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by LIZ PAGE

International Children's Book Day around the World in 2021

International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated by IBBY members on or around the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen: April 2. Each year a different national section of IBBY has the opportunity to be the international sponsor of ICBD. It decides upon a theme and invites a prominent author from the host country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster. The 2021 poster and message were sponsored by USBBY; Margarita Engle wrote the delightful poem "The Music of Words," which was accompanied by the stunning artwork of Hans Christian Andersen Award winner (2014) Roger Mello.

These materials are used in different ways to promote books and reading. Many IBBY sections promote ICBD through the media and organize activities in schools and public libraries. Often ICBD is linked to celebrations around children's books and other special events that may include encounters with authors and illustrators, writing competitions, or announcements of book awards.

Below is a brief glimpse of some of the activities organized by IBBY members to celebrate ICBD 2021. A retrospective of more events celebrating 2021 International Children's Book Day can be seen on the IBBY blog: www.ibby.org/ibby-blog.

In **Iceland**, a new short story by a popular children's book author was broadcast on Iceland's national public service broadcaster, Channel 1. The author read her story herself, and then gave a short interview on the radio. The short story was written for all students in primary school, from six- to sixteen-year-olds. IBBY Iceland has celebrated International Children's Book Day in this way for many years, choosing a new author and a new short story every year. The goal is that everyone in Iceland has a joint listening experience on this special day. People who read or listen to the same story have something in common with each other, which will foster tolerance. By allowing all primary school students in the country to listen to the story at the same time, forty thousand students enter the same world at the same time! After listening to the story, children are often given a fun assignment in connection with the story. IBBY Iceland provides the text of the short story online; these can be viewed on the IBBY Iceland Facebook page. In 2020, the short stories from the last ten years were published in a book. Learn more at www.facebook.com/IBBY.is/posts/3033571243340704.

IBBY Nepal chose to distribute children's books to students and school libraries. Members of the section held sessions with teachers about the importance and utilization of children's literature in the classroom. Books were contributed by Room to Read (Nepal Unite). The section also celebrated International Storytelling Day on March 20, with support from the Storytellers' Society and Room to Read, by running a digital discussion

about the importance of storytelling for children's development and imagination.

IBBY Dominican Republic supported the production of three books in Spanish and publishing a presentation of them on YouTube.

IBBY Argentina, working with Desde los Libros, gave a special workshop about ways of matching literature contents and readers through technology. The two-day workshop shared ways of learning through digital content on the media. The workshop addressed mediators, librarians, teachers, and promoters who wish to share their love for books in this "distant world."

The **Slovenian** section of IBBY prepared a reading promotion event on their website: www.ibby.si/index.php/icbd/2021. IBBY Slovenia shared a video made for the occasion with a group of children and their teacher on the theme of Hans Christian Andersen.

IBBY Malaysia organized various activities, which included a talk on the "Rhythm of Words" that was a joint activity with IBBY Malaysia and the Department of Early Childhood Studies, Faculty of Education, and Social Sciences University Selangor (UNISEL). A reading and storytelling session was held at the Genius Aulad Preschool in Nilai by Teacher Sha, as well as a storytelling session at Gallery Busana Ampang by Storyteller Sharif Apen.

IBBY Ecuador organized a conversation on "The Book, a Bridge to Creativity: Reading Experiences in the Tambos of the National Book and Reading Plan" at the end of March. The event was carried out through the platform Facebook Live of @girandulaecuador.

IBBY Australia held two events to celebrate ICBD 2021. The first took place on Saturday, March 27, and was an online discussion with two guest speakers, Maxine Beneba Clarke and Gabrielle Wang, with

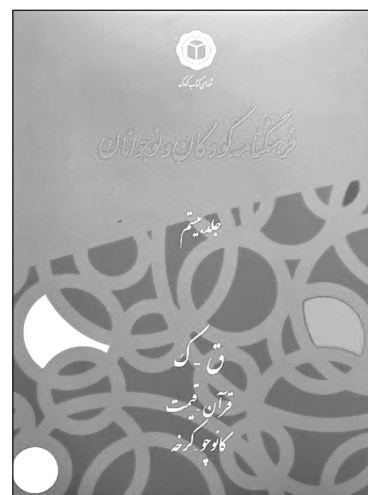
the theme "Words Change the World." The second event was a children's literature quiz organized by the Tasmanian Branch of Australian IBBY and held in Hobart on May 1.

A Dream Come True

The Children's Book Council (CBC), which represents IBBY in Iran, launched volume 20 of the *Encyclopedia for Young People (EYP)* in March 2021.

The idea to produce a wide-reaching reference work, known as the *Encyclopedia for Young People (EYP)*, was proposed in 1980 by Touran Mirhadi. (See the article by Leila Maktabi Fard in *Bookbird*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2019, pp. 34-41.)

The dream was to publish twenty-five volumes of the encyclopedia for

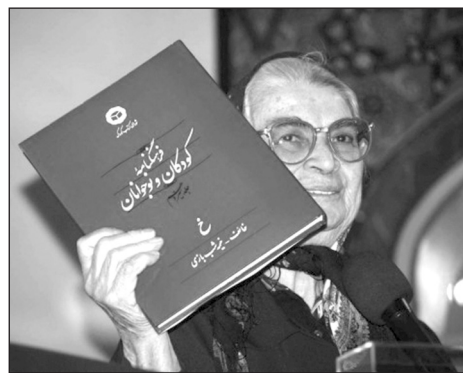




The encyclopedia volume launch ceremony

children from twelve to sixteen years of age, which would contain a total of five thousand alphabetical entries. The articles are donated by different expert contributors. Touran Mirhadi was the first chief editor of the encyclopedia.

By mid-1980, it had become clear that no single publisher would take the risk of investing in the project! Therefore, it was decided to register a public limited company with publishers and CBC members as shareholders. At first, the work was financially supported by a bequest from Mirhadi's late husband. The first volume of the encyclopedia was launched in 1991. The need for



Touran Mirhadi with her dream project



The art group

further funds was resolved during this time by a group of CBC members who established the association of the Friends of EYP to attract support, which continues today.

During the presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), the *Encyclopedia for Young People* was widely introduced across the country, and the already published volumes were given two prestigious awards. With this national support, the encyclopedia found its way into schools and public libraries throughout Iran.



One of the young advisor groups

With time, the speed of publishing became a major issue. Touran Mirhadi passed away in 2016 (see *Bookbird*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2017, p. 72), but her family pledged to continue to support the work. The addition of more chief editors proved effective, as they were then able to produce a volume every year. The launch of volume 20 this year illustrates that Touran Mirhadi's dream continues.

Noushin Ansari

Secretary General of the Iranian Section of IBBY

Honorary Member of IBBY since 2010



Promotion in schools and libraries in large cities as well as in deprived areas

IBBY Yamada Projects 2021

In 2005, IBBY launched a campaign to draw attention to the right of every child to become a reader. With generous funding given by the Yamada Bee Farm, the IBBY-Yamada Program was established to provide funds for IBBY projects that help develop a book culture for children in all regions of the world.

Each year, projects are developed by IBBY members and presented to the Executive Committee. The projects selected thus far have included reading promotion programs, establishing libraries in schools and community centers, training teachers and parents in maintaining libraries and storytelling, and workshops for writers, illustrators, and editors of children's books.

In 2021, IBBY is once again grateful to the Yamada Bee Farm for its support of eleven projects around the world. The projects that were submitted by the national sections and approved by the IBBY Executive Committee are as follows:

1. IBBY Argentina: "Los Favoritos de los Lectores"—workshops across Argentina on using books in schools
2. IBBY Armenia: "Our Big Corner of the World"—workshops for young adults in five regions of Armenia

3. IBBY Cameroon: “Imagine My Book, My Universe”—the challenge of developing a children’s book culture in Cameroon
4. IBBY Dominican Republic: development of a children’s library in the rural community of Hatillo
5. IBBY Ecuador: “I Love to Read”—library extension in Indigenous communities in Tungurahua
6. IBBY Ghana: capacity building in basic library management and reading promotion skills for primary school teachers
7. IBBY Italy: “Mamma Lingua”—introductory workshop on how to use books in many languages to foster a culture of mutual comprehension in families with preschoolers
8. IBBY Nepal: “Stories for Children after Covid-19 for the New Normal”—a collection of children’s experiences for picturebooks and books for parents
9. IBBY Sri Lanka: “Let’s Make Books and Reading Fun!”—a series of workshops on illustrating, storytelling techniques, bibliotherapy, and mentoring
10. IBBY Ukraine: “Green Wave of Eco-Reading”—events and workshops to promote environmental reading for everyone
11. IBBY Zimbabwe: stories recorded on CDs and circulating to schools for children and young people in an effort to mitigate the COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Many of these projects will be run online. Reports of all these innovative projects will be posted on the IBBY website: www.ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/ibby-yamada-fund.

The complete record of past IBBY-Yamada projects can be viewed on the IBBY website.

Liz Page was born in Britain and moved with her family to Heidelberg, Germany, in 1983. After nearly two years they left Germany and settled in Basel, Switzerland. Through her interest in children and books, Liz helped to establish the Intercultural Children’s Library in Basel—JUKIBU, which opened in 1990. She was a member of the managing board with responsibility for the day-to-day running of the library for the first years and was elected President of the Intercultural Children’s Libraries Association of Switzerland, now called INTERBIBLIO. She joined IBBY as Assistant to the Executive Director in 1997 and in 2009 was appointed Executive Director.

