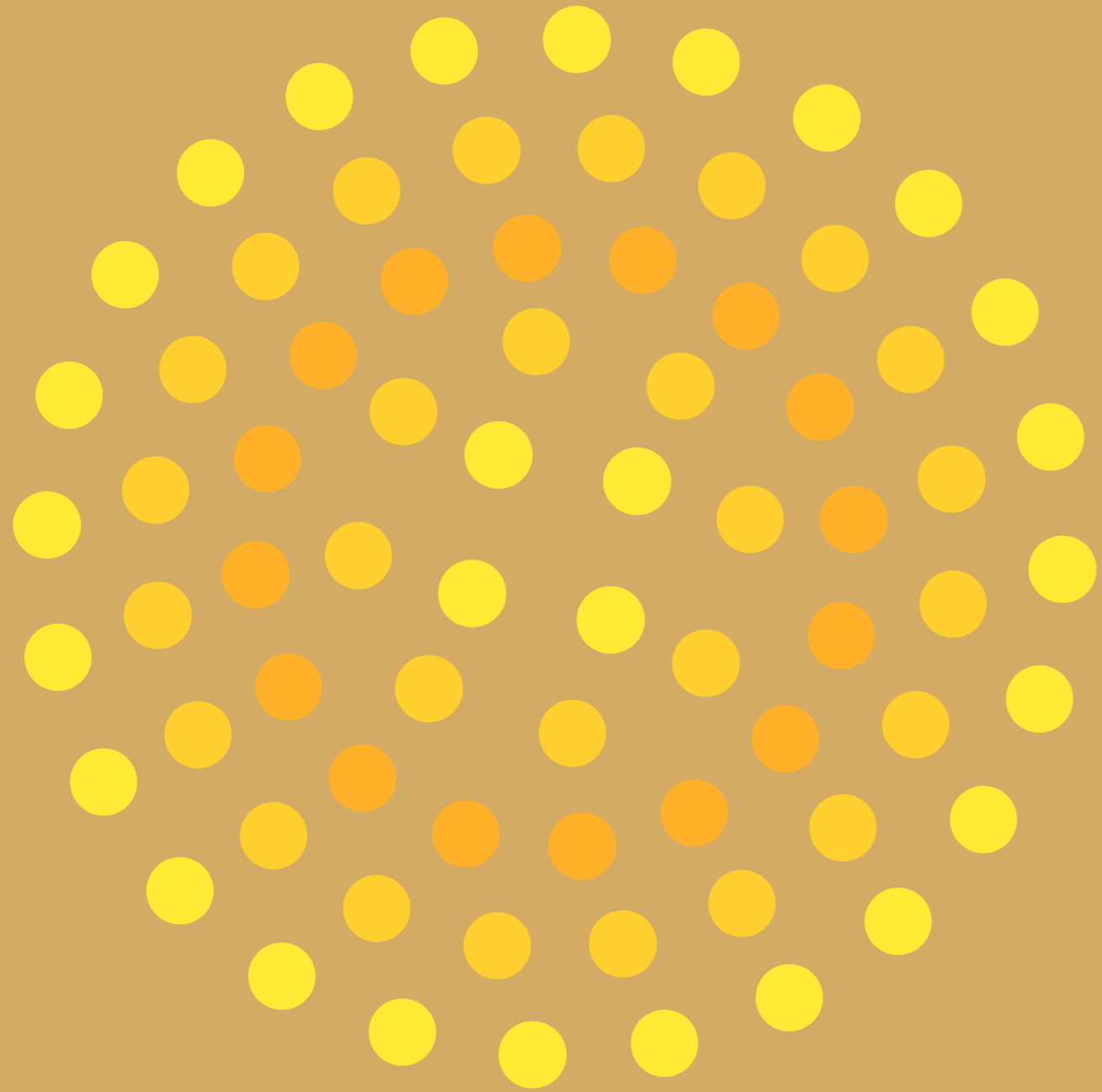
Reading a book is great, but having someone read a story to you is something special.

Therefore book stations have a small film studio to tape readings and stories in sign language.

And since there is a film studio, it can also be used for local productions and film experiments.

And there are offers to learn sign language.

events at book stations



As mentioned before a book station is a living and breathing space where all sorts of people come together who love books and stories.

Visitors are welcome, and there will be the occasional festival and party.

A book station usually has a theatre and pop-up venues for book festivals and for crafts festivals.

The theatre hosts all sorts of events, including readings, plays, movies, and visual arts shows.

Frequent events will celebrate storytelling and reading

The following are a few examples for potential events.

story hours

Storytellers in action. These events can be themed or for a specific audience, like the teens story hour, the sign language story hour, or the adventures story hour.

reading time

People come together to read their books in a cosy atmosphere. A shielded bar provides an area where readers meet and talk about the book they are reading.

book hook

A cosy event where a group of people read a book to each other.

poetry time

People read their favourite poems to each other, or invite a poet to present their work.

favourites

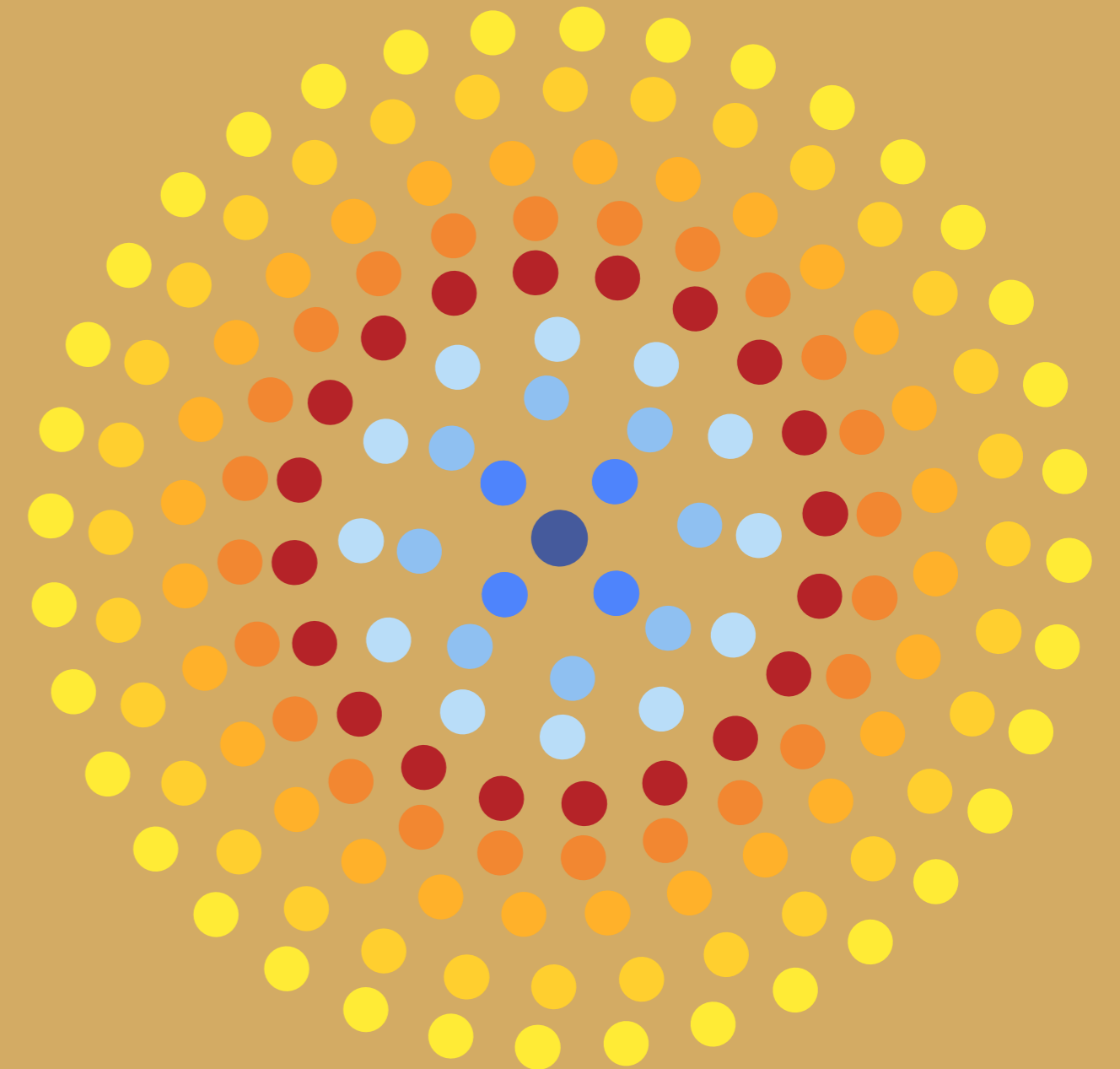
An event where people read favourite passages from the books they love.

sneek peak

One or several authors read passages from a story they are presently working on.

book tour

An author introduces their work, or their latest publication, or both.



Craftspeople at book stations

As a book station is further extended more spaces for craftspeople can be added.

Anyone working with paper or timber would be a great addition since these craftspeople can use the same raw material suppliers as the book workshops.

Such craftspeople would include a lampshade creator, an instrument builder or a woodworker who specialises in book shelves, writing desks or reading benches.

Another related craft, at least with respect to writing books, would be a pen & pencil maker whose workshop could include a pen recycling area.

With regard to crafts, a book station's team aims at:

- providing the local community with the kind of crafts needed in this area
- supporting cooperation & synergies among the different craftspeople
- supporting the craftspeople with respect to admin & sales so that they can focus on their work
- organising a regular farmers' market where the craftspeople can offer their products
- and supporting training offers.

Artists at book stations

The bigger a book station the more room it can provide for additional artists, such as:

- writers
- illustrators
- font makers
- graphic designers
- painters
- sculptors
- playwrights
- film makers
- musicians
- and more

In fact, a book station can host a group of visiting writers who frequently read bits and pieces of the stories they are working on — preferably when everyone sits around a nice fire in a starlit night and some of the local musicians add the sound effects and some melodies.

Research at book stations

The teams at book stations learn and test new ideas continuously.

At larger book stations, the teams are supported by a research team who work closely with the research teams at other book stations.

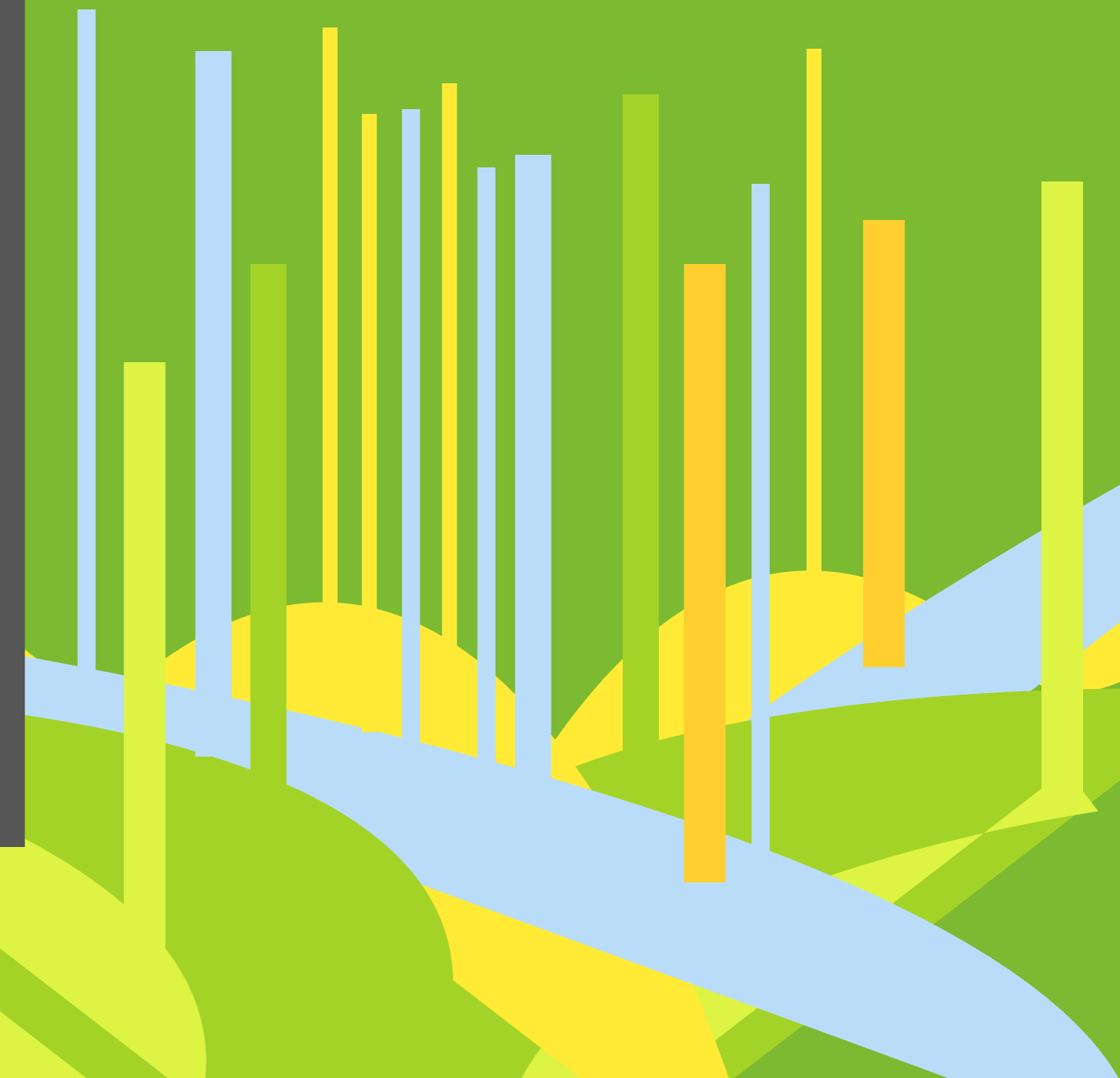
The research subjects include everything from forestry to energy sources, from the role of sexuality in workplaces to the impact of layouts on the reading experience, from the history of printing to non-toxic colours, from plastic free printers to optimising recycling processes, from learning to read to exposing manipulation, and a lot more.

Education at book stations

The larger a book station the more communal services it can provide. Education is one of those services, and the offers include everything from schools for children to university degrees in ecology, and everything from training as a craftsman to maturing as an artist.

And the book station offers courses for all sorts of people from all walks of life on all sorts of topics, and if possible on any subject a group of interested members in the community might suggest.

There could also be weekly courses and holiday courses where people can acquire or improve skills like binding, calligraphy, recycling or voice acting.



Libraries at book stations



I could happily spend two or three years just inventing libraries.

And I think each book station should have its own kind of library — be it a books maze, a walk-through-literature library, or a mystery library with creaking boards and secret passages.

All libraries will have reading spots, indoors and outdoors, where the reader can sink into cushions or straw, and enter a story's world.

And all libraries will have a good selection of Braille books, and reading spots especially designed for the comfort of blind people, and watch-stories-ports for deaf people.

Coexisting with nature

Nature plays an essential role at book stations, and one of the research team's big questions is: How to coexist with nature?

As a consequence, every aspect at a book station will be weighed with regard to its impact on the ecosystem. The aim is to integrate a book station into the natural world.

This will be visible in gardens, both on the ground and on the roofs and terraces. It will be apparent in the extended usage of underground facilities to leave more space to nature. Waste will tend towards zero whenever possible, spaces for animals and wild growth will be integrated, and small windmills and watermills add to the picture.

A book station is alive with trees, bushes, flowers, fruits, vegetables, crops – and animals from fly and bee to horse and deer.

And it is alive with people. Craftspeople and artists work outside, interact with nature, or just enjoy the abundance and inspiration nature provides. Gardeners and farmers work with the land, and locals and visitors take strolls or give a hand.

Cycles & digesting

General observations

Interestingly humans are the only creatures who build dead things like plastic bowls, concrete buildings, cars, or tar roads. And the only 'cycle' that is available to dead things is to increase the waste mountains.

In contrast, nature is alive. A seed awakes to new life, grows, bears fruit, and eventually dies. And instead of increasing waste, nature uses every discarded leaf to enrich the soil and nurture new life.

The human itself only lives because it follows a daily cycle of digesting, or in other words: food goes in, poo comes out, and poo can serve as nutrient for new life.

Cycles & digesting

At a book station

Digesting rather than stockpiling, using compostable materials rather than dead materials, and creating cycles rather than increasing waste are important aspects of how book stations are built, and how they are run.

Though, how to build a house that grows, lives and dies, nurturing the ground for a new house to rise, that is still a big mystery.

But some things should be possible, such as:

- Cycles for water and waste
- Sustainable forestry
- Gardens and fields to make use of natural waste and to give room to a healthy ecosystem
- Books and paper recycling
- Sustainable book printing
- Using sustainable building materials
- Using organic materials on roads
- Using pavements only where needed
- Using underground spaces where possible
- Not using fossil fuels, plastic or other toxins
- Establishing production standards for durable books, and creating a feasible system of passing books on to other readers
- Making offers for bespoke books

Gardens at book stations

Here is another hardly explored passion of mine: gardens with content and even some purpose.

Gardens provide a wonderful setting for reading spots, be it in the orchards, or in the flowers, vegetables or herbs gardens, or on outdoor stairs with integrated seats.

But for me the real treat are gardens with content like a Books Garden, a Story Garden, or an Authors Garden. And I also love the ideas for recreational and anti-stress gardens like an Out For Laughs Garden, a Challenge Garden, a Festival Garden or a Party Den.

And the great thing about these gardens is that they combine so many positive things: they give room to nature and humans alike, they are inventive and inspiring, they contribute to a balance between nature and human habitats, they have health benefits, and they are fun.

A special highlight could be the Blind Garden which is best explored barefoot and which includes a guide system via smells.

For more on gardens see the easy town website: [towns & cities international](#), [gardens for towns & cities](#)



Accommodations at book stations

from station flats to micro communities



Smaller book stations offer flats above the workshops, either for members of staff or for additional residents at a book station.

Larger book stations build micro communities which might form a belt around the station.

Next to the communities are shops and other facilities and venues, like a health centre, a school or a theatre.

Due to the no cars policy everyone can safely roam the book station, and the good air as well as the low noise level are additional factors for providing a healthy environment.

Food at book stations

Depending on the size of a book station the food places on location include food trucks, pubs, restaurants, bars, cafés, shops for groceries and the like.

The offers are for staff, residents and visitors alike.

I have a few favourites which might count as a bit of a luxury for a book station unless they become popular with the local community: a master bakery, a winery and an ice-cream parlour.

A book station usually has one or more organic farms attached to it, or it cooperates with a nearby farm, and small orchards are part of the book station's gardens anyway.

All food places and shops are run locally, and whenever possible they use and sell what the book station's gardens and farms provide.

Energy at book stations



Solar energy, biogas and probably some small wind turbines would be combined to feed into the book station's micro grid. However, the teams are always on the lookout for ways to use less energy.

Depending on the size of a book station, the station's micro grid could also provide the neighbourhood with low cost energy.

Health & Healthcare at book stations



Especially with its low stress workplaces, the avoidance of toxins in all areas, its public gardens and organic food offers, a book station contributes to a healthy environment for the local community.

Apart from that larger book stations also include healthcare facilities. The extent of these facilities depends on the needs of the community, and how much resources a book station has to finance such a place.

Small businesses at book stations

I like to think of a book station as something that grows, that adds spaces and opportunities, and while doing so the book station maintains a certain flexibility so that a change in the needs or even in the perspectives of a community make adjustments relatively easy.

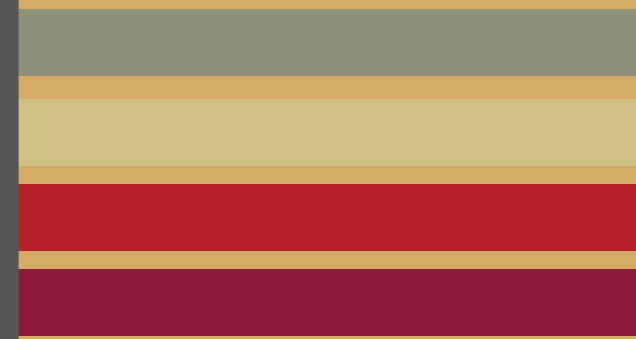
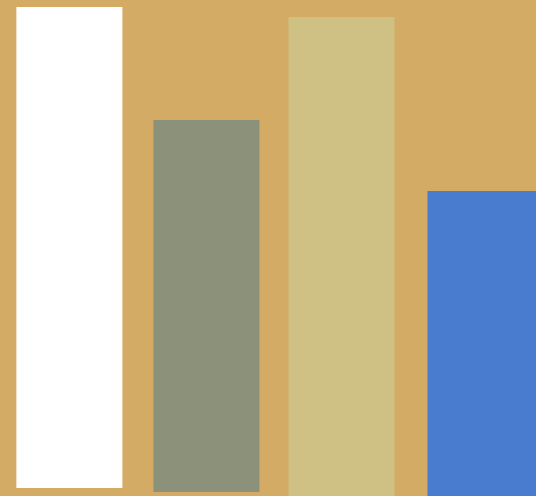
This is especially relevant when it comes to additional small businesses which have neither a connection to books nor to the materials used in or for books.

In such cases some factors play a major role, like saving a small business from rising costs (rent or energy), or supporting a small business which is important to the community. And since such factors can change, the who will become a part of a book station can change too.

Press offices at book stations

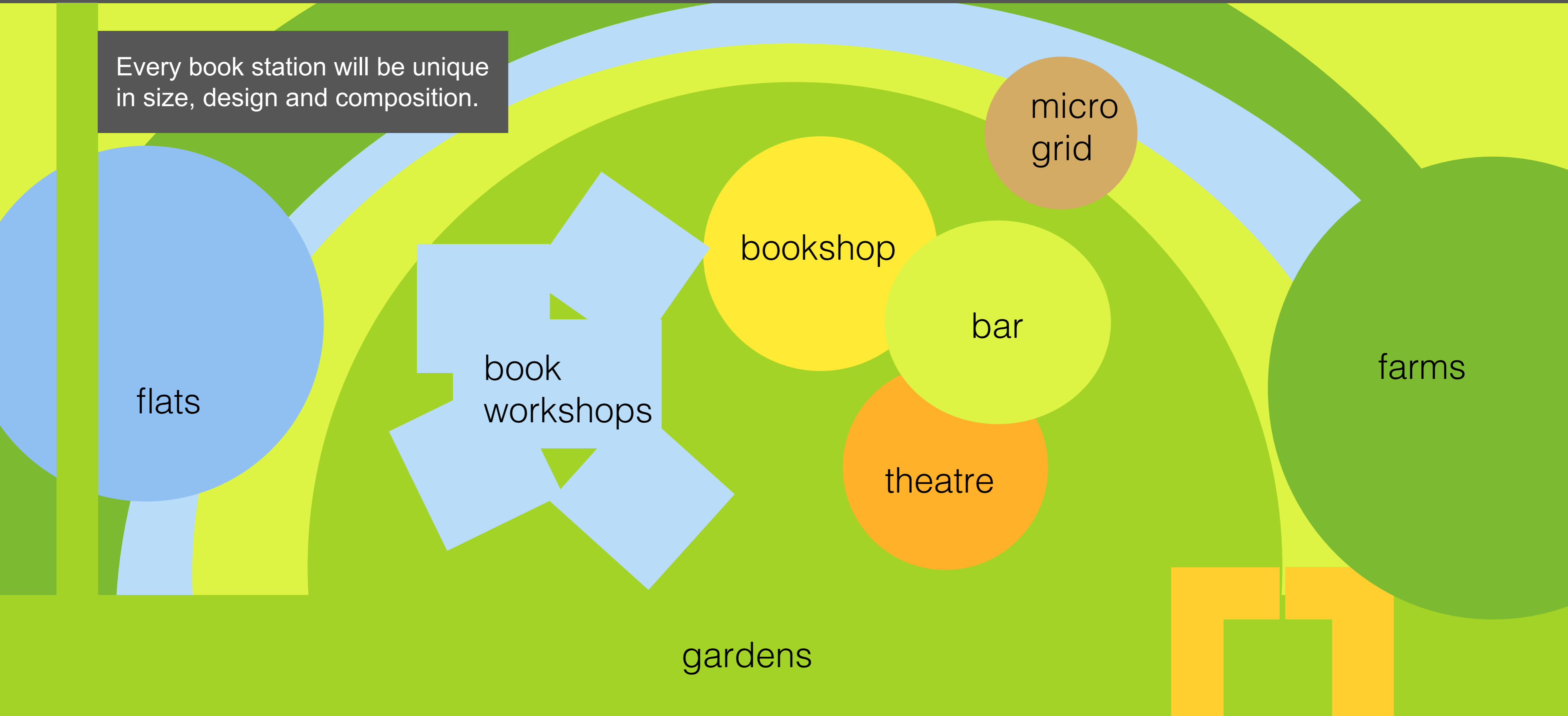
For a single book station, a press office might be too much of a luxury, though it would provide the community with a local paper, and that might help to make the printing business more feasible.

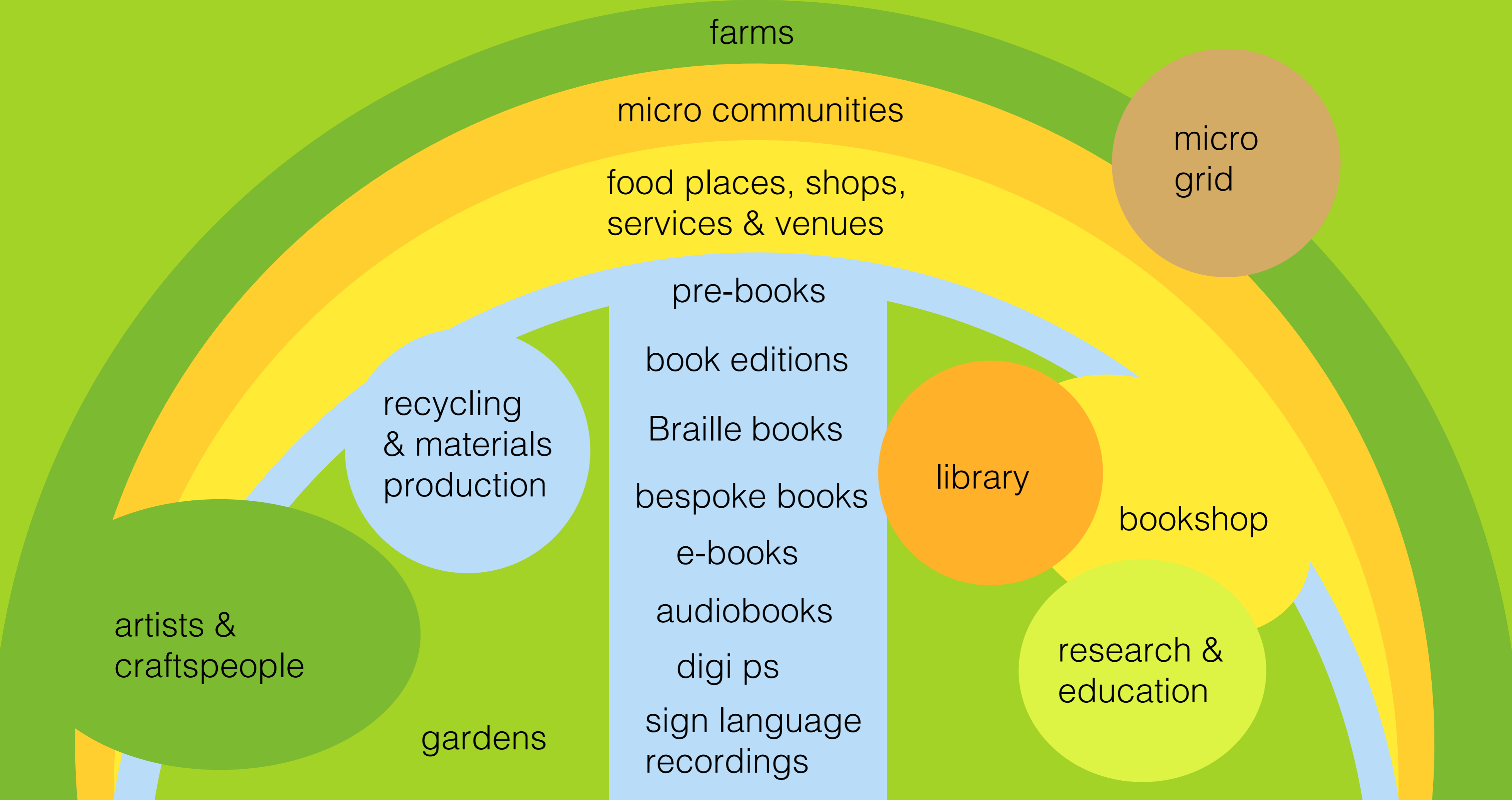
Once there is a network of book stations, it makes sense to establish a paper which reports from all book stations and their locations, and which publishes book reviews, research results and interviews with artists and craftspeople who work at or for a book station.



Individual book stations

Every book station will be unique in size, design and composition.







Locations for book stations

At book stations the injustices of the past are acknowledged by giving indigenous people priority with regard to choosing the location and the management for a book station.

In regions with no indigenous population, neglected areas are prioritised.

After all, one of the aims of a book station is to provide communities with a place that offers inspiration, communal spaces, support, gardens, arts, food, services, energy, healthcare, education, entertainment, jobs, and a place to become part of — and that where those offers are most beneficial.

Furthermore, book stations are built where they can easily be extended over time.

Management for book stations

This is a bit tricky, because the first book stations will start with an untested management model, working closely with the research team to further develop the model.

The general idea is that a book station has a lead team which is tasked with the role of a guardian and coordinator rather than with the role of a manager.

In other words: every single member at a book station is a skilled and open-minded person who subscribed to the principles of a book station, and who doesn't need anyone to tell them what to do. Everyone knows their job, and everyone works with the research team on everything that might need improving. And the guardians keep an eye on the overall picture and are on the lookout for possible synergies among all parties at a book station. Plus, sometimes a mediator might be needed, and that would be another task for the guardians.

Profits at book stations

The profit policy at a book station changes over time.

At first book stations use their profits to give the station a solid financial basis.

This achieved a station will use its profits to extent the book station, and to provide additional services for the community: such as healthcare, education, arts.

Once a book station is fully extended, parts of the profits are used to help finance new book stations around the world.

Each craft, workshop and team at a book station keep some of their profit.

To find a satisfying balance between making profits, sharing profits and working with profit caps will be interesting.

Generally speaking, the success of a book station will be measured by the extent of positive ripple effects it has on the community and on other book stations, not by the amount of money it would otherwise hoard or worse speculate with.

Property at book stations

Also a bit tricky.

To start with, from what I have observed neither the idea of private property nor the idea of state ownership work.

Some kind of community ownership seems to be the best option, though my guess is that the success of such a model will depend on getting the contract details right.

It's obvious at least that a book station can't be owned by anyone. It's too risky. Just imagine a divorce or an inheritance dispute, or someone having the brilliant idea of turning the book station into a shopping mall, or someone increasing the rent or the leasehold.

A book station needs continuity. And the lower a book station's costs, the better it can support the community.

As alternative to the community ownership, there could be an umbrella company for all book stations worldwide who would act as the guardians of all properties.

Such an umbrella company has the advantage that this group of guardians get insights from around the globe which gives them the best expertise to advice and support all book stations. And such an umbrella company would have the resources to protect a book station from speculators, and help it through rough stretches.

Or maybe there could be a hybrid model, and the community and the umbrella company could have a joint ownership of the book station. However, since the book station makes little profit for owners, the question is what the arguments for a joint ownership of a book stations could be.

What about the publishers?

The more publishers get on board with book stations and with rethinking publishing the better for authors, readers and the planet.

In order to find feasible solutions to new ways of publishing, and to rethink — well, everything about publishing, it is easiest to start from scratch and set up a new publisher which can do the groundwork:

pepper books publishing

pepper books publishing

shares a business model with dot.international

What is dot.international?

dot.international is a fictional fashion company in the easy town books. The business model for dot.international can serve as a blueprint for the publishing sector.

At the core of the dot.international model is the Millions of Dwarfs Approach.

Or in other words:

create locally, sell globally, and produce locally.

The Millions of Dwarfs Approach

Create locally, sell globally, and produce locally

local
creation

global

admin

local
production

sales

dot.international

dot.designer

dot.workshops

**global
presentation
& sales**

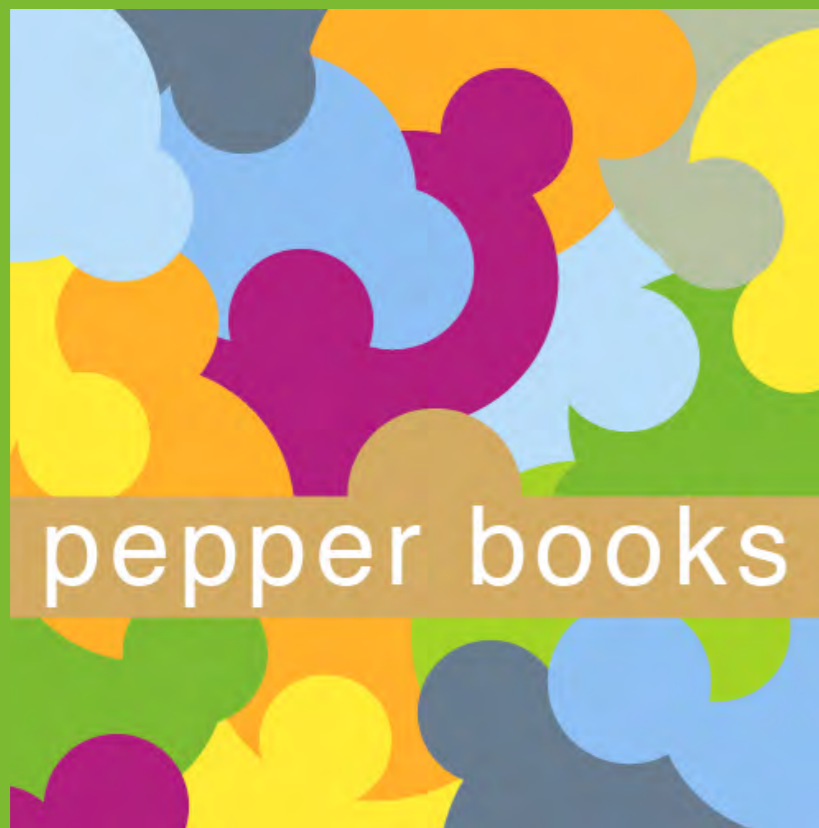
**admin
& coordination**



dot.international provides the framework for fashion designers from around the world to present their work globally.

And dot. connects to craftspeople around the world who produce the designer's creations locally for the local market.

Or in other words, millions of dwarf businesses are empowered by dot.international.



Pepper books publishing provides the framework for authors from around the world so that they can present their work globally via the pepper books website.

Books are printed at local book workshops for the local market whenever enough orders have been placed by local readers.



global

local
pepper authors

local
book workshops

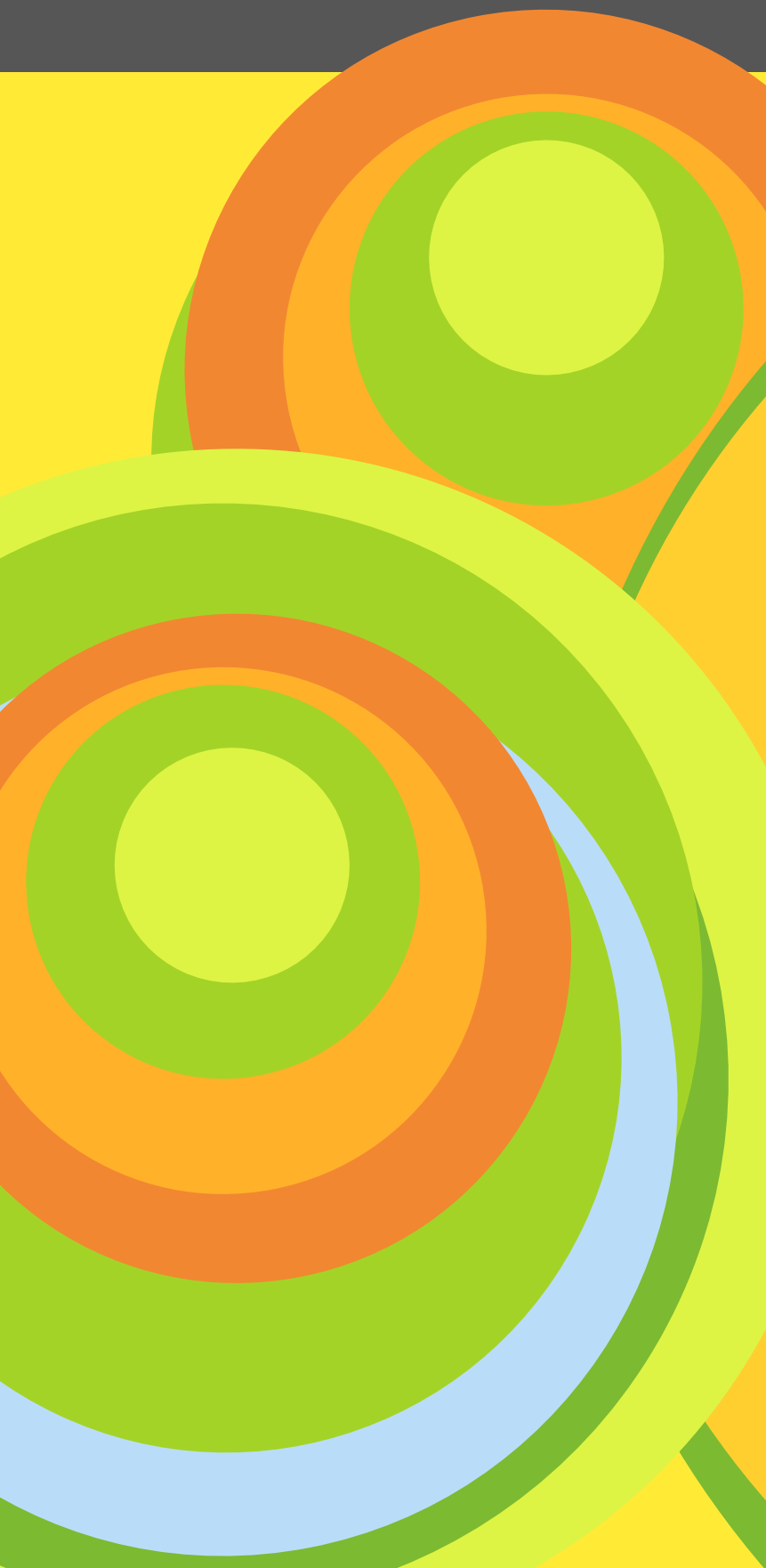
pepper books publishing

admin

readers

Two simplified examples

First example: dot.international



Anha, a fashion designer from Malé, Maldives, creates a special clothes collection for people living along coasts. And the designer's intriguing idea is to create each item in a way so that it can be adjusted to different weather conditions.

This idea gets a lot of attention from around the world, and Drifa, an oceans researcher in Iceland, orders the whole collection for her team.

Unfortunately the numbers don't hold, meaning that there aren't enough orders to make the local production feasible. The researcher either has to wait until more orders are in, or she finds fifty people who order the outfits as well. But with a product like this, Drifa needs no time before another hundred people place their orders.

The local dot.workshop gets the specifications for each item from dot.international, who has already contacted the local materials producer. Once all materials have arrived, the dot.workshop starts with the production.

All transactions, the coordination between all parties, the online presentation and the marketing are done by dot.international while the creators and the craftspeople can focus on their work.

The designer receives a percentage for each produced item, dot.international receives a share for their work, and the materials providers as well as the dot.workshops receive their shares.

Two simplified examples

Second example: pepper books publishing

Molia, a writer who lives in the Amazon, completes his third novel. After a few days rest, Molia travels to Manaus where a pepper books team has some offices.

At the offices, Molia is introduced to the terms & conditions for becoming a pepper books author which includes agreeing with the principles of pepper books publishing such as zero tolerance towards superiority complexes, discrimination, sexism, racism and exploitation.

Molia could have done all the paperwork online, but he wanted to know more about pepper books publishing before committing to working with them.

It is after the meetings with the editors and with a local illustrator that Molia decides to give pepper books publishing a try. After all, the contract with pepper books publishing is not exclusive, and he likes the way they do business and support

all members of the network. He also decides to go all in and opens his novel for the worldwide trade in licences for local pre-book offers, book prints, bespoke books, Braille books, audiobooks, sign-language recordings, theatre adaptations and the like. Since Molia keeps his copyright, he can veto any production or withdraw any permission he doesn't want to keep up.

It takes two weeks before Molia receives the email with the confirmation that his book has been accepted. The email includes an invitation to Manaus to take photos, discuss some minor changes with the editor, to finalise the details for the first edition, including the illustrations, and to discuss the prices & shares for the various editions. A second meeting is suggested for a video interview at his village, and a third for a video recording of Molia reading the first chapter of his novel.

Three weeks later, pepper books publishing presents Molia's novel and all the additional material on the pepper books website. E-books of the novel are already available. And pepper books opens the novel to members of the pepper books network for translations, transcriptions, prints and other productions around the world.

A book workshop in Rio de Janeiro is the first to get enough orders for a print. This first edition is celebrated at the local bookshop with Molia present.

A reader in Mongolia bought the e-book and is eager to get a printed copy. But so far not enough regional orders have been placed. Some two months later, the regional book workshop gets in touch, informing the reader that the books will be printed within the week.

Molia is already working on his next story, but once a day he takes a look at his pepper books online profile and watches as more and more dots appear on the world map, indicating where another workshop just started to print a copy of his novel. Admittedly, he is also happy about the total sum of his shares in the sales, which constantly grows — at least

for now. His smile broadens when he sees the first group of actors coming together in Lima to produce the first audiobook for his novel, and he contacts the workshop in Johannesburg who print the first Braille transcription of his story, and he asks them for a copy.

Colour codes on the sales map

white dot = pre-book sold

orange dot = first book orders are in, but not enough to start production

blue dot = books in production

green dot = books delivered

brown dot = bespoke book(s) in production

gold dot = bespoke book(s) delivered

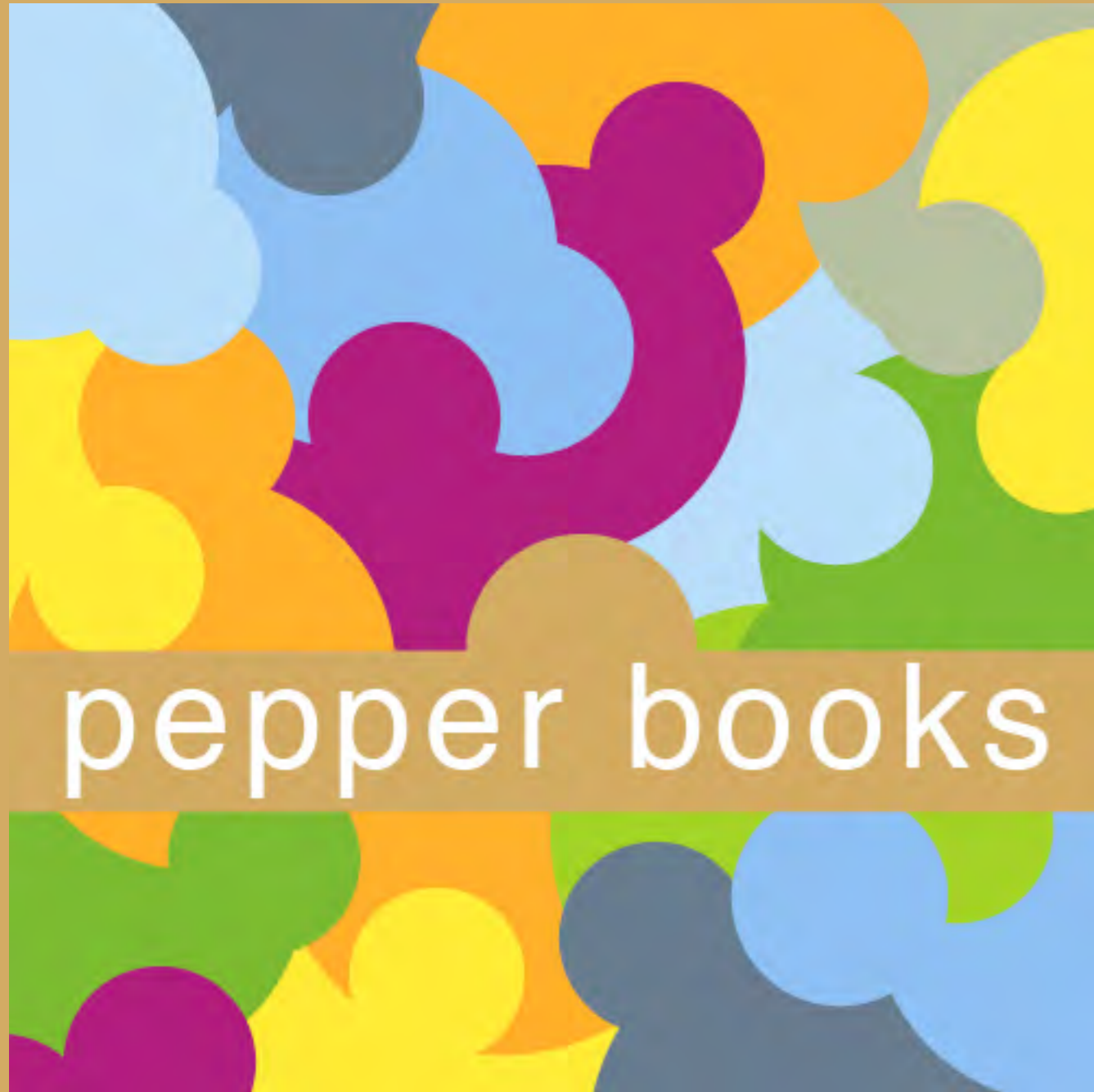
yellow dot = a book with a history has been passed on

lilac dot = Braille transcription, audio version, sign language video or another production is in preparation

plum dot = a production is completed

light red dot = a new translation is in progress

dark red dot = a new translation is completed



Apart from testing the Millions of Dwarfs Approach for the publishing sector, pepper books publishing will explore other approaches and issues too. This includes:

- Research sustainable materials
- Research how a book can be printed in the most sustainable way
- Research how to let a maximum amount of people benefit from a single product
- Research how to print as few books as possible, and yet make as many stories as possible available
- Research how to best build an international network which strengthens local communities
- Build a books website which is highly adaptable by the user
- Test price structures and profit caps
- Work with teams which are balanced with regard to gender, age and origin
- Test management models
- Investigate how to avoid bias, arrogance and superiority complexes
- Research how sexuality affects the publishing sector and work spaces
- Create work spaces that are healthy
- Find out how to support authors
- Research how pepper books publishing offices can be integrated into nature

And pepper books will be part of the bespoke books network.



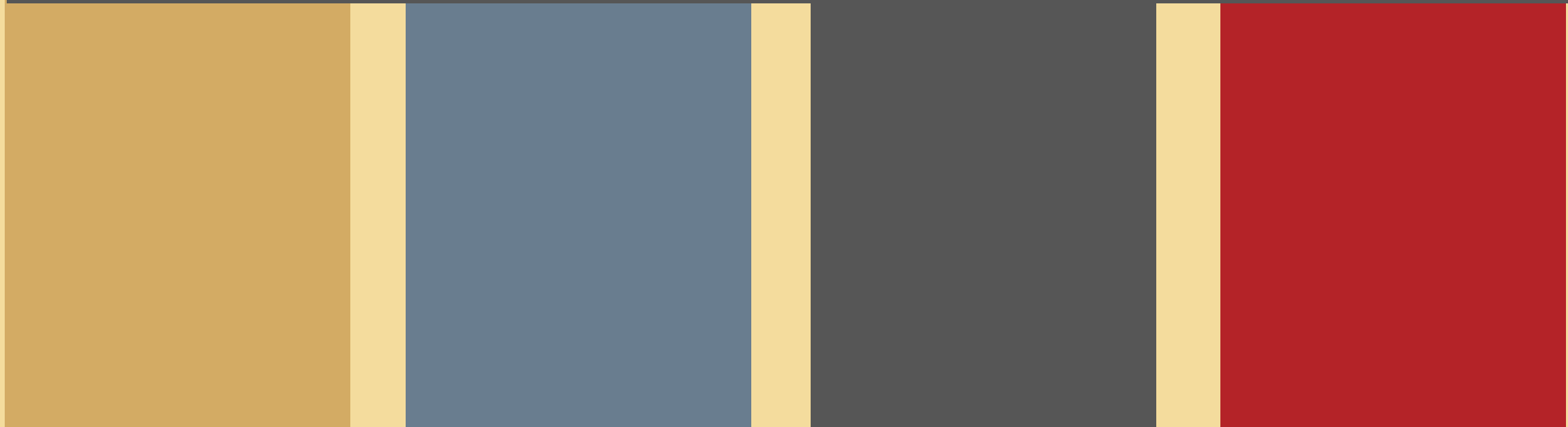
bespoke books network



bespoke books network

The bespoke books network is the idea for a network of book workshops, sustainable materials providers, publishers & authors, and bookshops.

On the following pages, we will take a closer look at each party involved in the network.



The customer

The initiative for the bespoke edition of a book usually comes from the customer.

case 1

A customer has twelve favourite books for which they would like to have bespoke editions. The customer checks on the network's website whether these books are available for bespoke editions.

Since the books are all available, the customer contacts the local book workshop and gets involved in the layout and design processes, and chooses the materials for each book.

At every step the customer is advised by the craftspeople, but the customer has the final say. These twelve books are single editions.

case 2

A group of fans get together to create their own design for their favourite book series. They tell their social networks about it, and in the end two thousand two hundred and twenty two people sign up for a copy of this limited edition of the book series, which will be produced at the nearest local book workshop of the respective fan.

case 3

A customer approaches the local book station, which includes a workshop for bespoke books, about a new layout and design for her Lord of the Rings copy. The customer, layout master and the illustrators work together closely until every detail is agreed upon.

A first copy of the book will be produced for the customer, and afterwards this particular edition will be offered online.

Whenever a bespoke books workshop receives enough orders, this edition can be reproduced anywhere in the world.the world.

case 4

A customer peruses the bespoke books network website and discovers an edition of Aitmatov's Jamilia, designed by a Kyrgyz artist.

It is a pretty expensive edition but it is still open for reproduction, meaning that any bespoke books workshop can obtain a licence to reproduce it, until the maximum of 7,500 copies is reached.

The customer sends an enquiry for a copy via the network's website.

The network contacts the closest bespoke books workshop, but the workshop declines since this edition needs a highly specialised illustrator. After a few more tries, the network finds a match, and it turns out that two other readers are thinking about ordering this edition too. With this in mind, the network contacts the customer and gives a first estimate for the price.

In the end seven orders are placed at this workshop. The price is still pretty high, but once the copy is in the customer's hands, it seem like a priceless jewel.



case 5

A customer has a collection of favourite recipes, most of them loose on paper, some earmarked in cookbooks.


The customer approaches the local bespoke books workshop, and asks whether they would be prepared to work their way through this collection and create a bespoke cookbook on particularly resilient paper.

Also the customer would like to support local artists and offers a budget for illustrations.

After about two weeks the workshop presents a first draft with some choices for illustrations.

It takes another week to agree on all the details, and about a month until the new cookbook is ready.

When the customer picks it up, they exclaim: 'I say, every cookbook should be a bespoke book. This is perfect.'



There are all sorts of reasons to initiate a bespoke edition of a book, like a favourite book edition, a special friend edition, a birthday edition, the author's edition (even like a director's cut), the Berlin edition, an artist's edition and so on.

Though generally speaking, the aim of bespoke books is to reduce the number of printed books, not to come up with more ideas to use up resources /-)

Summary

- Bespoke book editions can be single editions, limited editions, editions which are connected to a person or a location, or editions which are made available globally.
- The customer is the one who initiates an edition.
- Only sold editions are produced.



The workshops

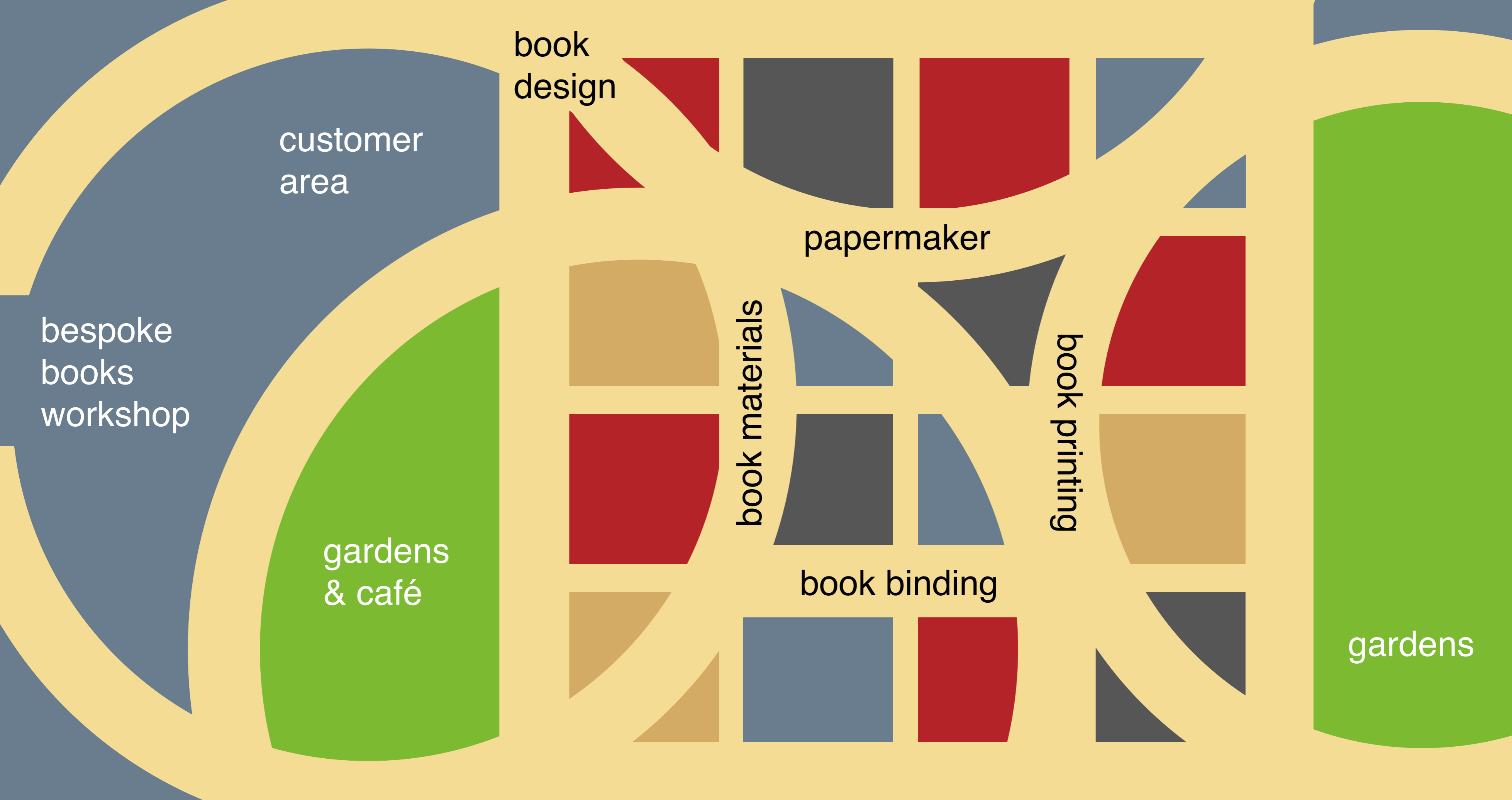
It is probably best to set up bespoke books workshops for the network to ensure sustainable working practises from the start.

The network will need a minimum size so that enough orders come in for each workshop.

A bespoke books workshop has three main sources for orders:

- Direct orders from local customers
- Orders from local bookshops
- Orders via the network website

Depending on the wishes of the craftspeople in the workshop, and also depending on the region, a workshop could be extended to include book repairs, general printing and a customer area. Or a bespoke books workshop can be integrated into a book station.



customer
area

bespoke
books
workshop

gardens
& café

gardens

book
design

papermaker

book materials

book printing


book binding

Tasks at a workshops

The tasks at a bespoke books workshop

- Work with the customer on the layout, design elements & materials
- Make paper and cover materials
- Create the book cover
- Add illustrations
- Set the book
- Print all parts
- Bind all parts
- Add a unique code to the book (e.g. embossed on the leather cover)
- Issue a certificate of authenticity

A bespoke books workshop could work with independent illustrators or decide to get together a permanent team of craftspeople and artists who specialise in bespoke books.

The header features a yellow background with four colored rectangular blocks: a gold block on the left, a blue block, a dark grey block, and a red block on the right. The text 'The workshops' is centered in a large black font, with 'examples' centered below it in a smaller black font.

The workshops

examples

Case 1

The head of the Bangkok bespoke books workshop receives a request for a bespoke edition of the verse drama Ramakian. The customer is an illustrator herself and would like to work closely with the workshop's illustrators.

At the first meeting with the customer, papers and cover materials are inspected, layout options and the size of the book are discussed, and a schedule for the next steps is completed.

Over the next two weeks the customer and the workshop's illustrators work together closely.

When the drafts for all illustrations are completed, the proposed layout is revised and some changes are made. Next a draft copy of the book is produced, and after some final adjustments the bespoke book is created.

This is a single and unique edition which will be registered and documented at the workshop but which cannot be reproduced.

When the customer picks up her bespoke book, she also receives a certificate of authenticity.

Case 2

The network's team for western Europe has been crunching numbers and decides that the increasing popularity of bespoke books should bring in enough work for twelve additional workshops. Being careful, they decide to set up two new workshops every other month, and only continue with extending the network as long as the numbers hold.

The first new workshop will be in Bergen, Norway. The special point about this workshop is that it also offers ocean-compatible prints, meaning that the books can survive a high concentration of salt in the air, and are much less affected by some drops of seawater than standard paper.

You still can't go swimming with such a book, but overall it's a lot more resilient than your average on-land book.

Orders for these books are already piling up, but the network can't move as fast as it likes.

The workshop is built quickly enough, a number of timber buildings and a stone building for the laboratory, all embedded in a natural garden on the outskirts of Bergen. But finding all the craftspeople and artists needed for this workshop, is more difficult.

In the end, the six initial members of the workshop agree to train six newcomers to complete their team. And here they get lucky: two students sign up, two pensioners and funny enough two former sailors.

The good thing about the training period is that the scientists on the team can further develop and test their ideas for resilient books and involve all members in the process.

After about six months, the team is ready to start. There are still some wobblers, but after another six months their production runs smoothly.

By then all twelve new workshops have been set up in western Europe and are running fine. And by the looks of it, for now the network has all the bespoke books workshops it needs. And it has enough revenue to support the local communities.



Case 3

The curiosity bespoke books workshop in Prague, Czech Republic, is coming into global fame for its extraordinary book editions. In fact, the bespoke books network set up another workshop in Prague which handles the more established bespoke books orders so that the curiosity workshop can keep up with the demand for extraordinary prints. Plus, the curiosity craftspeople train craftspeople from around the world so that those can set up their own curiosity workshops.

It all started with classics and world records, such as the smallest and the largest book edition of Kafka's *The Trial*.

And then young Nikola visited the bespoke books workshop with a special request: she wanted a book with short stories by Czech authors printed on different kinds of paper, each paper representing a different author and a different natural resource such as wood, sugarcane, bamboo, straw, cork, reed, cotton, fruit peels, nutshells and so on. The covers were to be made of two woodcarvings, Nikola would carve herself.

In the following weeks, the paper makers at the workshop had a great time and used this contract to experiment and develop more kinds of paper than any other bespoke books workshop to that date. And at the same time the book people got drunk on ideas for bespoke books no one had ever dreamed up.

Over the following months, the craftspeople transformed their workshop into a place where nothing is impossible.

You want an edible book? No problem.
Single flavour or multi flavour? Sweet or spicy?

You want a book made of actual leaves?
No problem. Single leaf? Or a whole mixed forest worth of leaves?

You want a book you can close with buttons?
No problem. Single buttons? Or a collection of buttons,
and should the title be made of buttons too?

You want a book made of metal sheets?
No problem. Printed? Or engraved?

Of course, there were people who brought up ideas which were simply a waste of resources. Like a love story printed on condoms. To which Hynek, head of the workshop, said: 'Dear, I don't mind printing your love story on silk and add a pouch for condoms, but we are not wasting materials.'

Admittedly the question of what is a waste of material, and what isn't, is a bit critical.




The raw materials suppliers

When it comes to bespoke books there are few limits to the materials that can be used, even a fancy snow globe edition of a poem is a possibility, or a fairy tale edition engraved across a copper globe.

However, the bespoke books network, while open to the most far-fetched ideas, has subscribed to sustainable practices both with respect to the materials used, how and where those materials are extracted, produced or farmed, and with respect to avoiding waste and using recycling methods.

Where possible, the bespoke books network sets up a raw materials supplier close to a workshop, or central for several workshops.

A raw materials supplier produces a diverse range of natural fibres and other materials, and usually also operates a recycling facility.



The authors & publishers

The bespoke books network makes trade in bespoke books very simple for authors and publishers.

The only thing authors and publishers have to do is to contact the network, negotiate their terms and conditions for bespoke book editions, sit back and watch as more and more unique editions of their publications see the light of day.



The authors & publishers

examples

Case 1

A publisher registers some of its authors on the bespoke books website. So far fifteen authors of this publisher are interested in opening their publications for bespoke editions. Each author has different conditions which are all added in the registration process.

About a week later, the publisher meets with one of the spokespeople for the bespoke books network.

Three of the books are declined. One because of sexist content, the other for the extent of outdated clichés, and the third because the author doesn't accept any changes to the layout of her book. The latter defeats the objective of giving readers the option for creative input.

The other twelve authors are added to the network, and each book receives a profile so that publisher and author can watch in real time where their publications are printed in bespoke editions.

Case 2

An author loves the idea of bespoke books but her publisher is against joining the network.

Being a bit of a rebel, the author writes a new book, self-publishes it and registers it with the bespoke books network.

It's a beautiful and powerful story about a woman who constantly gets angry. But then the character finds an unorthodox way to deal with her anger, which gets her into quite a few comic situations. It's the kind of story that makes you think by making you laugh.

However, while the story sells well, no one seems to want a bespoke edition of that story.

But then our rebel author has an idea. She finds people who struggle with anger and asks each of them to create a bespoke edition of her book, and to add some pages about their own experiences with anger.

The results are great, and our rebel author chooses the 24 best extended and personalised editions and sets each to a maximum of 24k copies worldwide.

And that does the trick for several reasons: the books are still limited editions, but due to the high number of copies per edition, and subsequently a higher minimum order volume, the book is less expensive. And due to the added stories by readers, each edition has a personal touch by someone who knows about struggling with anger.

These editions are so successful that other angry people want to create a personalised edition too.



Case 3

An author decides to order two bespoke editions of her book for herself. The first edition is a work edition with a lot of space for notes. This copy she uses as a reference for the upcoming books of her series.

The second edition is her special reading edition and also the one she might show to visitors.

The author can decide whether to keep this edition as her personal unique copy, or whether to open it for reproduction in the bespoke books network.

Case 4

A publisher decides to have a unique single edition of each book they ever published.

It's partly to impress visitors or aspiring new authors, but it's also an investment, worth a lot more than a first edition, because these single books are unique.



The bookshops

It won't be easy to find a way for bookshops to benefit from bespoke books.


Unless bookshop owners do a bit of a rethink. The biggest advantage a bookshop owner has, is the knowledge about books and readers, and the direct contact with the reader.

If you think about it, a bookshop doesn't need shelves full of books to sell a book. What the bookshop needs is an atmosphere where the reader feels good and ready to listen to advise on which book to read next, what kind of edition to get and so on.

So what if bookshops would establish something like talking spots where a reader can be advised and where special offers can be presented via a tablet or screen?

In such a case, advising customers about bespoke editions could be part of a bookshop's service and would qualify the bookshop for a share in the revenue.

Also bookshops and bespoke books workshops could team up and benefit from each other's expertise. In such a case a number of bespoke books could be on display in the bookshop as examples of what the customer can expect.



The tasks of the network

The bespoke books network negotiates all deals with the authors and the publishers. Deals are individual and can be adjusted over time.

The network sets up and maintains the online presentation of all works. As a result the customer can see which books are on offer for bespoke editions, and which books are already available in a special edition.

The network provides secure online vaults for each book edition which contain text and graphic files. These vaults can be accessed by a book workshop who has received the required number of orders to go into production.

The network takes care of all transactions. That is to say, the customer registers with the network, pays the network, and the network distributes the payments to all participants.

The network sets up profiles for each author and publisher where sales and the specifications of each edition are documented in real time.

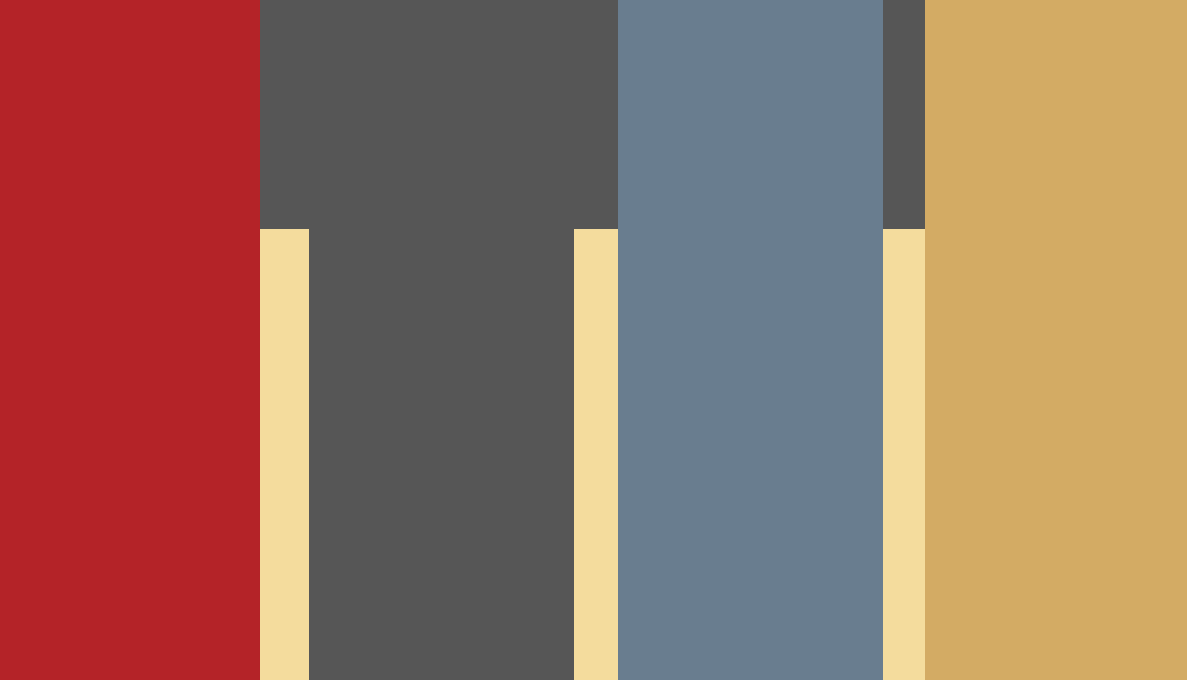
The network sets up a network of bespoke books workshops.

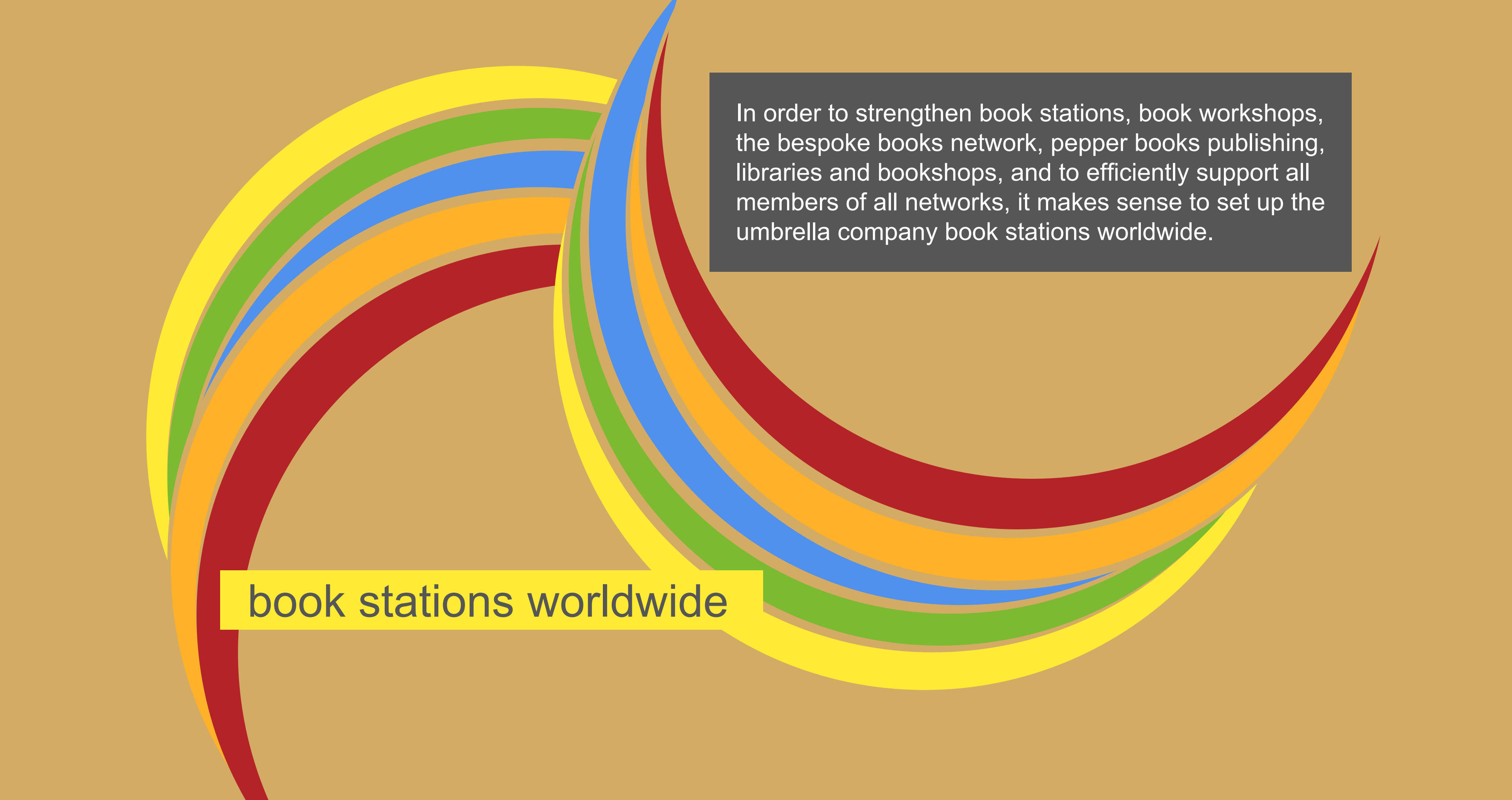
The network is responsible for the coordination between all parties.

On top of this, the network ensures that quality, sustainability and work practices comply with the network's codex.



The main aims of the network

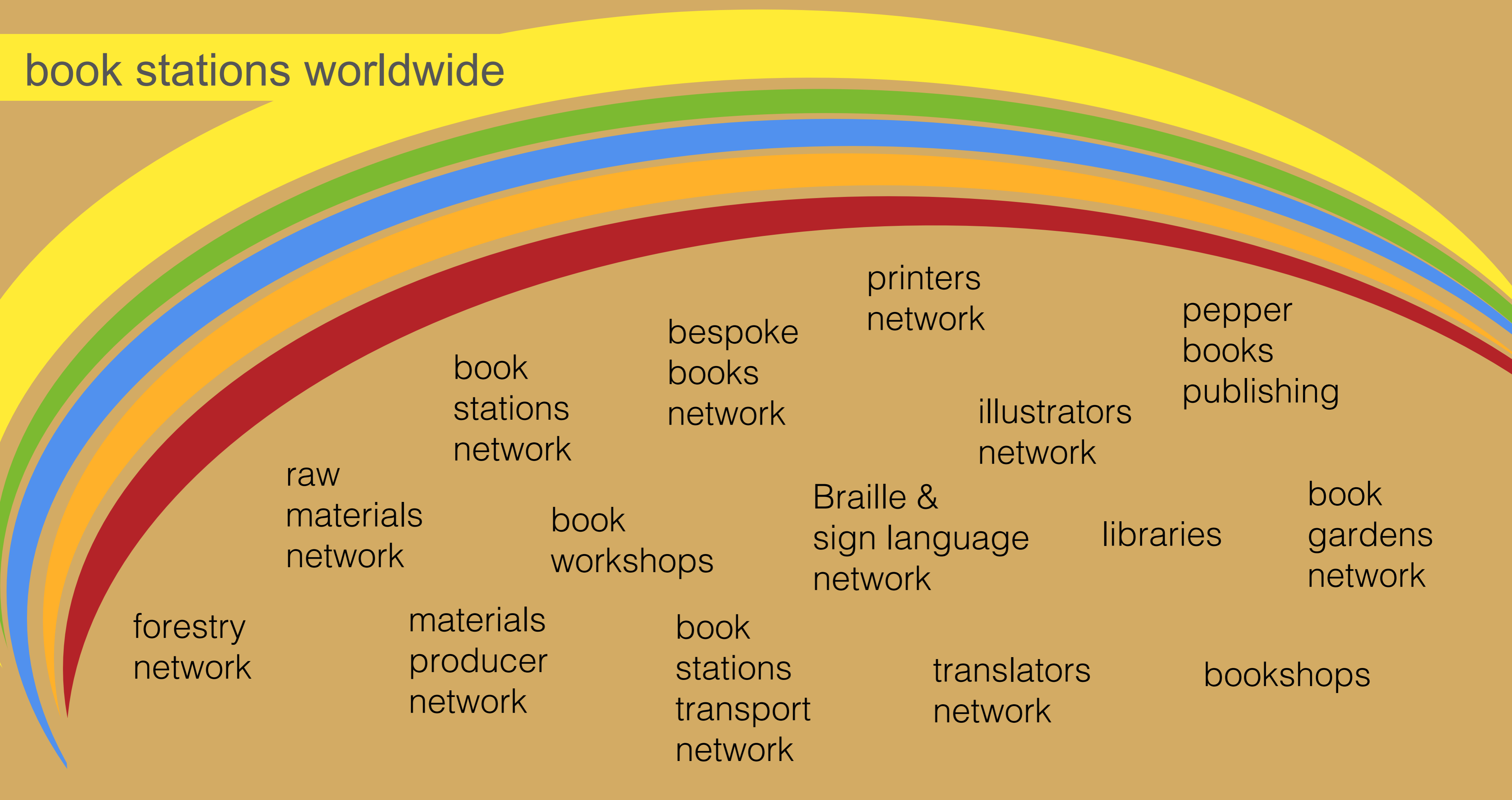
- Reduce the number of printed books
 - Give readers a chance to be creative
 - Give publishers and authors a simple procedure to offer their publications globally in special editions
 - Support local economies by providing job opportunities
 - Research sustainable approaches to book production
 - Connect artists and craftspeople
- 



In order to strengthen book stations, book workshops, the bespoke books network, pepper books publishing, libraries and bookshops, and to efficiently support all members of all networks, it makes sense to set up the umbrella company book stations worldwide.

book stations worldwide

book stations worldwide



Summaries

for all book stations worldwide networks

Members of all networks exchange and share knowledge, innovations and skills.

Forestry network

The forestry network takes care of resources, protecting and providing them.

Raw materials network

The raw materials network protects and provides resources. This network includes a recycling network, plus energy and water providers.

Materials producers network

This network ensures sustainable production practices. The materials producers receive their raw materials from the forestry and the raw materials networks. And they supply their local or regional workshops.

Book stations network

Book stations are places that are all about books, the community and the future of the planet. The book stations from around the world cooperate with each other.

Book workshops network

Often book workshops will work at or closely with a local book station. But the workshops themselves also form a network for exchange and support. Plus book workshops might be part of a book station and of the bespoke books network.

Bespoke books network

A network to make bespoke book editions available worldwide. The network includes a base for admin, coordination and contracts, and a network of material suppliers and bespoke books workshops.

Book stations worldwide transport network

This network includes research, development and production of cargo bicycles, and software development for delivery coordination. Other transport options and logistic issues are also addressed by this network.

Networks for printers, illustrators, Braille, sign language and translators

These networks serve to connect the members to book workshops, book stations, the bespoke books network, and pepper books publishing.

pepper books publishing

A publisher who offers the work of authors from around the world, using the Millions of Dwarfs Approach.

Book gardens network

This is a network of all kinds book garden at book stations around the world for the exchange of ideas, innovations and the development of more book gardens.

Libraries

Libraries are part of every book station. Ideas and research are shared with all libraries worldwide.

Bookshops

Bookshops are part of book stations, and other independent bookshops can join book stations worldwide for cooperation and support.

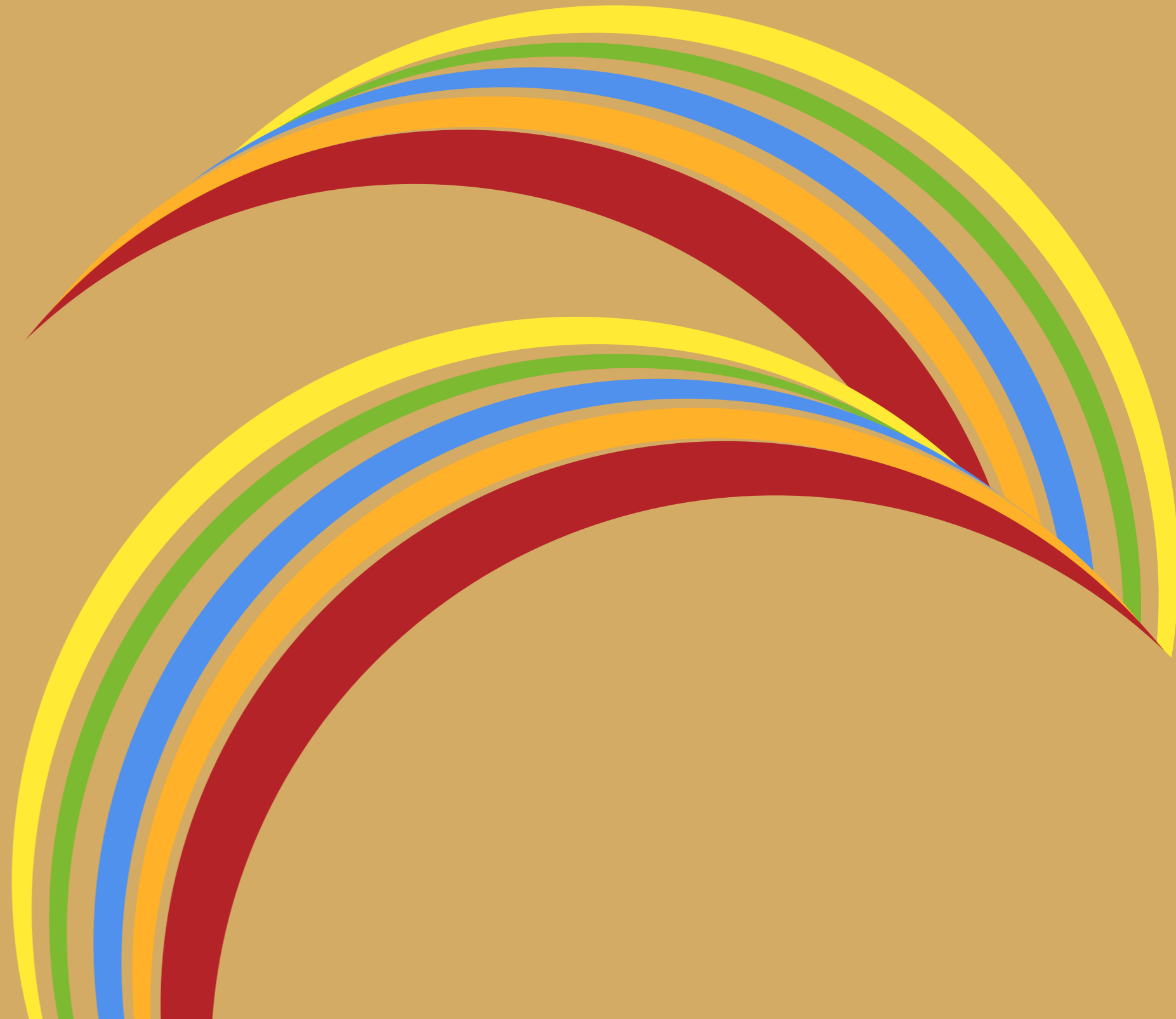
book stations worldwide

Online

Book stations worldwide online presents everything the networks have to offer. And the website gives the reader easy access to books of all kinds, to background information, online events, libraries and much more.

On top of that, a reader can create their own and highly adaptable & sortable profile on this website. Plus the customer can create something like a private library and/or communicate with other readers, and sometimes with the creators and makers of books such as authors, book makers, publishers, raw material suppliers or Braille transcribers.

There is no tailored advertising, data harvesting, bestseller lists or any kind of unasked for interaction with the user on this or the connected websites.



book stations worldwide

A good day to you

log in

use the
filters
questionnaires

search from scratch

search

books

authors

book workshops

book stations

book events

recycling

research

surprise me

book stations worldwide online

authors	filter	books
book workshops	bespoke books	book stations
book repairs	book recycling	book events
interviews	research	surprise me

login

book stations worldwide online

authors

books

book
stations

bespoke
books

book repairs
& recycling

book events

login

workshops

online
events

readers
lounge

videos

bookshops

audiobooks

sign
language

Braille

research

innovations

libraries

Advantages

of book stations, pepper books publishing, the bespoke books network, book stations worldwide and the dot.model

Creativity unearthed

by giving a platform to millions of creators and craftspeople thereby unearthing and amplifying the world's creative potential.

Global presence

by providing millions of small creators and actors with a framework that gives them access to the global markets plus advocacy, and at the same time relative independence from market volatilities, plus job security.

Powers are balanced

Empowering the dwarfs = reduction of monopolistic powers = broader distribution of income = broader purchasing power & more health = fewer costs in combating poverty & health issues = less dependence on support = fewer conflicts = less damage to the human habitat plus fewer imbalances.

Advantages

Costs saved

by reducing costs for transport, resources, raw materials, waste management, administration and marketing. Costs are also reduced by minimising the damage done to people and to the environment.

Waste reduction

by only producing what is sold, buy focusing on compostable materials, and by establishing waste cycles.

Rewards

Creativity, skills and the sharing of opportunities are rewarded — not exploitation, speculation, market dominance or profiteering.

Inclusive

by working with diverse and balanced teams for every kind of customer.

Advantages

Sharing

- Sharing work opportunities by working with small businesses = redistribution of work = redistribution of income.
- Sharing ideas by trading in licences.
- Sharing research & innovations via the umbrella company thereby ensuring that all members of the networks can work in the best possible way.
- Sharing profits by working with price corridors and profit caps, and by using excess profits to support communities.

Empowering creatives

by providing support, security, presentation, and freedom.

Advantages

Empowering craftspeople

by employing the core tasks principle which means that the umbrella company takes care of administrative tasks, financial transactions and workflow coordination. This way craftspeople can focus on their core tasks.


Empowering customers

by giving them a voice, a choice, a reconnection and a basis for trust.

A voice by listening to the needs of the customers. A choice by offering products from around the world. A reconnection by re-establishing the connection between customer, creator and producer. A basis for trust by subscribing to the dot.perspectives and dot.principles, which are a statement for the dignity and uniqueness of every human, for the future of the planet, and for a high and durable quality of all products.

The global economy

The global economy is strengthened plus more balanced, more inclusive and more sustainable thanks to these ideas.



No one is going to become super rich with this business model, but it provides ample opportunity for people who want to work independently but agree on a set of principles, such as no exploitation.

As a result communities can generate a stable and diverse income. We tried big business. It didn't do us any good. dot.international and the Hub prove that doing business doesn't have to be some weird profiteering, it can actually be about building communities, about giving people freedom, about being creative and contributing, about providing what is needed, about treating the human as a human, and not as an asset.

notes for book 4/1, building

Casey's bookshop

A concluding example & story



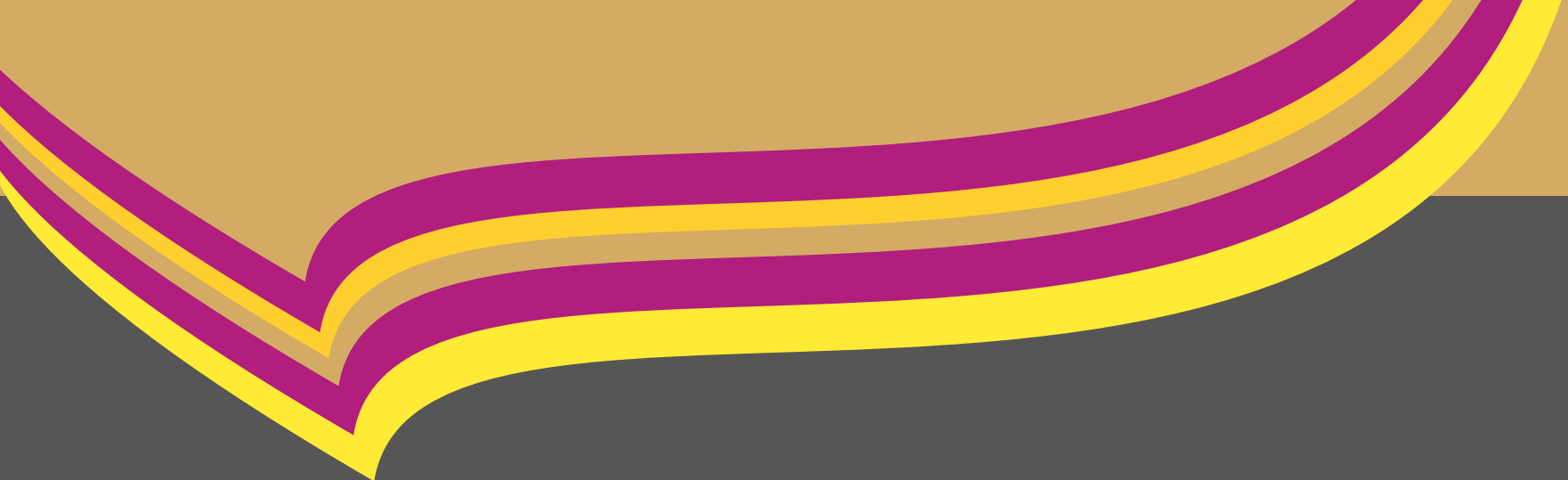
WORLDS

Blue Meadows

The coastal village of Blue Meadows, in the north-west of England, was founded some centuries ago by a handful of families, fishermen and farmers.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Blue Meadows had grown into a small town, prosperous thanks to the rising demand for fish.

The last quarter of the twentieth century saw a rapid decline of the family-run fishing businesses, many of which had to give up — at least fishing. In the following period, former fishing families transformed Blue Meadows into a place for tourists. The highlights were an old fishing boat, which had been turned into a museum, and the beautiful harbour area, which was now a place where people went for a stroll or visited the fish restaurant.



Casey knew the story of Blue Meadows well, and when she was small, she often dreamed of travelling back in time to when her great-grandfather owned seven fishing boats, which made him the second most important fisherman in the village.

In her dreams Casey would dress up as a boy and beg her great-grandfather to take her on one of his adventures.

And what adventures they had: fighting sea monsters, braving life-threatening storms, uncovering plots by devious sailors, fighting villains who had smuggled themselves on board, or landing on a secret island full of terrible beasts.

Casey's love for stories and for Blue Meadows influenced her decision to open a bookshop. But there was something else. Casey wanted to share the worlds she discovered in books.

So many people only knew a handful of authors like

Shakespeare, Austen, Dickens, Doyle, Woodhouse, Priestley, Christie. But what about contemporary writers? What about writers from other countries, other cultures? Or writers with disabilities? Or queer writers? Or writers who had faced death and were starting over? Or writers who had to stay anonymous, because in their country they couldn't speak freely or didn't have an accepted gender?

There were so many worlds to discover.

And that decided Casey to open a bookshop and to share her discoveries with the people of Blue Meadows. And she got lucky. An old house on the road to the harbour became available.

More than twenty years later, Casey still loved to discover new worlds, and her bookshop was known everywhere in the region and beyond.

It was called Worlds.

Yet another world

book stations worldwide heard of Casey's bookshop, and one fine morning, Frederick, a member of the book stations worldwide team, opened to door and stepped into Casey's world.

'You mean, do I want a book station?' Casey asked bluntly, after Frederick had introduced himself.

'Oh, I was thinking small—' Frederick stopped and looked around Casey's bookshop, remembering a description he had read: 'Imagine you enter a room full of books and warmth and little corners to sit in, and everything is composed in a way as if the room itself was the most intricate painting with thousands of details all belonging to the worlds presented in the books. This is Worlds, Casey's bookshop.'

Frederick frowned and looked at Casey again. 'I can't imagine that you would ever exchange this place for any other.'

'I would not,' Casey retorted, feeling off balance, which was not like her at all.

But here was the thing: over the last weeks, Casey had read a lot about book stations worldwide, and she liked the ideas. But it was kind of unsettling that Frederick had turned up just when she was tentatively exploring the implications. She was curious where rethinking the book trade would lead and leave her. But what if, if she went down that road, what if she would have to give up everything she loved about her bookshop? And why couldn't Frederick have come in a month or in a year, when she would have been more certain what to think?

Frederick smiled a little. 'Look, I was in the area, and I just wanted to say hello and see whether you'd like to meet for lunch or supper. You know, you tell me about your work, I tell you about ours, and maybe we end up doing something together.'

'Who did you meet? I mean, what are you doing in the area?'

'Barnes Hall.'

'What?'

Transformations

About a year later, new worlds were taking shape. Not just in Casey's bookshop but also in Blue Meadows.

The incident with Barnes Hall had been the turning point. Everyone called it incident, though it was more a case of boredom, some said.

This is what happened.

Barnes Hall was a retired farmer, and one day he decided that he had had enough of retirement.

He had read a lot about book stations worldwide and he had a great love for books. A love he developed late in his life, and really thanks to Casey's bookshop, which had all sorts of books, some of which you would never have expected to exist.

Barnes sometimes teased Casey, saying: 'Confess, you're using magic to make up all these writers and books.'

Anyway, Barnes knew that there were six book stations in


England so far. The closest was in Liverpool and that was where he went, and where he told one of the book station's people: 'I want to learn! You say age doesn't matter. Well, here I am. I want to learn how to make bespoke books, and if I like what I learn, I have a bit of land to spare which we can use for a bespoke books workshop. Not sure a whole book station would fit into our town.'

By the time Frederick met Casey, Barnes was already in the middle of his training to become a master for bespoke books.

And later that same day, Barnes told Frederick that he insisted on having a bespoke books workshop and a paper workshop on his land. All it would need was transforming the old barns. 'And doing the integrating with nature. You would think I know all about that, being a farmer, but the truth is I was a bit lazy in the head department. Not much of a thinker. And these days it's books I want to learn about. So you people do what other things need to be done — and for the nature.'

To staff the workshops, Barnes insisted on getting old birds back into play. 'We can do better than sit in front of the telly all day.'

But in the end, Barnes agreed that some youngsters, and maybe one or two of the middle-aged towners, would be allowed on to the team, too. Just to balance the team a bit.



Now, a year on, book-related ideas were seeping into every corner of Blue Meadows.

It wasn't just Barnes and his growing team any more, or Casey and her Worlds.

It was also Gina, the mayor, who had become a driving force behind the town's transformation and worked relentlessly to get everyone on board for all the new ideas for the future of books — in Blue Meadows.

And Lizzy who was great with embroideries and who designed beautiful pouches as protection for books.

And Martin, an up and coming chef, who travelled to Oxford to speak with a professor in English Literature to find out which dishes he could offer in his book-themed restaurant. Meanwhile other towners were already building the new books restaurant in a nice spot between Barnes' farm and the entry to the town. From there the guests would have a fantastic view across Blue Meadows and all the way to the ocean.

And Joyce and Marlon who quit their jobs as teachers to build a Books Garden, which stretched from Barnes' farm to the town, with Martin's restaurant in the middle, Marlon's Tea Hut on the other side, and Joyce's Breakfast Café at the entrance to the garden.

Once completed, the Books Garden would offer reading spots, designed by three artists from neighbouring villages, book tours, garden competitions, and reading events. They even thought of adding Alice's rabbit hole.

And the former teachers were developing ideas for the town's children, hoping that the Books Garden would give children a place where they could learn about books and nature alike, and about the children's place in the natural world as much as in the world of stories.

And then there was Marsha who asked, during one of the many books-related town meetings, whether part of the book trade's profits could be used to rebuild a small fishing branch.

'And I want a fishing museum,' Larry chipped in. 'And we should get into teaching about sustainable fishing and build our own aquaculture farm.'

Bertha stood up: 'And I want a museum documenting the farming history of our families, and we need support to diversify and improve our farming practices. Get our biodiversity back.'

Martin shook his head. 'We already have a fishing museum on the boat—'

'—that's just a small bit of our history!' Larry cut in.

Gina, the mayor, cleared her throat. 'I'm sorry to ask, but what does fishing and farming have to do with books?'

Immediately the towners erupted into protest. An outsider would have been surprised how quickly the hubbub subsided, and how easily the crowd decided who should speak first. But here was the thing about this time of the books: all considered, people didn't want to fight. They wanted to build. So they decided that Larry should make his argument first.

'But don't you see?' Larry said to Gina. 'Books contain stories. And the story of this town is all about fishing, that's where we come from—'

'—and farming,' Bertha chipped in with a challenging smile.

'And farming,' Larry repeated with a wink. 'And therefore, telling our stories in museums, but also using this opportunity to improve our work practices, to rebuild, to look after our land better, after nature, that's all part of everything. I mean ... You know what I mean. And we can have books with all our new knowledge and with our history. It's all connected.'

Marsha, who had brought up fishing in the first place, nodded and added: 'We can make both work, fishing and books, and combine it. We could, for example, invest in some newer boats. And we can use them to fish what we need in town. And at the same time we can use them to offer fishing trips for tourists. And,' Marsha paused for effect, 'and we can offer boat readings. Like, people can rent a boat and read a book while sitting in the boat.'

'But fishing boats smell, to put it politely,' Gina remarked.

'So what?' Marsha returned with a grin. 'It always says, people are keen on authentic experiences. That's what they get, smells and fish scales included.'

People chuckled and nodded, and Bertha added: 'If we learn more, we can also use parts of our farmland to produce the raw materials for paper. I mean, if we work together like in the old days, we can make it work, and we become independent of— of all the weird stuff that's going on in politics and on the stock markets.'

This time the towners erupted into a big applause.

And more people got involved, like Jake and Ada who were looking into opening a Braille kids holiday camp, a school for guide dogs, and a workshop for Braille books and comics.

And Mick who was about to publish his first book with short stories about how Blue Meadows got into books.

And Jenna who specialised in calligraphy and was presently working on redesigning all the signs in town, and she developed new signs for all new book locations. Plus she

created little plaques for every house where someone lived who had added a book idea. For example, the plaque for Lizzy read: Lizzy, our book pouch creator and embroiderer, and the plaque for Mick read: Mick, our first local author. And the plaque for Barnes read: Barnes, the source of the incident.

And then there were Sandy and Clara who extended their bicycle shop to include a cargo bicycle service.

And Ralph and Nash who decided to revive their great-great-grandparent's coach service. And for that they built an old-style coach house.

Presently the brothers and their team were building fun book coaches for tourists who were asked to leave their cars outside the town in a new underground parking space with a sprawling mixed forest on top and a coach waiting at the exit of the parking space to take the visitors into Blue Meadows. The coach trip could be booked with a reading.

Nash, the younger brother, tinkered on a particularly large book carriage for tours into the region to give more people access to books.

But the truth was that he was hoping to impress Zoe, and whenever he worked on the carriage, he dreamed of them travelling up and down the region, having a laugh, doing puppet shows and readings, and in the evenings getting a campfire going, cooking together and ...

There was a small chance that that might happen. Zoe was a puppeteer and performer, and she loved adventures and the unconventional. But so far, Nash hadn't dared to tell her about his dreams.

And then there were the kindergarten kids who helped create a book-themed playground.

And the schoolkids gave a hand wherever they could, did short story competitions, and added ideas of their own, such as the Comics Garden and the Philosophers Garden.

And there was Luis who sold his house to Casey so that she could extent her bookshop.

And Alex, the baker, who experimented with letter-shaped buns, and who was working with Jenna, the calligrapher, on ideas for poems and quotes on rice paper which could then be added to cookies or cakes. And they were discussing ideas for a rice paper printer with Hayley.

And three farmer families, the Forks, the Millers and the Stouts built a new farmers' market for the harbour area. It could be stowed away in the wall at the back of the promenade. And to the delight of all children, and those adults who still loved fairy tales, the market had many references to fairy tales, using carvings and sculptures to create something to tickle the imagination.

And Josie bought three houses, not far from Casey's bookshop, for her book workshop. Then she went headhunting to find the best printer in the country and to learn from them.

There was a rumour that Josie had an old flame, who was an excellent printer, and that her push to open a printing workshop was an excuse to find her love again. When challenged on this rumour, Josie smiled. 'You have no idea. But lucky for me, I also want to become the best printer there is for my book workshop.'

And then there were the two families who invented the storyscapes, the Bakers and the Greens, grandparents, parents and five children between sixteen and twenty-one, all of them tech-savvy.

These families bought, restored and extended the old lighthouse while working on website-like portals for novels.

There was a simple portal version where an author could upload background information on characters and storylines, and create maps of the story's locations and add illustrations of scenes.

The complex portals had a lot more content and features, including videos. The highlights were the 3D spaces where readers could explore the locations of a story with an avatar, and in some cases, they could sneak into the scene of a story.

The lighthouse had several spaces for visitors. Some for single visitors, others for groups. For example, a group could explore a story's background and locations on large screens together, or a single visitor could book a viewing spot, and explore a story on their own.

Many more ideas were in the making, both for online options and for the lighthouse experiences.

The families worked closely with the local illustrators, of which Blue Meadows had twelve now. And more illustrators were coming since there was a lot of work on offer, not just at the lighthouse but also at Barnes' bespoke books workshop and at Josie's book workshop.

The lighthouse had three studios for authors who could stay there for days or weeks, and who could work with the two families and with the local illustrators on their storyscapes.

And the families brought the collections idea into play. If, for example, a story touched on several subjects, then a reader could ask for a special print or an e-book which only included scenes or dialogues on the subject the reader wanted to re-read or further explore.

That everything worked so well in Blue Meadows was also thanks to Miro and Marla, who had declared that so long as a job was about books, and they weren't asked to work before noon, they would be the town's odd jobs people, which included quite a few deliveries between the different branches of the town's book businesses.

Meanwhile Barnes realised that his paper workshop could easily be extended and produce all the paper needed in town, on top of producing the paper for the book workshops. And Casey's bookshop got an outpost at the lighthouse.

There were more stories of how the towners, newcomers and people from the region found something to get involved in and become part of the book frenzy.

It was like people suddenly discovered that new worlds could create new worlds — and they could be part of it.


About nine months ago, book stations worldwide calculated the size of the region Barnes (bespoke books) and Josie (pre-order books) would supply. The size of the region ensured that sufficient orders would come in to make the book workshops profitable.

For Casey that meant more customers and from further away, because Barnes and Josie sent all customers to her bookshop.

In Casey's bookshop things were also still in a process of changing.

The greatest change for Casey was that by now three people were working full time in her bookshop, plus her two part-time staff, and her two occasional helpers. And Casey teamed up with Bobbie to open the Worlds Café, next door to her bookshop.

Seven months ago, Casey selected books she wanted to display in the bookshop. Single copies, some of them durable books, others bespoke editions. This way, a reader could still come into the bookshop and browse all the books on the shelves. And then a reader could decide whether to buy a pre-book, whether to pre-order, or whether to go for a bespoke edition of a book.



The old books, Casey hadn't sold yet, were transferred to the new spaces in the attic which got something of a farewell atmosphere, but like everywhere else in the bookshop, this space also included reading corners.

For bespoke books Casey added a special counter where customers could look at samples, and where they could meet with a typesetter or with an illustrator if they didn't want to use the Worlds Café.

Pre-books were still a bit tricky to sell, though Beth and her team produced the most amazing binders, which actually sold better than the pre-books, at the moment.

Over the last year, Casey had become both an expert and a fan of bespoke books, not least thanks to Salome who was a great graphic designer, and who had a good intuition with regard to what kind of bespoke book a customer would enjoy.


In fact, one of the big lessons Casey learned this year was: a bespoke book is not about what an artist considers best, it's about what the customer likes and enjoys. Give that an artist's touch, and you get something extraordinary.

Books with a history were a great hit with tourists. Some liked to start a book's journey in Blue Meadows, while others liked to let a book pass through here.

Someone in Amsterdam invented a travelling passport for owners of books with a history, and those owners could get their passports stamped at Casey's.

By now Casey even bought back books with a history, because there was a steady demand by people who loved to buy books that already had a history.

The pre-order books had a wobbly start, but eventually people accepted that reducing waste, and printing fewer books, was good for the environment and therefore good for them. When this thought finally sank in, about six months ago, Casey's bookshop was overrun by people who brought their books for recycling.




It took a while to find someone who wanted to build a recycling facility, but eventually a man from a neighbouring town, Gus, decided to move to Blue Meadows, and he built the facility with a local team and with a team of experts sent by book stations worldwide.

Casey had been hesitant about the digital station, which offered everything from e-books, audiobooks and digital comics to movie-adaptations. But then Gina, the mayor, suggested to transform an old bus stop into a digi-p, and the lighthouse got a digi-p, too.

And that was that.

Two weeks ago, Casey had a long talk with her former book suppliers, and eventually Casey agreed to sell some of the old books for a few more years.



Not a book station

Some books inspire.

In Blue Meadows it was the idea of books which inspired, and at some point nearly everyone in town was hooked.

As for tourists, Blue Meadows took a leaf out of Venice's book and started to sell day tickets, and holiday tickets, to make sure that the towners had their town to themselves at times. After all, this was their home, their community. And while visitors were welcome, the towners didn't want to dedicate their community and their way of life to tourism.

With and without tourists the boat readings became a great hit, and the book stations worldwide research team provided Josie and Barnes with the know-how to

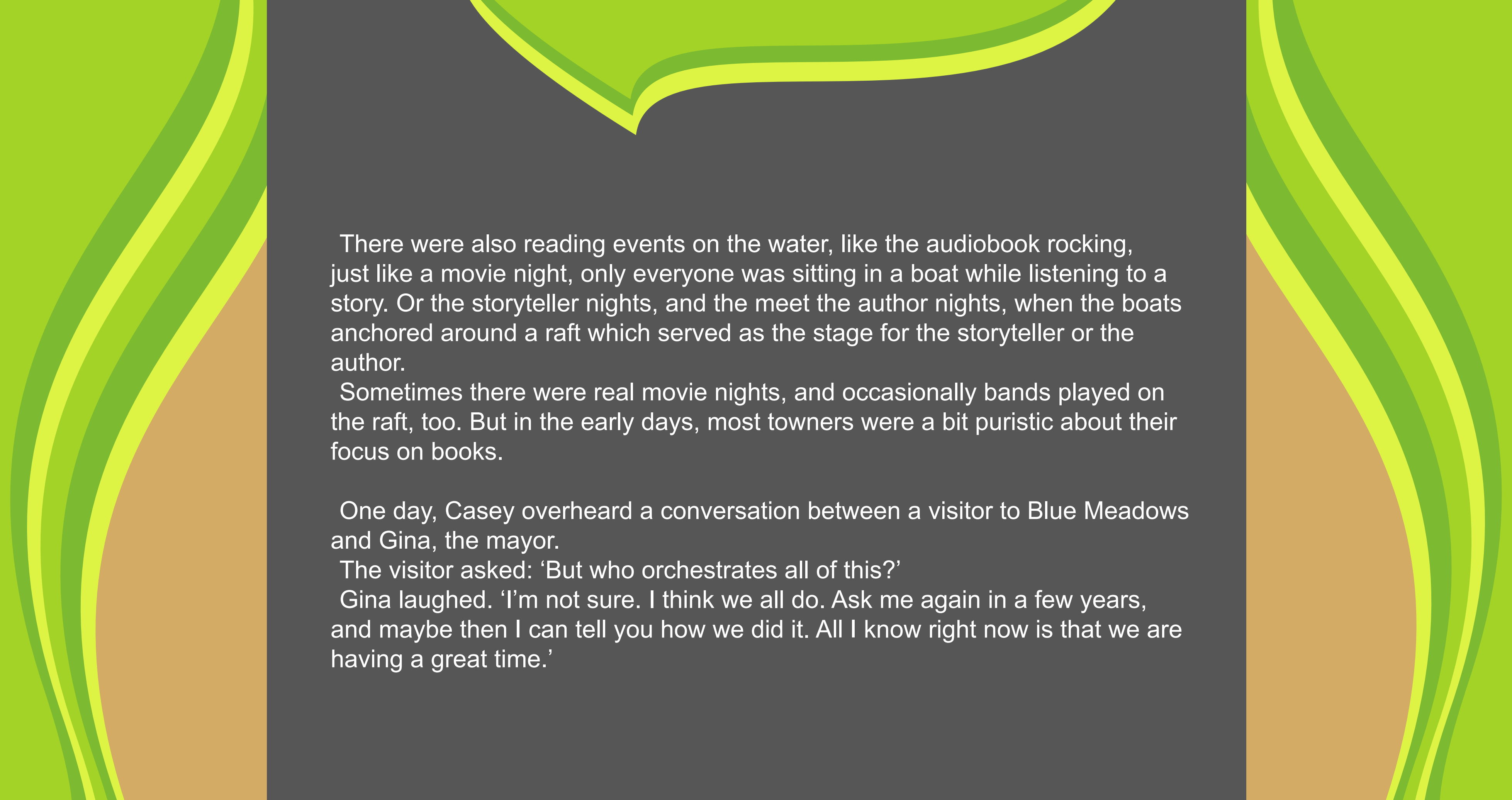
produce saltwater-resistant books.

Boat readings could be all sorts of things, private or public.

A couple of friends could, for example, go to the new boat rental, choose a resilient book, pick one of the comfy rowing or pedal boats, where they could lounge on straw, get a bit out on to the sea, and either read for themselves or read to each other.

Often you would see six to twelve or more boats gently rocking in the sea.

On tourist days, Peter and his team would row past the boats and offer drinks and snacks. Peeing was a bit of a concern at first, but then Marsha and her brothers came up with an in-boat solution plus a docking release that worked very well, though no one was keen to talk about it.



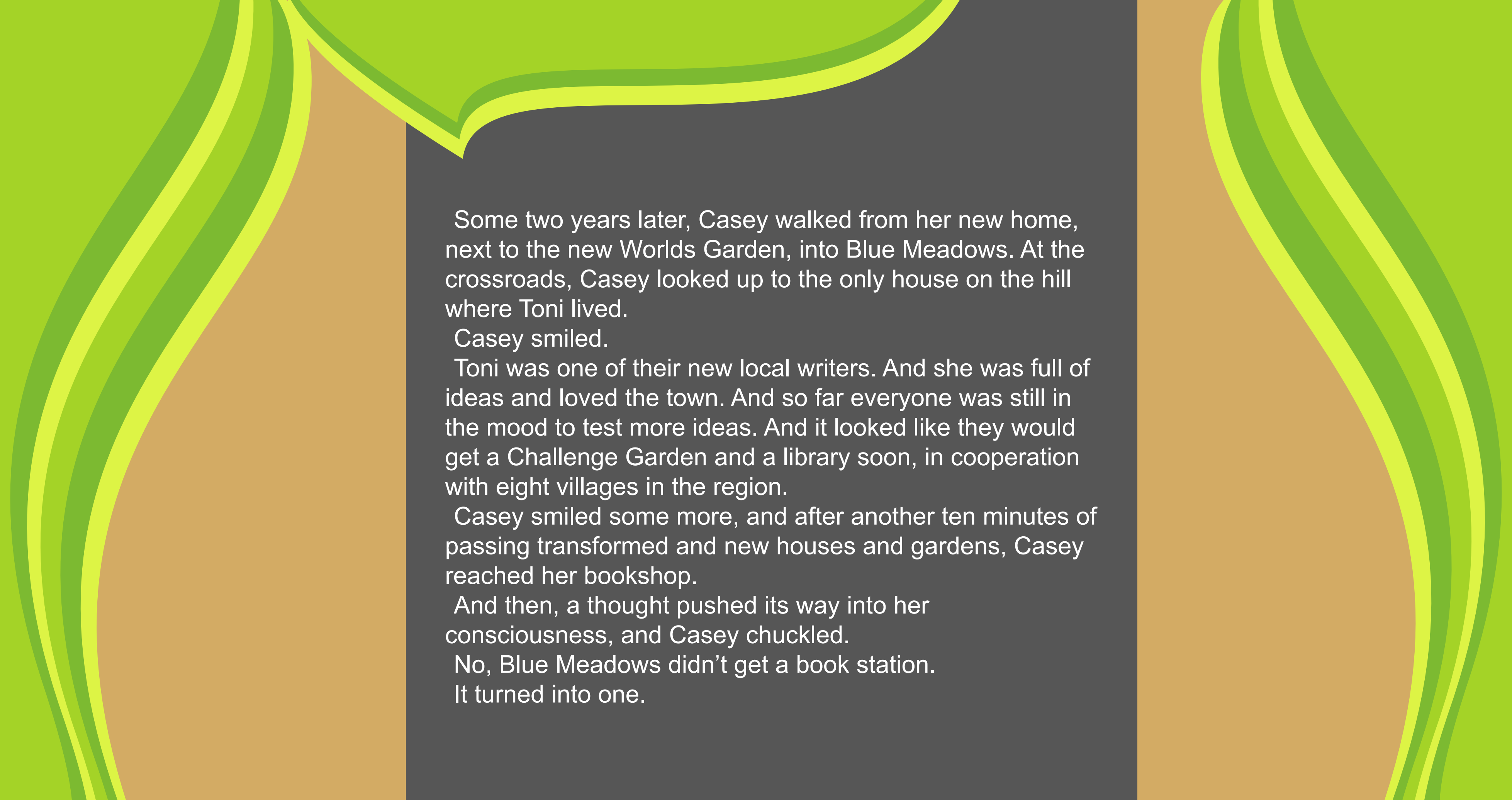
There were also reading events on the water, like the audiobook rocking, just like a movie night, only everyone was sitting in a boat while listening to a story. Or the storyteller nights, and the meet the author nights, when the boats anchored around a raft which served as the stage for the storyteller or the author.

Sometimes there were real movie nights, and occasionally bands played on the raft, too. But in the early days, most towners were a bit puristic about their focus on books.

One day, Casey overheard a conversation between a visitor to Blue Meadows and Gina, the mayor.

The visitor asked: 'But who orchestrates all of this?'

Gina laughed. 'I'm not sure. I think we all do. Ask me again in a few years, and maybe then I can tell you how we did it. All I know right now is that we are having a great time.'



Some two years later, Casey walked from her new home, next to the new Worlds Garden, into Blue Meadows. At the crossroads, Casey looked up to the only house on the hill where Toni lived.

Casey smiled.

Toni was one of their new local writers. And she was full of ideas and loved the town. And so far everyone was still in the mood to test more ideas. And it looked like they would get a Challenge Garden and a library soon, in cooperation with eight villages in the region.

Casey smiled some more, and after another ten minutes of passing transformed and new houses and gardens, Casey reached her bookshop.

And then, a thought pushed its way into her consciousness, and Casey chuckled.

No, Blue Meadows didn't get a book station.
It turned into one.



The End

— for now



Postscript

How book stations got into the front seat

Originally, I wanted a website for pepper books publishing, but someone clever had already registered the domains (without using them). And I thought, well, why not have a book stations website instead? I wasn't happy with this solution and regarded this website as a small landing page which might come in handy later.

And then I had the idea to invent a little book station tour and — well, you know what became of that idea.

But the really remarkable thing for me is, that approaching publishing via the book stations is actually better than approaching it via pepper books publishing.

The book stations will only work if a good number of publishers agree to trade in licences and to open their publications to bespoke books. Pepper books publishing will just be one in many publishing houses. But it is the book stations that can help to rethink publishing for all.

So, I have to thank that clever individual who snatched up my pepper books publishing domains. It was this unlucky incident that put me on a broader track.



dig deeper

To dig deeper you can visit the websites on the following pages and/or download additional material. For the Hub and for dot.international there are e-books available which explore the business ideas in more detail.



dig deeper

www.dot-international.net

dot. is the idea for a fashion company which empowers creatives, small businesses and communities.

dig deeper

The Hub is an idea to de-giant the internet and to provide a platform which restores freedom, privacy, independence and safety for the user while supporting communities via the Hub Stations.

www.hub-international.org

dig deeper



www.towns-and-cities-international.org/gardens-for-towns-and-cities

This was

book stations

the tour



easy town books

book stations

including quotes from the easy town books
www.easy-town-books.com

Published in Berlin, 2023 by Charlie Alice Raya
Copyright © 2023 Charlie Alice Raya
see also: www.easy-town.vision

Graphics, content, composition & layout © Charlie Alice Raya 2023

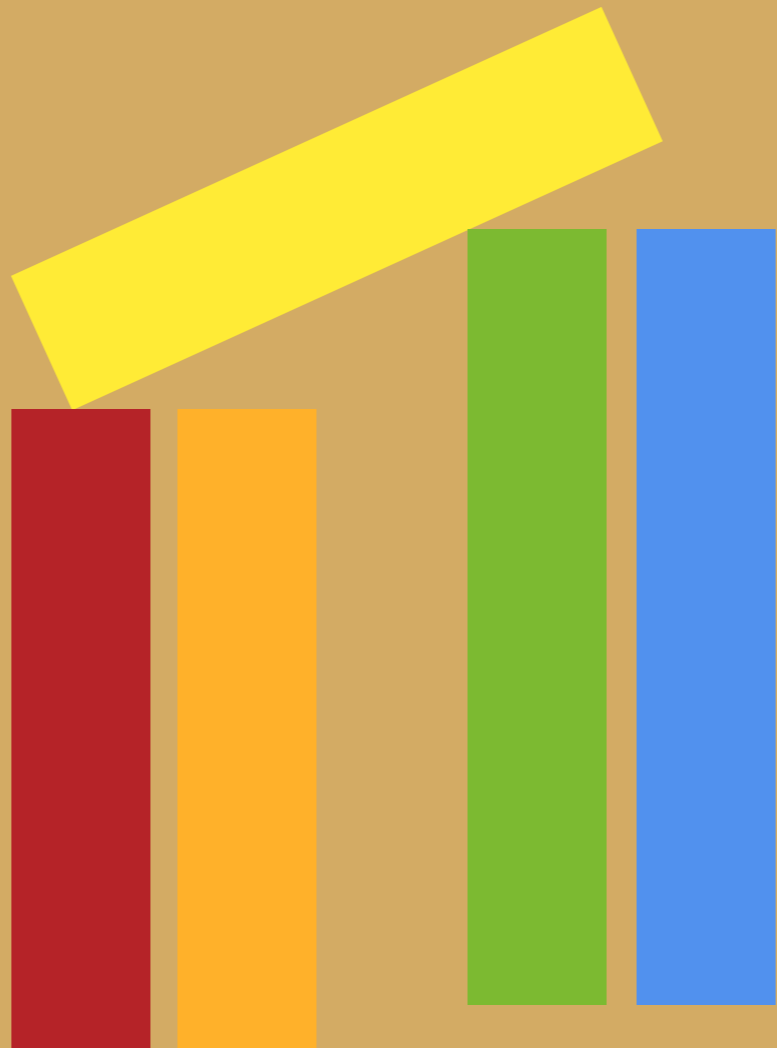
This collection is available as **free download**, and you can make copies of the complete file and share the complete file freely.

It is not allowed to use any separate part of this collection, be it an idea, a quote, extract or graphic in any context. It is not allowed to print this collection or single parts of it, or to sell this collection or any part of it.

This is partly a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real or factual.

contact@book-stations.org

Last updated: 17 February 2023



[www. book-stations.org](http://www.book-stations.org)