
The XII International Toy Library Conference, São Paulo, 2011

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The XI International Toy Library Conference took place on last October (13th to 17th), with the theme “Toys libraries bringing toys and games to life”, at the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie of La Villette conference centre in Paris, France.

This Conference was organised by the International Toy Libraries Association, ITLA, now presided by Cynthia Morrison, from South Africa. Memories show that these every three year conferences, are intended to be held in different countries and continents. So, the first one was in London (1978), then in Stockholm (1981), Brussels (1984), Toronto, Turin (1990), Melbourne (1993), Zurich (1996), Tokyo (1999), Lisbon (2002), South Africa (2005) and France (2008).

For 2011, the Brazilian Toy Libraries Association presented a proposal, supported by the Governor of São Paulo, José Serra, which was fully accepted, to be held in the city of São Paulo. It will be the first time that this conference will be held in America, and we have already the support from many countries, especially the American ones. By this meeting we hope to show the great diversity of our toys and games, their different regional origins and acculturations, and the importance of our toy libraries for health and educational purposes.

The last conference was organised by the French Association of Toy Libraries, Association des Ludothèques Françaises and its Scientific Committee was presided by Gilles Brougère, from the Paris XIII University.

More than 600 people from all continents attended to this meeting.

Brazil was represented by the Brazilian Toy Libraries Association board and counsel, also by the Brazilian Toy Manufacturers, ABRINQ, and by 15 presenters from different universities and states, such as Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto.

Visits to the toy libraries in the Ile-de-France and FunPark Playmobil were organized.

This year, in Paris, about 100 professionals and researchers replied to the call for papers and sent studies, which were grouped in different sub-themes, presenting the toy libraries all over the world in their diversity and similarity, in different contexts, as in schools and hospitals. Among the focused items, there were works that presented data on the importance of toy libraries for: the recovery of hospitalised children; disabled people; developing social and cultural programs (as to community empowerment and welfare); improving creativity in education (such as multi-purpose pre-school, abstract games in collaborative school situations); designing ludic engagement on therapy, communication, and learning; giving support to parents. Children’s traditional games and video games were discussed, as also issues on toy libraries organisation.

The European Toy Library Group (ETL) presented the results of an active network among European countries. At this conference, it was observed an increasing number of American participants, mainly from Latin America. In the last five Continents meeting (Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania), in South Africa, we were only five people from America; at this time we were now represented by 30 persons from six countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Canada. An American Group of Toy Libraries, GATL, was organised in order to provide the sharing of experiences and researches, to investigate and promote the social, cultural, educational and psychological value of play, toys and games. Each country nominated two representatives and a forum has begun to be planned.

Beside this conference, the 1st International Meeting about Research on Toy Libraries” took place, organised by Gilles Brougère and Natalie Roucourt, Univ. Paris XIII, which gathered people from Canada, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and South Africa. At this first meeting it was emphasised the necessity of more researches on toy libraries. A forum was also organised to share data already obtained and discuss the possibility of developing cross-cultural researches.

The interim meeting to organise and prepare the XII International Toy Libraries Conference in São Paulo, 2011, will take place in Germany, in 2010. For this preparation we hope to get the attention and support from every association, institution and professional that recognise the importance of bringing to Brazil an international congress on play and toy libraries.