

# ITLA Newsletter

## 14th International Conference, Leiden, Netherlands May 2017



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The 14th International Toy Library Conference was held in Leiden, Netherlands, from 10 to 15 May 2017.

The Dutch National Toy Library Association (Vereniging Speelotheken Nederland) hosted 106 delegates representing 20 different countries at conference the historic Kinderrechtenhuis.

Delegates were welcomed to the conference by the Kinder Kleijnkoor Noordwijk accompanied by the Berghdrummers from the Heeren Loo Zorg-groep.

Delegates were welcomed to Leiden by the mayor at a reception held in the city hall.

Thought provoking and interesting presentation were included in the toy library line up. Topics examined ranged

from loose parts play to rebellious play and cooperative games.

Digital media and play was explored. Also included in the programme was the recreational places and play areas in the city; living aging, playing, recreating and a session on recycled paper toys were informative sessions to attend.

Interesting perspectives were gained through the toy libraries: its surroundings and its place in society/ In addition, the view of play with indigenous children, and steps to create a profitable toy library was shared with toy librarians.

Delegates had the opportunity to visit three toy libraries on four different tours. International guests were able to learn about interesting toy library models located in book librar-



ies, schools as well as toy libraries focused on serving children and adults living with disabilities.

The conference closed with toy library associations having meetings with their members. meetings held by ITLA and



**The 15th International Toy Library Conference  
will take place in South Africa, Johannesburg from  
16-19 July 2019.**

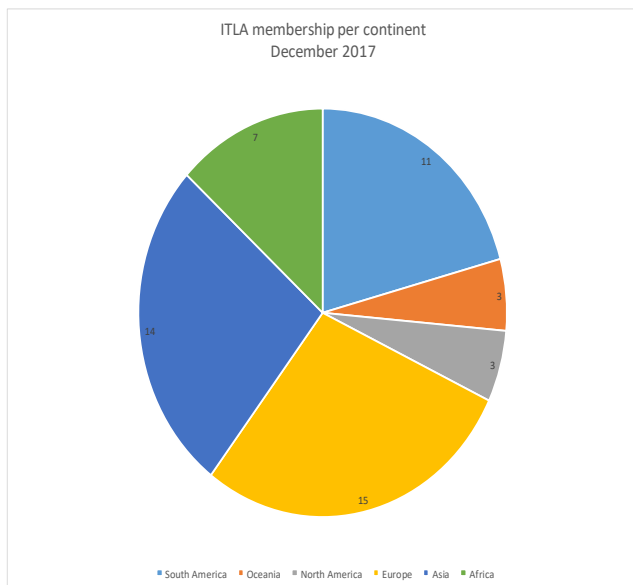
### ITLA members attending the conference



### ITLA Banking Details:

- Account name: ITLA
- Account number (IBAN): BE08 5230 8086 2713
- Bank Identified Code (BIC)/Swift Code TRI-OBEBB

## ITLA membership



ITLA's membership totals 53 member countries each representative of a number of toy libraries in their respective countries.

ITLA's membership records reflect an increase in the number of members from 38 members in 2011 to 53 members in 2017.

ITLA membership is divided into four categories: National organisation with more than 10 members, individual toy library association with less

than 10 members, and individual toy librarian.

A total of 11 national toy library associations are members.

Membership fees and application forms are available at [www.itla-toylibraries.org](http://www.itla-toylibraries.org). Membership queries can be emailed to [members@itla-toylibraries.org](mailto:members@itla-toylibraries.org).

## Sustainability of toy libraries

**“Sustainability is a critical aspect to consider when setting up new toy libraries”**

Toy libraries across the world is seen as a community service, often operated as a not for profit concern.

In recent years, toy libraries need to consider how to make their toy libraries sustainable beyond the initial funding received to start up the toy library.

The most common strategy towards sustainability is in-

come raised through membership fees. Toy libraries design their premises in such a manner that it can double up as a children's party venue. Adding a large sized room allows toy libraries to rent out training or meeting spaces.

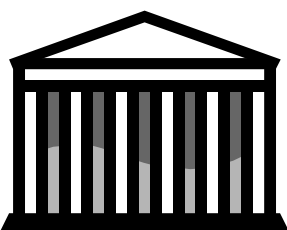
Another option is to include a coffee shop at toy libraries offering play sessions for children, at a fee, while parents

can spend time at the coffee shop.

Offering training courses, renting out party décor, making and selling toys, setting up play spaces at expos or music concerts is another creative initiative that sustains toy libraries.

Sustainability is a critical aspect to consider when setting up new toy libraries.

## Research related to toy libraries



### Toy library research

The following toy library related articles makes for interesting reading:

- ⇒ Barros De Oliveira, V. 2015. Playing in hospital toy libraries: support for children and their families. *Boletim Academia Paulista de Psicologia*, 35(99):59-74. [Online] Available from: <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/946/94640400005.pdf>.
- ⇒ Cottrell, M. 2013. *Toy Libraries: a place to play*. [Online] Available from: <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2013/12/03/toy-libraries-a-place-to-play>.
- ⇒ Livingstone, A. 2016. *Toy lending libraries and exchanges: benefits and how they work*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.moneycrashers.com/toy-lending-libraries-exchanges>.

Please share toy library related research by emailing it to [info.itla@gmail.com](mailto:info.itla@gmail.com).

## INTERNATIONAL TOY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Email: [info.itla@gmail.com](mailto:info.itla@gmail.com)

Visit our website

[www.itla-toylibraries.org](http://www.itla-toylibraries.org)

The International Toy Library Association is a membership organisation that actively promotes play, playful interaction and playthings that are essential to optimal educational, physical, psychological, social and cultural development. ITLA was created in 1990 in Torino during the 5th International Toy Library Conference. The Association is registered under Belgian law as a non-profit international organization open to any association or individual who supports our aims.

ITLA is committed to the beliefs that play, playthings and playful interaction is essential to optimal educational, physical, psychological, social and cultural development and wellbeing, specially all this in toy libraries.

ITLA facilitates the exchange of global best practice principles between toy libraries by ensuring bi-annual international toy library conferences.

*Our vision: Every community in the world has access to toy libraries that contribute to the well being of all*



### Research: The role of toy libraries in the provision of play-based learning opportunities to young children



Worldwide, toy libraries are regarded as a non-centre-based early childhood education programme. In South Africa the majority of young children live in poverty and do not have access to early learning opportunities and play materials before entering formal schooling. This study investigated how toy libraries provide play-based learning opportunities to young children.

Seven toy library sites located in five South African provinces. The participants consisted of toy librarians, managers and parents. The toy librarians were selected purposively, applying the criterion that play-based early learning sessions were provided to children younger than six years.

The research methodology employed was qualitative, and an interpretivist paradigm informed the multiple case study design. The conceptual framework was based on learning and systems theories informing how young children learn. The toy library operations and play-based early learning session characteristics inform the framework of quality standards

for toy libraries.

The data collection strategies included focus group discussions of photographs, document analysis and observations of play sessions. The group discussion and observation transcriptions, documentation and photographs were analysed by means of coding. Three themes, namely young children and learning, toy library operations and play-based early learning, and nine sub-themes emerged that include academic learning, 21st century skills, administration, play materials, services, challenges, developmentally appropriate practice by toy librarians, play-based learning pedagogy indicators and char-

acteristics of play-based learning.

The findings indicate that toy libraries provide access to play-based early learning sessions to young children. However, a variety of developmentally and culturally as well as age-appropriate play materials and play-based early learning sessions that include a variety of play opportunities are required. In addition, the framework of quality standards for toy libraries was enhanced as a result of the study. This framework provides guidance on how to operate a toy library which includes, apart from lending toys, play-based early learning sessions in its services. –*Monica Stach*