

Focus IBBY

by CAROLINA BALLESTER

LOOKING BACK AT THE 60TH BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

After 60 years of fruitful existence, the Bologna Children's Book Fair has become a landmark in the agenda of anyone interested in children's books publishing. It has also established itself as an

important moment for the IBBY community: Executive Committee meetings, press conferences, announcements, and most importantly, an occasion to meet for so many IBBY members.

With the support of the Bologna Children's Book Fair, a large and bright **IBBY stand** stood at the back of Hall 29, decorated with newly designed banners and posters about IBBY's main programs.

The stand presented over 200 titles from both the 2022 Honour List and the 2023 Selection of Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities. Publishers and authors of books included in the IBBY collections came to visit the stand to mingle and take pictures of their work in context.

The IBBY booth also comprised an "International Children's Book Day corner" for the first time, which featured a selection of titles by Vagelis Iliopoulos and Photini Stephanidi, giveaway posters, and valuable folders containing braille translations of the International Children's Book Day (ICBD) message.

ICBD was also one of the important items on the program of the **IBBY Press Conference**, which was held as per custom on the first day of the Fair (Monday 6 March). The ICBD message was read jointly by Vagelis Iliopoulos and Sylvia Vardell in the presence of IBBY Greece President Vassiliki Nika and Greek cultural officials, who attended the fair in numbers as the BookPlus Market Focus was dedicated to Greek publishing.

The Press Conference continued with a video presentation (available on the IBBY website) of the 2023 Selection of Outstanding Books by Toronto Public Library expert Leigh Turina, as well as updates by Bookbird Inc. President



Valerie Coghlan, who announced the launch of *Bookbird en español*, the Spanish edition of Bookbird.

Other important news concerned the organization of the 41st IBBY World Congress, which was attributed to IBBY Spain. The city of Barcelona will host the event in 2028 under the theme “Reading is a universal right”.

The press conference concluded with the official presentation of the 59 candidates running for the 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award, by Jury President Liz Page.

CANDIDATES FOR THE 2024 HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARD

Authors:

Jorge Luján, Argentina
 Nouneh Sarkissian, Armenia
 Gary Crew, Australia
 Heinz Janisch, Austria
 Bart Moeyaert, Belgium
 Marina Colasanti, Brazil
 Angèle Delaunois, Canada
 Gerelchimeg Blackcrane, China
 Triunfo Arciniegas, Colombia
 Sanja Pilić, Croatia
 Anna Kouppanou, Cyprus
 Affaf Tobbala, Egypt
 Timo Parvela, Finland
 Marie Desplechin, France
 Andreas Steinhöfel, Germany
 Angeliki Darlasi, Greece
 Roberto Piumini, Italy
 Jamshid Khanian, Iran
 Joko Iwase, Japan
 Lee Geum-yi, Korea
 Samar Barraaj, Lebanon
 Edward van de Vendel, Netherlands
 Andrey Usachev, Russia
 Peter Svetina, Slovenia
 Fina Casalderrey, Spain
 Franz Hohler, Switzerland
 Miyase Sertbarut, Turkey
 John Agard, United Kingdom
 Judy Blume, United States of America
 Raim Hakimzoda Farkhadi, Uzbekistan

Illustrators:

Gusti, Argentina
 Matt Ottley, Australia
 Helga Bansch, Austria
 Anne Brouillard, Belgium
 Nelson Cruz, Brazil
 Sydney Smith, Canada
 Paloma Valdivia, Chile
 Cai Gao, China
 Ivar Da Coll, Colombia and Venezuela
 Dora Oronti, Cyprus
 Linda Bondestam, Finland
 Gilles Bachelet, France
 Nikolaus Heidelberg, Germany
 Kelly Matathia-Covo, Greece
 Beatrice Alemagna, Italy
 Alireza Goldouzian, Iran
 Ryoji Arai, Japan
 Kwon Yoon-duck, Korea
 Maya Fidawi, Lebanon
 Thé Tjong-Khing, Netherlands
 Gavin Bishop, New Zealand
 Iwona Chmielewska, Poland
 Julia Gukova, Russia
 Damijan Stepančič, Slovenia
 Elena Odriozola, Spain
 Catherine Louis, Switzerland
 Akin Düzakin, Turkey
 Jackie Morris, United Kingdom
 Christian Robinson, United States of America

The Press Conference was followed by a cocktail at the IBBY Stand, where IBBY friends could mingle with a drink and treats brought by Executive Committee members from their respective countries.

A global, lively, and enthusiastic atmosphere could be felt in the hallways of Bologna. This 60th edition of the Bologna Children’s Book Fair

has confirmed that in-person events are irreplaceable and that the pre-pandemic flair of Bologna is back, hopefully to stay!

IBBY REGIONAL NETWORKS IN ACTION

Since 2017, the Bologna Children’s Book Fair has also become the stage of an important meeting for the IBBY Europe regional network, which usually celebrates its regional encounter on the last day of the Fair in odd years. This was only the first landmark in a series of regional events that took place over the spring, which show that regional and linguistic cooperation within the IBBY community is thriving.

Europe: 3rd Regional IBBY Europe Conference held in Bologna

The 2023 Europe regional conference resulted from the work of a collective of European IBBY members formed by Hasmig Chahinian (France), Doris Breitmoser (Germany), Charalambos Demetriou (Cyprus), Eva Devos (Belgium), Sabine Fuchs (Austria) and Chiara Pinton (Italy).

This third edition, entitled “Finding a Safe Home in Books”, focused on the consequences that armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, and natural disasters have for children. The program included the participation

of youth psychiatrist Winny Ang (Belgium), authors and creators Fabio Geda (Italy), Andrij Lissiv and Romana Romanyschin (Ukraine), Margaret Anne Suggs (Ireland), and Edward van de Vendel (Netherlands), as well as reading promoters Kathrin Buchmann (Germany) and Alenka Veler (Slovenia). Beyond the concerns and the need for action, the conference also provided solid signs of hope, as expressed in the conference opening speech by Charalambos Demetriou:



“Every child has the right to great stories, just as every child has the right to a safe home. Nevertheless, children all over the world have to face moments of doubt, insecurity, fear, loss, or threat. Every child has the right to read. Books can offer shelter, give hope and create awareness. Stories have the potential for identification and they teach us that we are not alone – others are in the same situation. Books can even offer ideas beyond our limits of imagination, for a different, for a better world. This is the power of stories.

We are all books.

During the past three years we had to stay at home more than ever before. Unfortunately, home for some children was not then and may still not be a safe space. They could be experiencing a difficult situation at home due to unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, war, or because they belong to a minority, are immigrants or refugees. When home does not feel like home anymore, children can find a safe place in books. Books can shelter them in several ways and can function as their ‘escape room’ to where

they can escape their everyday lives – rabbit holes, palaces, mountains, seas, on earth or in the stars, on a quest, solving mysteries or learning about something new, in the future or the past. Books can help us all to escape, get hope, strength, empathize, and evolve. Children’s literature can provide ways for children to learn about and manage difficult issues, especially when facing difficult personal or interpersonal problems. That is the healing and uplifting power of stories.

It may be a cliché, but it really takes a library to raise a child and IBBY sections around the world are working hard to bring children closer to books.

We often have a supply of simple medicines in our homes, but what about something for our hearts and souls? Do you have a book that you read again and again? What do you read when you are happy or sad or feeling lonely? Books can function as ‘literary pharmacies’ and we need to ensure that children have access to books that can do this for them.”



North America: “The World of Words” celebrated at the 15th USBBY Conference

USBBY members celebrated their 15th regional conference at Scholastic’s headquarters in New York City, on Saturday 25 March. Slimmed down significantly to a one-day program due to logistical reasons, the event brought interesting perspectives on international children’s literature in the USA. The program encompassed six panel sessions on a wide range of topics: the art and work of literary translation; *mangas* as an appealing genre of international children’s literature for teenagers and young adults; illustration as an intercultural dimension of children’s literature; new publishing initiatives striving to bring international titles into the US market; and books as a vehicle for social and cultural change. Each session was introduced by IBBY officers who connected the above themes with the programs and awards organized by IBBY at a global scale.

The next IBBY North America regional conference will take place in two years’ time in Salt Lake City, Utah, hopefully returning to its usual three-day format.



Latin America and the Caribbean: 2nd IBBY Ibero-American Seminar on Children’s and Youth Literature

After a successful first edition in March 2022, IBBY brought together over

20,000 online viewers, OEPLI-IBBY Spain and the network of National Sections from Latin America and the Caribbean (IBBY LAC) again organized a two-day online seminar streamed at a time suitable for viewers in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America.

The seminar opened on Tuesday 16 May with a presentation by Isol (illustrator, Argentina) on the roots and search of her artistic voice. The program also included presentations on the role of oral tradition (Daniel Munduruku, Brazil; Ana Christina Herreros, Spain/Cameroon) and different story-telling practices such as *kamishibai* (Pepe Cabana Kojachi, Peru). It also featured keynote speeches on topical issues by two important figures of the Colombian children's book world: Yolanda Reyes (on what writing means in the twenty-first century) and Irene Vasco (on the weight of the past and censorship in contemporary children's book).

The full seminar can be viewed on the YouTube account of OEPLI-IBBY Spain (<https://www.youtube.com/@oeplilij8864/>).

Work meeting of the Arab-speaking sections in Sharjah

On 10 and 11 May, the IBBY National Sections of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates met in Sharjah to strengthen their coop-

eration. Improving digital communication – noticeably through the creation of a bi-yearly newsletter published in English and Arabic – and exploring the construction of an Arabic children's literature database were among the topics discussed.

Another objective of the meeting hosted by the UAE section of IBBY (UAEBBY) was to encourage the establishment of additional chapters in the region. Part of the meeting consisted of a presentation of IBBY's work and member-

ship to children's book professionals coming to attend the Sharjah Children's Literature festival from Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.



Asia and the Pacific

Regional cooperation is also at full speed in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the beginning of the year, two widely attended online meetings have taken place in order to define priorities for renewed regional projects. These work meetings have resulted in the planning of a regional newsletter, discontinued since 2016, and in the organization of an online regional conference for the end of 2023. The 2025 regional congress will also surely generate high expectations, as it will take place in person in Suwon, Korea, upon the invitation of IBBY Korea (KBBY).



Upcoming meetings: IBBY Cuba call for the “Reading the 21st Century” International Congress

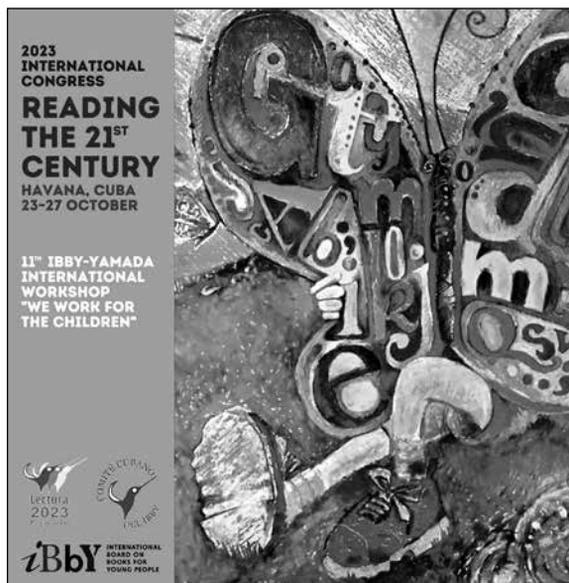
Later in the year, IBBY Cuba will add a milestone to the tradition of regional congresses inspired by the rich thinking of poet, philosopher, essayist, journalist, translator, professor, and publisher José Martí:

Children must think as soon as they can think. José Martí (1853–1895)

The congress encompasses a colloquium that will offer a space for discussion of the creation, production, promotion, and research of books for babies, children, and young people. The 11th IBBY-Yamada “We work for the children” workshop will be a substantial part of the congress’ program.

The congress is placed under the honorary presidency of Katherine Patterson, whose 90th birthday is celebrated this year. The organizing and scientific committees are composed of personalities from all across Latin America.

The “Reading the 21st Century” International Congress will take place from 23–27 October 2023 in Havana. Information can be found on www.ibbycuba2023.webnode.es (in Spanish).



ON THE WAY TO TRIESTE: CALL FOR THE 2024 IBBY WORLD CONGRESS

Preparations are moving forward with the 39th IBBY World Congress, which will take place from 30 August to 1 September 2024 in the Italian city of Trieste.

Keynote speeches, round tables, and workshops will be on the program placed under the theme “Join the Revolution”.

A call for abstracts has been launched this summer, looking for presentations on the following themes:

GOOD BOOKS: DRIVERS OF CHANGE – The power of the visual, the power of the word, the power of diversity, digital literacy, and language sensitivity.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT – Strategies to broaden and develop the pool of children and young adult readers, focusing on press, radio, and television; social media; and political, economic, and social policy makers.

ACTORS OF CHANGE – The role of the different players as actors of change: libraries, publishers and bookshops, organizations and institutions, schools and universities, associations, and volunteers.



FRONTIERS – Translation, multilingualism, border projects, traveling libraries.



The congress will distinguish itself through the active participation of a delegation of young European readers, who will be given a voice at the congress and act as reporters. The program will also encompass the usual IBBY award ceremonies and exhibitions, as well as the IBBY General Assembly, scheduled for 31 August.

On the eve of the Congress opening, a pre-congress day will be offered to the participants and include a visit to the city and the IBBY Forum, where members can exchange thoughts on IBBY practices and information.

For detailed information, please visit the official Congress website: www.ibbycongress2024.org.



Carolina Ballester was born in Paris and studied in Spain and France, obtaining an MA in Political Science from the Madrid Complutense University and degrees in Chinese and Arabic from the French National Institute of Oriental Studies (INALCO). She worked as a translator and as cultural attaché at the Consulate of Spain in Shanghai. In 2013, she joined the Shanghai International Children’s Book Fair team as programme manager and during ten years she promoted and developed international interest in children’s illustration as well as served on juries for children’s illustration catalogues and contests. Carolina brings to IBBY an interest and wide knowledge in children’s literature and illustration, as well as international experience and fluency in several languages, including French, Spanish, English and Mandarin. Carolina joined IBBY as Executive Director on 1 September 2022.