

Pardon my French!



Monsieur Reynard is a fox with an idée fixe: bringing French literature back onto your bookshelves. Designed as a youthful character with a beret and a monocle, he is the great great grandson of the wise Fox who guided the Little Prince back to love; of himself and around the world.





OVERVIEW



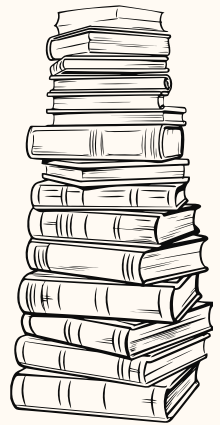
The French Institute in India, in its mission to make French literature more accessible to people in India, has decided to launch French literature corners called *Pardon my French!* in selected independent bookshops all around the subcontinent.

These corners will feature translated French literature, ranging from classics to contemporary works that have affected the course of history and impacted the lives of people around the world. We will be making titles available in English translations, as well as regional language translations carefully curated per the bookstore's clientele along with few titles in original French itself.

The French Institute is working hand in hand with an expert literary consulting agency to create an attractive brand and provide bookstores with marketing material to promote the Pardon My French! programme.

Currently, there are three *Pardon my French!* corners in India:

- The Dogears Bookshop, Goa
- Rajat Book Corner, Jaipur
- Harmony The Bookshop, Varanasi



Our goal is to have one PMF! across all the 15 cities of the Indian subcontinent in which we also have an established Francophone connection through the Alliance Française.



ABOUT FRENCH INSTITUTE IN INDIA

The French Institute / IFI (Institut français India) is a section of the Embassy of France responsible for connecting and implementing Indo-French human exchanges.

IFI performs numerous functions: from promoting academic and scientific exchanges between higher institutes of learning and research to enabling student mobility and promoting the French language.

We also foster links between artists, scientists, NGOs, professors, enterprises, film professionals, publishers and more. We support partnerships in research and innovation, capacity-building and interactions with civil society, vocational studies, as well as artistic and cultural partnerships in performance, books, film, fashion, design and more. We support and organize forums and debates that bring together innovators and thinkers from both countries.



ORIGIN OF PMF!

A lot of great French literature is translated into English by UK/US publishers but these translations are not available in the Indian subcontinent. This is the gap we want to fill. We want to ensure that every Indian reader who has had a curiosity or desire to partake of French literature can do so.

To address this, the French Institute in India is taking the opportunity to partner with US/UK publishers and distributors in India to make sure these books reach the subcontinent. As a partner bookstore, you will be able to choose from a selection of 2000+ titles, ranging from fiction to non-fiction, with an emphasis on contemporary authors. You will also be informed about the newest releases.



WHY INDIE BOOKSHOPS?

With the advent of digital retail and its impacts on brick-and-mortar stores, we believe that independent bookstores now more than ever before play a critical role in bringing people a personal touch in their book suggestions, as well as keeping a literary community alive. They are not just places that sell books, but cultural hubs preserving the love of reading and literary culture.



Illustration by French graphic novelist Simon Lamouret

Bookshops around the country are as diverse as the cultures of the subcontinent, but share a similar love for books. It is their thoughtful curation and knowledge of their readers that make them special. We hope to add another layer of diversity by bringing new offerings from the Francophone literary world.

France is taking pride in having the highest number of independent bookstores per inhabitant within Europe. This unique reading ecosystem and lively reading culture result from governmental measures, such as the "fix price law", established in 1981, and which states that books can never be sold at a discount, hence preventing unfair competition from online stores. The "Reference Indie bookstore" label, introduced in 2009, comes as a further recognition of the role of bookshops as community enablers by providing tax breaks and special subsidies to them.

Through the PMF! Initiative, our aim is to federate a network of indie bookstores, which can regularly meet, share best practices and get emulated by each other.



FRENCH LITERATURE - WHAT'S NEW?

(WE ALREADY HAVE PROUST, CAMUS AND SARTRE)

France is most famous for its classics but hundreds of contemporary works are being translated and published every year in the anglophone world. They range from literary fictions, to thrillers, poetry and non-fiction political essays.

Among them:

- Annie Ernaux, Nobel Prize for literature whose autobiographical work resonates deeply with readers for its raw, direct and sometimes brutal treatment of personal and sensitive subjects.
- David Diop, the first French author to win the International Booker Prize in 2021
- Leïla Slimani, Goncourt Prize winner whose new trilogy is based on Franco-Moroccan history
- Edouard Louis who recounts his growing up poor and gay in a small village in France.
- Non-fiction political writers like Barbara Steigler, Jean-Luc Nancy, Achille Mbembe, etc..
- Feminist writers such as Vanessa Springora, Virginie Despentes, Lola Lafon or Pénélope Bagieu

Joining the PMF! network will ensure you receive the latest updates about the newest French books released in English.



SETTING UP THE CORNER

- **Ordering** – We have made sure that the titles in our catalogues can be ordered in India. You can go through your usual distributor or we would be happy to provide a contact
- **Categorizing** – We will provide you with suggestions of categorization for the French books (Great thinkers, Feminist writers, Global Histories, etc.) but you can go as per your categorization too.
- **Branding** – Adapt the logo and design as per the style of your bookshop (Minimalist to Dadaist)
- **Adding some charm** – Order some goodies to be sold along the books. A selection of objects from tote bags to postcards, mugs to keychains, are available to choose from.
- **Communicating** – Every month, we will provide you with content for social media to highlight the books featured in the corner
- **Host events** – If your space permits, we will help you curate events around French literature



OUR OBJECTIVES

- Boost cultural dialogues between India and France
- Promote French literature in translation
- Foster the development of a India's reading culture
- Support independent bookshops



HOW WILL IFI SUPPORT THE BOOKSTORE?

We want to make sure that we are giving you the resources to be able to make this corner a success and drive footfall to the bookstore. These are the elements we're able to provide - if there's more that you think you could use, we're happy to help!

- A catalogue of all translated titles from French to English and regional Indian languages
- A curated list of 60 spotlight titles with an established sales record.
- Content to promote the titles through social media (4-8 posts per month) designed by an agency with specific expertise in curating a literary audience.
- Communication to the students of local Alliance française and French university departments
- Co-organization of two events per year promoting the French corner
- Make you a privileged partner for book signings and author's talks



WHAT'S IN THERE FOR THE BOOKSHOP?

- More diversity with curated selection of popular titles with great potential in India
- More visibility via social media
- More visibility via literary events and book signings
- More sales at events organized locally by Alliance française or French Institute
- More interaction with like-minded independent bookstore owners who are part of the network
- More networking opportunities with an annual meet starting in 2026 and funded by IFI



HOW DO I JOIN THE NETWORK?

1. Get in touch with the French Institute in India
2. Sign the standard MOU
3. Let us work on the curation of books together
4. Order a minimum selection of 100 books
5. Set up the corner
6. Let us plan the launch event!



WHAT'S IN THE MOU?

• Bookshop

- provide a dedicated space for the corner (at least for 100 titles, though we believe an ideal collection can even go up to 120.)
- agrees to keep the corner in place for a year
- provide a monthly report as per the draft provided
- lead the events organization

• French Institute in India

- provide a comprehensive list of French Books available in India
- support financially the launch event (up to 12500 INR paid directly to vendors)
- advise and help on the organization of the literary event (choosing panelists, inviting guests, creating social media posts.)
- offer 18 books in the French language, free of cost to the bookstore to be able to explore the potential of a French-language market without any risk
- design a series of goodies that the bookstore can order and sell



GET IN TOUCH

Julia TROUILLOUD, Attaché for Books & Ideas : julia.trouilloude@ifindia.in

Arun GOYAL, Project Manager for *Pardon My French!* : arun.goyal@ifindia.in



FAQ



- **Do I need to empty a new shelf?**

- Not at all! Per our research, bookshops already tend to stock a large number of classic French authors, and as such, we envisage a reorganisation of existing space to be more likely than the need for a whole new setup.

- **How would I obtain books?**

- You can order them through the usual distributor, if needed, we would be happy to provide a contact.

- **What are 18 French books for?**

- With the growing number of Francophone readers in India, the French institute is offering a curated collection of 18 French books () free of cost to the bookshop to test the French book market in India. In case the books are selling and the bookshop owner finds the model sustainable, we can provide direct contact to order French books for sale at the bookshop.

- **How will I provide a report - (Download a draft report)**

- You would need to keep a track of the books in the Pardon my French! corner and fill a report which will have three columns- title, ISBN and number of copies sold. It will help us and you to reflect together on the promotion strategy and curation for the corner.

- **What else can I do to promote books?**

- You can organize low-cost literature events independently, we'll be happy to put you in touch with French literature experts in your city.
- You can also do independent posts to promote a certain title as per local flavor and vibes. We will also provide the goodies designs and samples that you can order to share some additional happiness with your reader.

- **How should I set up my corner?**

- We will provide you the details on categorization and branding for you to use in relation to your bookshop needs!