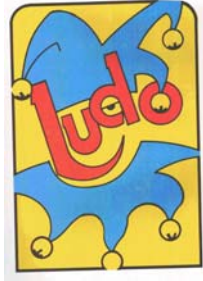


3rd International Toy Library Conference – Belgium

Brussels, 21 – 25 May 1984

Main Theme : Play is a Language



Participants from 27 countries are listed, though claims of up to 33 have been made. Queen Fabiola visited the conference and spoke with many delegates. Topics were-

- How toy libraries are organized and function
- The process of parenting & parent support
- Toys
- Children in need of special support
- The status of play

The proceedings were in two languages with interpreters. This meant in very general terms that the mainly English speaking and Nordic participants were exposed to the more cultural and philosophical interests of the francophone delegates who in their turn were hearing about many forms of family support to encourage play, and specialist ways to help those with disabilities.

Home made and adapted toys were demonstrated. A paper from Hong Kong about parent's attitudes to play made an impression. Roy McConkey presented "Lets Play" a video training programme for parents of handicapped children. Margalith Akavia's games workshop demonstrated that cooperation and inclusion were better than the punitive ethos of many traditional games. In her "musical chairs" game, pieces of furniture, not players were discarded. Denise Garon presented her ESAR system of toy classification that is now in wide use in the toy libraries of many countries. Video games and their role in toy libraries were discussed. Roma Lear's "Birdy" finger puppets made their first public appearance and decorated many conference badges.

A demonstration toy library with children playing was open throughout the conference. Visits were made to toy libraries, hospitals, schools, museums and archeological sites.

An "International Newsletter for Toy libraries" labeled Vol 1 No 1 dated November 1984, edited by Annetine Forell & Mary Glue was sent to 46 countries.

(Compiled by Pat Atkinson)