

## Children's Insight + Art = Be! Story

How does a thought become a story? This is a sneak peek into what children have told us during our research and how their insights are helping us create stories.

Aarti, age 14, said, "Until very recently, we did not have electricity in our village. Now the poles and lines have been set up but electricity is supplied only for an hour everyday. Usually, there is no electricity at night. So, after dark, my father doesn't allow me to go outside. Without electricity, I cannot study at night."

Neetu, age 15 says, "Electricity and water supply are the biggest problems that we face. There are parts of my village that get regular electricity. It is a big problem for us because most people in our part of the village are poor and illiterate. No facilities reach us because we are not able to raise our voices and even if we do, and no one listens to us."

In the absence of electricity, these girls and their families depend on kerosene lamps for light. They also use kerosene as fuel for cooking. Kerosene has its own set of problems. Ganga age 16 says, "The kerosene oil that the government supplies for us often does not reach us because the dealer sells it elsewhere and makes a profit. So even though we are supposed to get a certain amount, we actually get much less. If we oppose him he tells us either to take what he is giving or go away."

Based on what children have said about the absence of light and need for alternative fuel, we are now creating 50 Be! books and 10 movies – the first, is a story about a young woman called Tara, who builds a solar light business to bring light to her community.

### **Tara's 'Bolt of lightening' Business**

Tara, age 18, lives in a crowded slum without electricity. She lives with her younger sister Rani and her father who is a carpenter. To support her family and in order to send her sister to school, Tara makes packed lunches and delivers them to people's homes and offices. She makes a mistake about whose lunch it is. One day, Tara's father, defeated by world around him, does not go to work. Tara sees Rani trying to study by kerosene light, and finds herself standing in line the next day for hours, just to get enough kerosene so Rani has light to be able to study. The loss of her father's income and her desire to see Rani stay in school drives Tara to find a new solution: she needs a business she can run from home, that makes money and provides light.



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With the help of Tar Babu, a local electrician, she discovers, step by step, what she needs to know to solve the problem of electricity. She rents out solar lamps to street vendors, providing them with a dependable and clean source of energy and creates an enterprise that supports her family while solving the big problem of light for everyone in her community.

Tara's story in the form of a graphic novel is a work-in-progress. Meet the characters, and do check back in soon, so see more of the graphic novel emerge.



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