

Building more book bridges in 2019

In this issue...

Since the first issue of the Newsletter in April, we have been kept busy. **First**, by exploring ways to help children affected by the Easter Sunday bombings. **Next**, by preparing 3 nominations for 2 global awards. **Finally, during the past 2 weeks**, preparing a project proposal to obtain a foreign grant for a nationally-important project.

To help the children affected by the bombings, we decided book therapy would be best. (You can read more about book therapy on [page 3](#).) As we also needed to overcome the language barrier, **we decided to create a wordless book**. The book will be out by early September.

In June, IBBY Sri Lanka was invited to nominate organisations and persons for 2 international awards: the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award 2020, and the IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award 2020. We felt extremely proud to be able to nominate 3 nominees from Sri Lanka for the awards. That is, **Abhimana Guarantee and Room to Read—Sri Lanka for the IBBY-Asahi Award**, and **Neil Karunarathne of the 100 Books in a Basket concept, for the IBBY-iRead Award**. Out of 25 nominations for the IBBY-Asahi Award from around the world, 2 are from our small nation.

The information we received for preparing the nominations resulted in another idea. That is, conducting a year-long programme to introduce storybooks and story-telling activities to preschools. Originally, we were planning to carry out a pilot project involving just 4-5 preschools. However, we were informed about the **IBBY-Yamada Grant, an international grant awarded for projects promoting a reading culture**. Receiving such funding would enable us to carry out our project islandwide. We are hopeful that our application will be successful when taken up next month, at the IBBY Executive Committee meeting in China.

If anything, these last 4 months has shown us the power of IBBY: **the power to bring like-minded people together to work towards a common goal; the power to encourage organisations and individuals through awards and grants**. In the months ahead, we look forward to even more activities and opportunities.

*The one who tells  
the story, rules the world.*

—Native American proverb

**IBBY Sri Lanka Section holds its first Annual General Meeting.**

**Amazing as it may seem, IBBY Sri Lanka Section is now a year old. Accordingly, the first A.G.M. was held on 5 July at the Seminar Room of the National Library and Documentation Services Board.**

At this meeting, the activities carried out from June 2018 to June 2019 were read out. Thereafter, the accounts for the period of June 2018–May 2019 were declared and approved by the Committee.

An encouraging development was the new membership applications which we had received. These were read out and accepted by the Committee.

Next was the announcement of the restructuring of the Committee. Accordingly, the office-bearers of the Board of Advisors, Committee and Executive Committee for the year 2019–2020 were appointed. (The full list appears on [page 4](#).)

Thereafter, the 2019–2020 work plan was announced and discussed. The meeting ended with the vote of thanks proposed by one of the Joint Secretaries.



**IBBY working with the National Book Development Council to develop the reading habit.**

IBBY is working with the National Book Development Council to develop the reading habit in Sri Lanka through public libraries...

Page 2

**Up-coming events**



Illustration courtesy of International Literacy Association

International Literacy Day is celebrated on 8 September every year, around the world. Through IBBY, Sri Lankan children have been invited to be filmed reading the Children's Rights to Read...

Page 2

**Do you know the positive effects of reading stories?**

According to latest research, reading stories has many positive effects—at any age. Find out about the psycho-social impact of reading fiction...

Page 2

... IBBY working with the National Book Development Council to develop the reading habit.

In July, on the invitation of the National Book Development Council of the Ministry of Education, IBBY Sri Lanka President Mr. Dinesh Kulatunga and member Mr. Gratian Peiris attended a one day forum on reading development through public libraries. The other participants were librarians from the public libraries in Jaffna, Kaththankudi, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Bandarawela, Kurunegala, Colombo, Negombo, Galle and Kandy. Being invited thus, is a clear sign that within a short period, our organisation has won the regard of the state education authorities.

At the forum, it was decided to organise a poster competition among schoolchildren on reading, centered around the National Reading Month in October.

... Do you know the positive effects of reading stories?

Whether reading a fairy tale at age 6 or a novel at age 60, reading stories is shown to have many positive results. According to research by the Open University of the UK, this is true, not only psychologically but also socially.

#### The psychological impact affects in 3 ways:

1. The reader loses oneself in the story world.
2. The reader takes on the perspective and identity of a story character.
3. The reader takes on the qualities of the fictional group.

#### The social impact is equally powerful, resulting in:

1. Making us feel less lonely.
2. Supporting our self-confidence.
3. Improving our mood.
4. Lowering our prejudgements about topics such as race, religion and politics.
5. Leading us to change our views.

For children, stories play an important part of understanding the world around them, and understanding themselves.

So now, all you fiction readers have research results confirming what you already knew: a story is more than just a story.

You can learn more about this topic at: <https://www.bbc.com/ideas/videos/how-stories-shape-our-minds/p07h9t70>

## About the Children's Rights to Read

The Children's Rights to Read is a project launched by the International Literacy Association (ILA). Its aims are:

- Ensuring every child has access to the education, opportunities and resources needed to read.
- Focusing on 10 rights essential for individuals to reach full personal, social and educational potential.

The Rights were created by a task force of literacy educators, researchers and advocates from 5 countries, making it a truly global framework. According to ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post, **"These rights entitle children to read in a way that's meaningful, enjoyable and personally enriching."**

The project which will run for a year, is aimed at educators, policymakers and literacy partners. Through their cooperation, the ILA seeks to raise awareness and achievement of these Rights, for children everywhere.

INTERNATIONAL  
LITERACY  
ASSOCIATION

## Children's Rights to Read

1. Children have the **basic human right** to read.
2. Children have the right to **access** texts in print and digital formats.
3. Children have the right to **choose** what they read.
4. Children have the right to read texts that **mirror** their experiences and languages, provide **windows** into the lives of others, and open **doors** into our diverse world.
5. Children have the right to read for **pleasure**.
6. Children have the right to **supportive** reading environments with knowledgeable literacy partners.
7. Children have the right to extended **time** set aside for reading.
8. Children have the right to **share** what they learn through reading by collaborating with others locally and globally.
9. Children have the right to read as a springboard for other forms of **communication**, such as writing, speaking, and visually representing.
10. Children have the right to benefit from the financial and material resources of governments, agencies, and organizations that **support** reading and reading instruction.

Pledge your support for these #RightsToRead:

[www.rightstoread.org](http://www.rightstoread.org)

# What is book therapy?



Book therapy or bibliotherapy is a type of psychological therapy. Under this method, persons suffering from a deeply upsetting experience are given books to read. The aim is for the reader to recognise and understand his/her feelings, especially about the situation he/she is facing.

Bibliotherapy is a proven method for helping young people suffering from distressing experiences. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, USA, 'Books can be wonderful tools to use with children who have experienced difficult times such as trauma or loss.'

Yet, all books cannot be used for therapy. Suitable books have the following qualities:

- A story and characters like what the reader has experienced.
- A story and characters that help the reader to face his/her situation.
- Characters that provide an example of what the reader can do.
- A point/points leading to a positive change in the reader's behaviour.

A specially powerful type of book therapy is **Affective Bibliotherapy**. Under this method, the reader is given a story that touches the reader's feelings. Recognising and accepting hidden feelings helps the reader's recovery.

Stories created for affective bibliotherapy aim to achieve the following results:

- ▶ Stage 1—The reader identifies/feels like a particular character in the book.
- ▶ Stage 2—By identifying with the feelings of a particular character, the reader releases his/her own feelings.
- ▶ Stage 3—The reader sees the suitability of the suggested solution.

## Affective bibliotherapy has many benefits:

- Helps to draw out a child/youth on a subject which (s)he has been unwilling to discuss.
- A child/youth might find it easier to talk about his/her issues, if he/she and the therapist can pretend that they are talking about the character's issues.
- Using animal characters enable young readers to feel slightly distant, and therefore safer, from the situation in the story. This, helps the coping process.
- Allows the reader to travel on an imaginative journey, rather than being lectured to.
- Reading about a character who has lost a loved one can help a child/youth to feel less alone in their situation.

Depending on the age of the reader, book therapy can be followed by other activities:

- Children can be asked to draw a part of the story which they like or identify with.
- Children can be encouraged to act out part of the story or the entire story.
- Teenagers/youths can be asked whether they feel something in common with a particular character.

Like all other storybooks, writing a story for bibliotherapy or selecting one should be done carefully. Pay special attention to the following points:

- ▶ Is the story simple, clear, short, non-repetitious and believable?
- ▶ Is it at a suitable reading level and developmental level?
- ▶ Does the story fit with suitable feelings, needs, interests and goals?
- ▶ Does it demonstrate cultural diversity, gender inclusivity, and sensitivity to violence?
- ▶ Do characters show skills for facing the situation?
- ▶ Does the problem situation show a settlement/solution?

Books used for bibliotherapy do not need words to be effective. Wordless books are well-suited for this purpose. In fact, they are especially useful for helping very young readers, older readers suffering from reading disabilities and wherever language differences can be a problem.

Recognising the importance of books as a healing tool, the IBBY Sri Lanka Special Books Project has supported the creation of a book for use in book therapy. Titled *The Six Doves*, it will be available for purchase in early September.

# Press campaign on the value of promoting the reading habit launched.



As a part of our ongoing efforts to restart a reading culture in our country, we have begun a series of newspaper articles aimed at mothers and teachers. The first one of these articles appeared in *Sirikatha*, the popular women's weekly tabloid, on 19 August.

The article titled 'දරුවන්ට පොත්පත් කියවන්න හුරු කරවන්නේ කොහොමද?' (*How Do You Train Children to Read Books?*) was written by our Project Coordinating Secretary and multiple award-winning children's author, Thanuja N. Ayagama. It points out different ways of introducing young children to reading. In case you missed it, the article can also be read online at:

[http://ibbysrilanka.org/?page\\_id=341](http://ibbysrilanka.org/?page_id=341)

According to Thanuja, the next article will be about developing the reading habit at primary level. The third article will be on how Grade 1 teachers can promote reading within the classroom.

This awareness campaign is actively backed by Wijeya Newspapers (Pvt) Ltd., publisher of *Sirikatha* and a member of the IBBY Sri Lanka Section.

Through the goodwill of our media partners, we hope to launch a similar Press campaign in Tamil as well.

## IBBY Sri Lanka Section office-bearers for 2019–2020

Adviser—Dr.R.M.K. Rathnayake

Adviser—Mr.S.A.C.M. Zuhyle

Adviser—Dr.Praneeth Abeysundara

Adviser—Mr.P.K. Vithanage

Adviser—Mr.Uditha Alahakoon

President—Mr.Dinesh Kulatunga

Senior Vice-president—Mr.Lal Jayawardena

Joint Secretary—Ms.Deepthi Horagoda

Joint Secretary—Mr.Shane Perera

Treasurer—Mr.Athula Jayakody

Project Coord.g Secretary—Ms.Thanuja Ayagama

Executive Committee—Mr.Indika Ganegoda

Executive Committee—Ms.V.V. Pathmaseeli

Executive Committee—Ms.Geethika Senevirathne

Executive Committee—Ms.Prageethika Jayasekara

Executive Committee—Mr.Neil Karunarathne

## Think about it...

You are your child's first teacher.  
By setting your children up for reading  
success before they enter school and  
continuing to be a reading role model  
throughout their schooling, you are  
putting them on the path of achievement  
throughout their life.

—ILA Children's Rights to Read Advocacy

## 'Donate a book—to fulfil a mind And give them vision—to win the nation.'

The Senehasa Saviya Social Welfare Foundation and the Sinha Saviya Sports Club have organised *Sisu Diriya 2019*, an educational resources and book donation programme for 350 underprivileged students in the Gampaha and Ampara Districts. It will be held during August as well as September, to coincide with the State Literary Month.

Your donations can be handed over at:  
**Senehasa Saviya Social Welfare Foundation,  
198/6 A, Thuru Sevana Place,  
Makola South, Sapugaskanda or  
IBBY Sri Lanka Section office at Battaramulla.**

Hotline: 0783 000700 | Senith Fernando: 0784 473690  
Sachitra Elwalage: 0710 105054

E-mail: [senehasasaviya@gmail.com](mailto:senehasasaviya@gmail.com)

Facebook: [SenehasaSaviya](https://www.facebook.com/SenehasaSaviya)

## IBBY Congresses

### 4<sup>th</sup> Asian and Oceania IBBY Regional Conference

Venue: Xi'an, China.

Date: 26-28 September 2019

Organiser: Chinese section of IBBY - CBBY

### 37<sup>th</sup> IBBY World Congress

Venue: Moscow, Russia.

Date: 5-7 September 2020

More details: [www.ibbycongress2020.org](http://www.ibbycongress2020.org)

(Contact the IBBY Sri Lanka office if you wish to attend.)

To know the latest news and announcements from IBBY Sri Lanka, visit our website or Facebook page:  
[www.ibbysrilanka.org](http://www.ibbysrilanka.org) [www.facebook.com/ibbylanka](https://www.facebook.com/ibbylanka)

WEBSITE



FACEBOOK

