



# EBBY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 4 | November 2016

## What is EBBY?

The Egyptian Board on Books for Young People (EBBY) aims to promote a culture of reading and writing for children in Egypt. Founded in 1987 as the Egyptian Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), EBBY serves as a dynamic hub for children, parents, librarians, scholars, writers, illustrators, publishers, and others who are interested and invested in the field of children's and young adult literature in Egypt.

## What is IBBY?

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) was founded in Zurich 1953, as a network of people committed to bringing books and children together. IBBY is a non-profit NGO with an official status in UNESCO and UNICEF. It has a policy-making role as an advocate of children's books and has 72 National Sections all over the world.

## The EBBY Launch Event That Could



The EBBY Launch on Monday, May 23, had a packed house and an audience of publishers, famous and emerging authors and illustrators, critics and academics, and many more in attendance, all eager to hear EBBY's plans for the future, or just eager to partake in the post-launch buffet ... we were offering cake. EBBY's panel was comprised of Dr. Nadia El Kholy, our fearless leader; Dr. Ulfat El Shiaty, founder of Shoura Foundation for

Development, our generous patron; Shahira Khalil, founder of Samir Magazine; and Dr. Yasmine Motawy, the brains behind the operation. Later, the panel hosted the talented Egyptians that were nominated by the Egyptian section of IBBY to represent the best of Egyptian children's literature in the last two years: Affaf Tobbala (nominated for IBBY's prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award), Yacoub El Sharouni (recipient of the IBBY Certificate of Honor for Writing, for *Laylatul Nar*), Yasser Gaessa (recipient of the IBBY Certificate of Honor for Illustration, for *Sana fi Qena* by Hadil Ghoneim), and Abier Megahed (recipient of the IBBY Certificate of Honor for Translation, for *Altemsah wa Alzarafa Sadikan Haqan* by Daniela Kulot). Please note that the above honorees were



EBBY Panelists (left to right): Motawy, Kholy, Shiaty, Khalil

## EBBY Board in Action: Yasmine Motawy

Once again, EBBY partnered with Dr Yasmine Motawy's AUC Community Based Writing for Children course on **Saturday the 16th of April** to facilitate a special community engagement day at the [Samir Workshop](#) at Samir Magazine, one of Egypt's oldest (since 1956). The Editor-in-Chief Dr Shahira Khalil is also a dynamic EBBY-er. The children who attended were mostly residents of the popular Sayeda Zeinab area where the [historic Dar El Hilal](#) is. The writers worked with the children to develop their fantastic storytelling abilities, to dramatize the story of Dum-ta-ta-Dum by Hans Christian Andersen nominee Afaf Tobbala, and talk to parents about the power of bibliotherapy. It was an inspiring day, the writers, as usual, going home with altered perceptions, a fresh outlook on who their potential readers are and what readers want.

*By Yasmine Motawy*



Samir Workshop



selected by the Egyptian section of IBBY in recognition of their skills in a work that they produced within the last two years; alternatively, depending on which version of reality you lean towards, they were selected by means of the Harry Potter sorting hat.



Guest Panel (left to right): Kholy, Tobbala, Gaessa, El Sharouni, Khalil

Our EBBY panel explained the vision of EBBY and its next steps as it boldly sets forth on its mission. To summarize, in 30 seconds or less: During this past year, we've put ourselves back on the map, after lingering for a few years in cryogenic stasis post-revolution. We got our new lease on life thanks to the patronage of Shoura Foundation for Development and an energetic new board compiled of qualified children's literature academics, professionals, publishers, and more, all completely dedicated to the cause ... or tricked into doing so. We're gearing up to host seminars and workshops for writers and illustrators, and anyone else with a vested interest in the field—keep your ears peeled for Dr. Motawy's upcoming seminar on how to win the Hans Christian Andersen Award (she was a juror in the last ceremony, so girl is legit). We are attending conferences, such as the IRSC 2015 Worcester, UK, and IBBY 2016 Auckland, New Zealand; so those frequent flyer miles are getting a good workout. Furthermore, we've coordinated with Shoura to launch a writing competition called Ardena, on the racy topic of agriculture, but more on that later.

After we waxed poetic for a good portion of the evening, we reluctantly passed the mic over to our celebrated honorees. Who passed it down the panel like it was a hot potato, until it landed with Yacoub El Sharouni. Mr. El Sharouni became quick friends with the mic and settled in for a good talk,

## Book Review:

### *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* by Mona El-Shayeb



The book *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* revolves around the story of the three friends living inside Amina's mind: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow. One day, the three friends argue about the importance of each one of them to Amina and in order to prove who the most important is, they agree that each one will disappear for one day. They each take turns disappearing, causing havoc in Amin's life and infuriating Amina's teachers and friends. The three friends decide that they will never disappear again after they notice that they are all important to Amina, who was quite miserable in their absence. The illustrations showing Amina's room are quite colorful with all the pink furniture making the book attractive for young girls. However, the quality of the illustrations in the body of the book isn't as good as the cover. The reader might be a bit confused by the story, as some parts don't make sense and the effect of the disappearance of each character is sometimes confusing. The idea of emphasizing the importance of the past, present and future is vital for children, but the author could have elaborated more as the effects seem a bit shallow.

Review by Yasmine Gamal Ellaithy

raising a number of important issues. He spoke of the need to translate research on children's literature and award-winning children's books. He commented on the importance of prizes as they help publicize books and authors. And lastly, he spoke of the importance of professional criticism in the field of children's literature in Egypt. There was more, but you missed it.

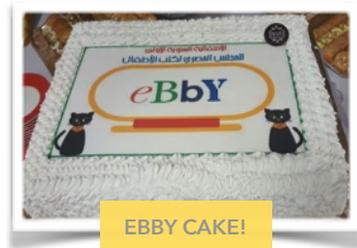


Some EBBY Board Members (left to right): Balsam Saad, Motawy, Rana Harouny, Kholly, Dina El Abd

During the Q&A, several important points were brought to light. Here's a highlight reel: The once popular Children's Book Fair was remembered and many asked for its return. Publishers such as Nahdet Misr offered

their full support for EBBY and the support of an active community of stakeholders in the field of children's literature in Egypt. Dr. Hussein Banhaway offered to return all the books that belong to EBBY back to the organization again ... we're holding him to that. The need for critics and researchers was once again reiterated, because international recognition of local talent hinges on having a healthy academic and critical foundation to bolster and support that talent. Last, there was a general feeling that problems relevant to children were not being addressed in current children's literature, and we need that relevance and those real-world connections to boost the love of reading in children. Or we need to bribe our kids to read.

All of the above was instantly forgotten when the buffet doors opened. There was a vicious stampede to get to the food and the cake was decimated in seconds. I'm happy to report that I managed to salvage a crumb. It was very tasty.



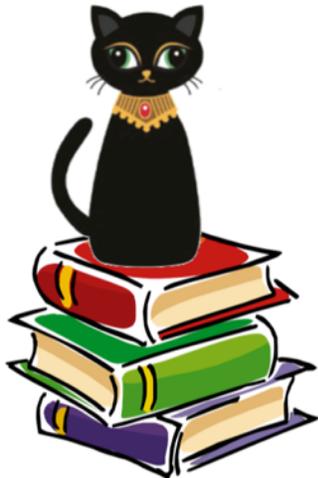
EBBY CAKE!

By Dina Elabd and Rana Harouny

## What is the IBBY International Congress?

"IBBY's biennial congresses bring together IBBY members and other people involved in children's books and reading development from all over the world. ... Every two years a different National Section hosts the Congress. Several hundred people attend the lectures, panel discussions, seminar sessions and workshops on current congress themes. An IBBY Congress also serves as a frame not only for the General Assembly and other meetings, but also for the presentation of different exhibitions and celebrations such as the Hans Christian Andersen Awards and the IBBY Honour List."

For more information, visit the [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org) website.



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# The 35th IBBY International Congress



Dina Elabd at the 35th International IBBY Congress

When the 35th IBBY International Congress came to an end I'm sure that all the attendees were in agreement that it was a great success and that they will miss New Zealand.

A great deal of interesting talks and seminars were held. What stands out were talks by Sir Richard Taylor, producer of *Lord of the Rings*, Katherine Paterson, author of *Bridge to Terabithia*, Leigh Hobbs, author of *Mr. Chicken Lands*

*on London*, and many more. Librarians from Australia and New Zealand explained new techniques they used to encourage children to read such as categorizing books according to interest like pets or football. The amount of research and information about the development of children's literature was incredible.

The 5-day conference concluded with a Gala dinner where all 500 attendees from around the world were in attendance. It was a real pleasure to have the Hans Christian Anderson Award Winner, Chinese Cao Wenxuan, give his remarkable acceptance speech. The winning illustrator, German Rotraut Susanne Berner was regrettably not in attendance, but sent a beautiful, personally illustrated video for all of us to watch as her acceptance speech.

All IBBY member states signed off the week by voting on changes in author and illustrator dossier content and submission requirements. Further details will be announced on the official IBBY site.



Dina with author Katherine Paterson