

Building more book bridges in 2019

In this issue...

Welcome to the very-first issue of the IBBY Sri Lanka quarterly newsletter. Beginning with this issue, you can look forward to receiving exclusive news, ideas and tips on books for young people; not only about selecting and reading such books, but also about writing, illustrating and even publishing them.

If you like what you read here, please recommend to others. Remember, only IBBY Sri Lanka members receive this newsletter. So, if you know someone who is creating quality books for young people, ask him or her to become a member. We need many more builders of book bridges from all over Sri Lanka.



Pix courtesy of Stepping Stones Montessori



State Minister of Education, Hon.Vijayakala Maheshwaran and Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mr.M.N. Ranasinghe lighting the traditional oil lamp.

IBBY Sri Lanka creates history

On the 5th of April, Sri Lanka's first-ever Convention on Literature for Children and Youth began at the SLFI, Colombo... .

Page 2

**"Books to the ceiling,
Books to the sky,
My pile of books is a mile high"...**

... so wrote the famous American children's author and illustrator Arnold Lobel.

That quote is true for many of us. Perhaps you are a book collector and have built up a collection over the years. Maybe you have inherited books from your grandparents or parents. The problem is what to do when you have no more space. Do you stop buying books? Do you give up reading?

You may think that an e-book reader or a tablet is a solution. Yes, it can be a solution for some readers and some types of books. However, the number of e-books produced in Sri Lanka is still very few. So, how can you continue to enjoy reading without those mile-high piles of books?

Why not begin a mini lending library for your neighbourhood's children and youth? You do not need cupboards: a plastic basket with a lid can hold 100 small storybooks. If you cannot begin a library, donate to one.

By continuing to buy and read books, we can help authors and illustrators to continue to create more books for our enjoyment.



Illustration by Deepthi Horagoda

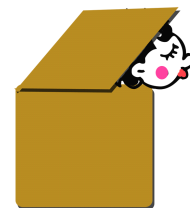


Exciting up-coming events

IBBY Sri Lanka will be holding several innovative events in the months ahead... .

Page 2

Are you living in a box?



Has anyone ever told you to 'think outside the box'? Try our Author's Challenge. ...

Page 2

... IBBY Sri Lanka creates history

Organised by IBBY Sri Lanka with the Ministry of Education, Department of Cultural Affairs, NILIS and Room to Read, the Convention was declared open by the State Minister of Education, Hon.Vijayakala Maheshwaran. The two-day event attracted maximum participation. Among the keen attendees were authors, illustrators, translators, book publishers, academics, librarians and media personalities.



Mr.R.H.N. Nandasiri, Project Head, presenting the first copy of *Lamā Sāhithya Kruthi Āgayīma* to the State Minister of Education.

The main highlight of the Convention was the launch of *Lamā Sāhithya Kruthi Āgayīma*, published by the Ministry of Education's School Libraries Development Branch. The result of 2 years of research, this publication sets down the standards for creating, as well as selecting, children's storybooks.

The President of IBBY Sri Lanka, Mr.Dinesh Kulatunga, also handed over a letter to Mr.Prasanna Ranaweera, Director of the NILIS, requesting the establishment of a Research Centre on Literature for Children and Youth.



Mr.Dinesh Kulatunga, President of IBBY Sri Lanka, handing over the letter of request to Mr.Prasanna Ranaweera, Director of NILIS.

The Resource Team of the *Kalana Mithuru Poth Sumithuru* Programme and *Lamā Sāhithya Kruthi Āgayīma* was also honoured with special plaques by IBBY Sri Lanka on this occasion.

The recipients were Mr.R.H.N. Nandasiri, Mr.P.G. Premadasa, Mr.U. Alahakoon, Mr.P.K. Vithana, Mr.Vijitha Welagedara and Mrs.Senani Bandara.



... Exciting up-coming events

June 8:

Convention on Literature for Children and Youth
at the *Jaffna Public Library*.

August 8, 9, 10:

Children's Literature Festival
at *Apé Gama, Battaramulla*.

Authors' Challenge—April 2019

What could happen if children from different ethnic communities had to live together in a camp? Quite a lot.

Almost every year, people are forced to leave their homes due to disasters: some natural, some man-made. What happens when they have to live in camps or schools? What happens when people who have lived separate lives are suddenly brought together? What happens if they speak different languages or have different beliefs? In such a situation, how will their children act and react?

Our children need to see and read about such characters in storybooks: both the blessings and the challenges faced by children in such situations. By doing so, we can help children to become mindful of others; their problems and needs. A camp is like our country put under a microscope: through the problems and solutions found within a camp's backdrop, children can begin to see similarities in our larger society. Through such stories, we can inspire children to think of others, first and foremost, as human beings.

If you had not thought of writing such a story before, now is the time. For, IBBY Sri Lanka is searching for stories on such themes. Your manuscript will be referred to the Good Books Council which will consider its suitability for publishing. Once certified by the Good Books Council, your book can be published by you or a publisher of your choice. Furthermore, the book can be printed at a very good rate by one of IBBY Sri Lanka's member printers. Your published book can even be nominated for awards and exhibitions by IBBY.

For more information about the Good Books Council, visit:

<http://www.ibbysrilanka.org>

Why is editing necessary?

So you have written a draft for a wonderful book. Maybe it is a story for children or for youth; maybe it is a text book. Now all you need to do is get it typed, and sent to a publisher. Correct? **No!**

Before that, you need to edit your writing. **Checking for spelling and punctuation mistakes is not editing.** That is simply proofreading. While proofreading is always important, editing should be done **before** proofreading. Self-editing your writing is a must for becoming a good writer, whether self-published or otherwise.

While publishers do have editors, you should edit your manuscript before letting them see it. Why? **A professional editor can decide if your manuscript is worth publishing, just by reading the first 2-3 pages.** So what does that mean to you as an author? **From the very beginning, every word and every sentence should be your best effort.**

That means doing the following:

For fiction such as children's storybooks, short story collections or graphic novels for young adults:

- ▶ **Check the story's structure—does it have a clear beginning, middle and end?**
- ▶ **Is the setting/timeline of the story clear?**
- ▶ **Check the content's quality—is the message/theme clear? | powerful? | persuasive?**
- ▶ **Is the plot tight or are there loose ends?**
- ▶ **Check the character development—are they so well-developed that the reader could recognise them if they met?**
- ▶ **Is there conflict among the characters, moving the story forward or does everyone boringly agree on everything?**
- ▶ **Check language suitability—do the words fit the readers' age group? | social values? | culture?**
- ▶ **Are the sentences too long and complex?**
- ▶ **Do the dialogues sound genuine or do they sound artificial when read aloud?**
- ▶ **Does the story flow smoothly from the beginning to the end?**

For non-fiction such as text books:

- ▶ **Check the structure—is the content divided into chapters and sub-chapters?**
- ▶ **Check the content's quality—are the instructions, explanations and arguments clear?**
- ▶ **Is the information correct?**
- ▶ **Check the references and quotations—any missing or wrongly cited?**
- ▶ **Check language suitability—do the words fit the readers' language ability?**
- ▶ **Are the sentences too long and complex?**

If all of the above is done by the author, then what does an editor do?

An editor will review your manuscript's

- **structure**
- **style of writing (including grammar)**
- **content's consistency and**
- **audience appeal.**

Thereafter, if the editor believes the manuscript is suitable for publishing, he/she will recommend it to the publisher. At this time, the editor will also provide feedback and suggestions for any improvements.

After reading all of the above, are you feeling worried? Perhaps the information is new to you or you have no editing experience.

That is why IBBY Sri Lanka is organising workshops on editing and also writing skills. These programmes will be conducted for **groups of 25 persons**. So, if you would like to join, please register now with the IBBY Sri Lanka office.

Setting up a Research Centre on Literature for Children and Youth

Under the guidance of IBBY Sri Lanka, the organising committee of the recently held Convention on Literature for Children and Youth requested the NILIS—University of Colombo, to establish this Centre. Through this project, we hope to nurture a national-level research culture on literature for children and youth. Our aim is to create and promote high quality research, thereby developing this sector to reach higher standards.

Calling
all illustrators!

If you are an illustrator and a member of IBBY Sri Lanka, we have good news for you. Send your website and social media links to be included in the Illustrators Directory.

This Directory will be featured on the IBBY Sri Lanka website, helping authors and also publishers to contact you. You will also be notified of competitions and exhibitions organised by IBBY. These are open only to IBBY members. (If you are not yet a member of IBBY Sri Lanka, [see page 4](#).)

E-mail/post the following details to be included in the Directory listing:

- ▶ **Your name**
- ▶ **IBBY Sri Lanka membership number**
- ▶ **Specialised area of illustration**
- ▶ **Your website and social media URLs**

This issue's poll

IBBY Sri Lanka is planning to publish a series of booklets on writing, illustrating, designing and producing books for our children and youth.

Question 1: *Would you buy?*

Question 2: *If 'yes', how many copies of each title would you buy?*

E-mail or post your replies to IBBY Sri Lanka at your earliest!



Become a Member!

IBBY Sri Lanka is accepting new membership applications **until 31 May 2019**. If you are still not a member, do not miss this opportunity.

Who can apply?

Those **over 18 years** and is one of the following:

- ▶ Author of children's literature/youth literature
- ▶ Illustrator
- ▶ Translator of children's literature/youth literature
- ▶ Editor of children's literature/youth literature
- ▶ Publisher
- ▶ Teacher (preschool/primary/secondary)
- ▶ Academic
- ▶ Librarian
- ▶ Parent of school-age children

What are the benefits?

- ▶ Invitation to participate in all local events, including training programmes.
- ▶ Receive information on all international activities of IBBY.
- ▶ Opportunities to participate in international competitions and events related to literature for children and youth.
- ▶ Get featured under *Local and International Achievements and Activities of Members* in the IBBY Report and Newsletter.
- ▶ Permission to use Member Logo.
- ▶ Receive services of the Good Books Council's Business Centre for printing/publishing.
- ▶ Support for promoting and negotiating **copyrights in the international market**.
- ▶ **Opportunities to have one's work promoted for international co-publishing ventures.**

Annual membership fee is Rs.1,000/-

Download the membership application form from: www.ibbysrilanka.org

Think about it...

With **pens** and **word processors**,
with **paint** and **ink** and **collage**,
we can...create possibilities where
there weren't any before.

Christopher Myers

Award-winning African-American children's books author and illustrator

Do you have any comments/suggestions/enquiries?

Send them to:

IBBY Sri Lanka

302, Pahalawela Road,
Pelawatte,
Battaramulla.

E-mail: secretary1@ibbysrilanka.org

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