Foreword

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We are very happy to publish the first results of this participative, international, ongoing programme, “The World through Picture Books”. It deals with something we children’s librarians must never lose sight of, even if we are so busy with new technologies, budget restrictions, everyday work…: read children’s books and choose the best ones for our readers. Of course, we could spend hours discussing what “best” means, but one thing it surely means is very good books from the readers’ own country and from as many other countries as possible…This is why, inspired by Kazuko Yoda’s request to our Committee for advice on the “top ten” picture books in Committee members’ countries, we launched “The World through Picture Books” programme, in 2011.

Librarians from thirty countries have already made their choice which we publish here, and, thanks to publishers’ generosity, their selected titles will be exhibited in Finland, before circulating in Japan; another set of books is available for any library in any country wanting to exhibit them. Also, papers on the project and on picture books in different countries (on line on http://conference.ifla.org/ifla78/session-99) will be presented at IFLA conference in Helsinki.

We wish to thank warmly all country coordinators and the very numerous children’s librarians that have worked for this programme: it is their participation that makes it valuable. And many warm thanks to Annie Everall for the hard coordinating work she has done and will continue doing…

Children’s literature is a treasure for young and not so young people. If some of the selected books are widely known, most are not, yet… We hope these lists of favourites will allow for many happy readings all over the world.
Introduction

The Programme

Children’s Librarians all over the world understand how important picture books in both traditional and digital formats are for children. For their development, their cultural identity, as a springboard into learning to read for themselves; for their visual skills, and because of the precious moment of sharing them with an adult… It is then very important for children librarians to promote picture books and to ensure access to them.

The idea behind the World Through Picture Books is to create a list of picture books from around the world that have been recommended by librarians, as a tool for building bridges and developing understanding between countries.

The project is led by IFLA Children’s and Young Adults section with support from partners IFLA Literacy and Reading section and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People).

Aims of the programme

To create lists of picture books from around the world that have been recommended by librarians and which can then be used:
– As a way of celebrating and promoting the languages, cultures and quality of children’s publishing around the world
– By countries wishing to purchase books from other countries and looking for ‘favourite’ titles
– By Sister Libraries as a way of exploring the children’s literature of their ‘Sister Library’ country

Criteria for inclusion in the list

Each country is asked to submit ten picture book titles:
– Suitable for children aged between 0 – 11
– Books that are ‘favourites’, that have lasted or will last the test of time, and are seen as classics, representing the best in picture books from that country
– Must have been published by the country submitting them
– Are available in the original language
– Are of a good quality and a high standard of publishing
– Have text and illustrations that work very well together
– Reflect a positive message
– Are excellent for reading aloud and sharing with children
– Are in print and therefore still available for purchase

Information required for each title

Each country is asked to provide the following information for each of the titles included in their list:
– Name of the author
– Name of the illustrator
– Title of the book in the original language and its meaning in English
– Date of publication
– ISBN
– A colour image of the front cover
– A brief review of the book (in English and in the language of the country)
The results in 2012

Country Participation
Each country organised the selection of their ten titles in the way that worked best for their country. In some countries there was collaboration between IFLA members, IBBY, Library Associations and a range of national youth library organisations. A variety of methods were used from on-line surveys and national nominations and country wide voting to small groups of librarians discussing and determining their list. So far 32 country lists have been received, 29 of which are published now – Algeria, Guadeloupe and India, almost finished, and other new country lists will be published in a second edition.

Information on the lists
The books within each list are arranged in the order that the country sent them to us. Some are alphabetical and some have been arranged in order of votes received or priority given to them. The aim is to publish in the future the reviews in both English and in the language of the country – some are already available in the two languages, others only in English for the moment. The English spellings of words have also been left as they would be in each individual country.
For more information or comments about a particular list, the contact person for each country is mentioned on its pages.
If your country has not yet chosen its list of ‘favourite’ books but you would like to become involved, please contact Annie Everall – email annie@alannie.demon.co.uk

Book Exhibitions
Two exhibition collections of the books are being created, thanks to donations by the publishers. These will initially be exhibited in Joensuu and Helsinki as part of the IFLA 2012 satellite and general conferences. They will then be based in the National Libraries of Japan and France and will be available for loan to libraries in all countries wishing to exhibit them – they will be responsible for costs of transportation, insurance and security. If you are interested, please contact Kazuko Yoda k.yoda2000@gmail.com or Viviana Quinones viviana.quinones@bnf.fr.

Impact of the Project
This has been a wonderful project to be involved with and its impact will become more visible once it starts to grow and the lists start to be used. The librarians who have been involved have very much enjoyed organising the list for their country and feel that they have learned a great deal. It has provided an opportunity to celebrate children’s books and the particular richness of picture book publishing around the world as well as strengthening the partnership between librarians, publishers and authors. The publishers and authors feel honoured and proud to be featured in these lists, especially as they have been nominated by librarians as these comments demonstrate:

‘I am thrilled that these three classic books, Dear Zoo, Peace at Last and The Gruffalo have been chosen by librarians to represent the UK in such an exciting international initiative. They have truly stood the test of time – and with good reason: each is a beautifully crafted book, perfectly pitched for its audience, engaging, satisfying and a joy to read aloud and share with a child again and again. That these books have been chosen by librarians makes their selection as classics especially meaningful since librarians are the experts who recognise which books really connect with children and families and therefore truly deserve classic status.’

Suzanne Carnell, Publishing Director – Macmillan

‘Desde Editorial Comunicarte deseamos agradecer a IFLA y a las bibliotecas escogidas por llevar adelante el Proyecto ‘El mundo a través de libros álbum’. Compartimos los objetivos y, desde nuestro lugar de editores, intentamos publicar calidad en literatura e ilustración para acercar los mejores libros a niños y jóvenes. Somos una editorial radicada en Córdoba, una ciudad del interior
de Argentina. Nuestro catálogo incluye nueve colecciones de álbumes y libros ilustrados. Mucho nos complace que hayan reparado en El árbol de lilas, de María Teresa Andruetto y Liliana Mendénez, Colección Vaquita de San Antonio”.

“Klaus [Flugge, Andersen Press] has told me that Elmer figures in the top ten list of favourites of librarians in the UK. Obviously I am delighted and Elmer feels honoured…. I’ve continually refused approaches to make films but in spite of that the books seem to reach more and more countries. If Elmer still continues to tell me his adventures, I’ll still try to make them into books. Good luck with the project.”

David McKee, author and Illustrator of Elmer

‘I’m very happy that my picture book will be at the IFLA conference, it is an honour. Every appreciation and recognition of my work is the greatest motivation to continue what I’m doing and the great thing is that the children’s librarians put it on the list. I’m happy to announce that in the autumn, I’m finishing the sequel to this picture book and I hope children (and librarians) will love it as much as they loved the first one”.

Pika Voncina, author and illustrator of Emilija in the Land of Wheels

“It is astonishing enough for me that British librarians chose to include Dear Zoo in this prestigious top ten for the IFLA project, but the knowledge that the book will then be part of an international exhibition as well is extremely humbling. I am quite overcome by this huge accolade, and can only thank those librarians nationwide who felt Dear Zoo deserved to be on the list.”

Rod Campbell, author and illustrator of Dear Zoo

Ideas for using the lists

There are many ways to use the lists. Here are some of our suggestions but if you find other ways of using them, do please let us know.

– Explore the cultures of other countries through their stories
– Use them for stock selection, to purchase books and build your international collection
– Build your own knowledge of books from other countries
– Use your own country list to generate publicity for the picture book publishing in your country
– Work with your Sister Library on activities linked to the lists of your countries
  • Video children in your library reading books off your list aloud and get your Sister Library to do the same and then share the videos
  • Explore the same story that has been published in your country and the country of your Sister Library
– Use the pictures in the books from other countries to get children in your country writing what they think the story is about
– Share your own ideas via the blog to be created

The Next Steps

Over the next months we will be:

– Encouraging more countries to work on producing a list for their country
– Developing the online catalogue further
– Ensuring each country list has reviews in both English and the language of that country (where appropriate)
– Looking at additional ways to use the lists
– Linking The World through Picture Books more closely to the Sister Libraries programme
– Encouraging countries to get media and press coverage for the project in their own countries
– Looking for ways to further promote the project
– Exploring ways of using social networking to promote the project
– Seeking funding to enable more promotional materials to be produced