

Establishing a Section of IBBY

What is IBBY?

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is a global non-profit network dedicated to bringing books and children together. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, IBBY connects 85+ national Sections worldwide. We believe that quality books foster empathy, critical thinking, and international understanding, paving the way toward a more peaceful world. IBBY's mission materializes in diverse activities that range from awards, book selections, reading promotion projects, etc., all of which are described on the IBBY website.

Why Establish a Section?

Children's books are essential tools for education and cultural exchange. By establishing an IBBY Section, you create a formal hub in your country to:

- Promote high-quality locally created literature.
- Ensure every child has access to books that reflect their reality and expand their horizons.
- Connect your local community of creators and educators to a global network of experts.
- Advocate for the right of every child to become a lifelong reader, in alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Who Can Form a Section?

A Section is formed by a group of individuals or organizations within a country who are committed to children's literature. This includes authors, illustrators, publishers, translators, librarians, booksellers, educators, researchers, and reading promoters.

Key Principles:

- **Diversity & Inclusivity:** Your group should reflect the diverse regions, languages, and professions of your country.
- **Unity:** Only one Section per country is permitted. If multiple groups exist, we strongly encourage forming a unified organization with regional branches or specialized committees (e.g., for illustrators or librarians) to ensure everyone is represented.
- **Independence:** While you may collaborate with public institutions, the Section should ideally operate as a non-governmental, non-partisan entity. Members should serve in their individual capacities, not as government representatives.
- **Democratic Governance:** The Section should have a clear constitution with transparent, democratic processes for leadership and decision-making.

What Does a Section Do?

Sections are the engine of IBBY's mission. Activities are tailored to local needs but often include:

National Impact:

- Promoting reading policies and the importance of children's literature to the public and media.
- Compiling annual recommended book lists, organizing book fairs, and granting national awards for writing and illustration.
- Hosting seminars, workshops, and training for teachers, librarians, and creators.
- Establishing libraries in underserved areas or running literacy campaigns for children in crisis.
- Maintaining archives or research centres on children's literature.

Connecting through our network:

- Appointing a delegate to liaise with the IBBY Secretariat and voting at the biennial General Assembly.
- Nominating candidates for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards and the IBBY Reading Promotion Awards. Submitting titles to the IBBY Honour List and other IBBY International collections. Proposing projects to the IBBY-Yamada Fund and the IBBY Children in Crisis Fund.
- Participating in the IBBY World Congress.
- Organizing activities and campaigns on occasion of International Children's Book Day.
- Contributing news and articles to *Bookbird*, IBBY's international journal.
- Collaborate with other IBBY Sections in cross-border initiatives

Building a Sustainable Organization: Structure & Finance

Organizational and financial health is the foundation of your Section's longevity. A robust foundation and sustainable budget allows you to run impactful local programs, support your members, and maintain your international connection.

1. Treat your Section as a growing organization with a transparent organizational structure, including leadership, decision-making bodies, and participative mechanisms. Ideally, the composition of the Section should reflect the whole sector of children's literature and reading promotion. We recommend reaching out to your local library, publisher, and other associations that could form part of and/or support the Section.

2. Create a multi-year plan that balances ambitious projects with realistic income projections. Your budget should prioritize local impact (events, awards, outreach) while allocating resources for international participation.

3. Reliable funding comes from a mix of sources. Consider:

- **Membership Fees:** Tiered fees for individuals and institutions wishing to join your organization.

- **Project Grants:** Applying for funding from cultural foundations, arts councils, or educational bodies for specific projects (e.g., a reading campaign or a translation grant).
- **Corporate Partnerships:** Collaborating with businesses for sponsored events or literacy initiatives (ensuring alignment with IBBY values).
- **Fundraising Events:** Events, book sales, auctions, or crowdfunding campaigns for specific causes.
- **Services & Publications:** Selling professional guides, organizing paid workshops, or offering consultancy services.
- **Volunteer Power:** Leveraging the expertise of members to reduce operational costs.

4. As a member of the global network, Sections pay annual dues to IBBY. These funds support the Secretariat, international awards, and global advocacy.

- Dues are calculated based on a tiered system (Categories 1–8) that considers your country’s economic indicators (GDP) and publishing activity (e.g., presence at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair). This ensures contributions are fair and manageable.
- Support for New Sections:
 - New Sections may qualify for a reduced rate in their first year.
 - Sections in developing nations (lower categories) can apply for a two-year transition period with reduced or waived dues initially, allowing time to build local stability before full financial commitment.
- In cases of unforeseen hardship, the IBBY Solidarity Fund may offer assistance to established Sections.

Benefits of Membership

Joining IBBY opens doors for your local community:

Governance & Voice

- Vote at the IBBY General Assembly and elect the global leadership.
- Propose candidates for the Executive Committee and Award Juries.
- Shape international policies on children’s literature.

Exclusive Opportunities

- Sole right to nominate candidates for the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, IBBY Honour List, and the IBBY Reading Promotion Awards.
- Rights to host an IBBY World Congress or Regional Conference.
- Opportunity to sponsor International Children’s Book Day.
- Access to funding for projects supporting children in crisis or reading development (e.g., IBBY Yamada Fund, IBBY Children in Crisis Fund).

Network & Resources

- Feature your national books and news on the IBBY website and in *Bookbird*.
- Participate in projects with other Sections, including the possibility of “twinning,” and access a global forum of experts.
- Direct access to the IBBY Secretariat for advice on advocacy, programming, and development.

Our Shared Commitments

Membership is a partnership. To remain in good standing, Sections agree to:

1. Uphold Our Values

- Actively promote the Mission and Vision of IBBY.
- Adhere to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.
- Maintain a diverse, inclusive, and democratic internal structure.
- Operate independently of political or government control.

2. Stay Active & Connected

- Submit a Biennial Report of activities to the General Assembly.
- Maintain open communication with the Secretariat and respond to inquiries promptly.
- Appoint an official delegate/liaison to represent the Section globally.
- Foster an active digital presence to engage your local community.

3. Fulfil Financial Obligations

- Pay annual international dues on time.
- *Important:* Membership rights (voting, nominations) are active only when dues are current.

How to Get Started

Establishing a Section is a journey we undertake together.

Contact the IBBY Executive Director Carolina Ballester to express your interest at carolina.ballester@ibby.org.

The Secretariat will schedule a conversation to discuss your group's composition, goals, and readiness. This is a supportive step to help you plan effectively.

Once ready, you will submit a formal application including your constitution, action plan, and founding member list.

The Executive Committee will review your application. Upon approval, you will receive a welcome kit and begin your journey as an IBBY Section.

We look forward to welcoming you to the network.

IBBY Secretariat, 2 October 2026

*Based on the IBBY Statutes (2026)
and Standard Operating Procedures on Membership.*