The 5th Baltic Sea Conference



Riga, July 23-24, 2023

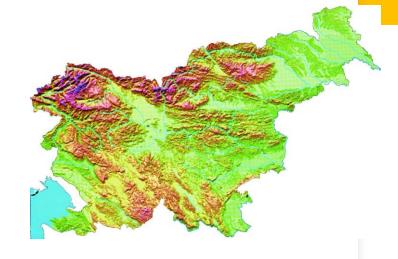
The Golden Reader Project - 20 Years / 679.500 Books

Petra Potočnik, Društvo Bralna značka Slovenije – ZPMS (Slovenian Reading Badge Society), Slovenia









Slovenia?

- Slovenia is a country in Central Europe.
- It covers 20,271 square kilometers (7,827 sq mi).
- Slovenia has a population of 2.1 million.
- At the beggining of the school year 2022/23, 86,177 children were enrolled in kindergartens, 197,062 students in primary and 77,462 students in secondary schools.

The Slovenian Reading Badge Society Društvo Bralna značka Slovenije – ZPMS

What (and Why) is a Reading Badge?

- The Reading Badge was initially **a mentoring practice** at the Prevalje primary school (a small city in the north of Slovenia). The movement was founded in the school year 1960/61 by Slovenian language professor Stanko Kotnik and author of youth literature Leopold Suhodolčan.
- The two of them turned the existing reading club into "The Competition for the Reading Badge", quite a challenging activity. They wanted to find an escape from school formalities. The expansion of all possible sports competitions encouraged them to introduce a new spiritual parallel.
- The idea of The Reading Badge came to Kotnik while he was reading a report about a similar form of literary education done by the Czechs. He grounded the new competition: "It is a noble cultural competition where young people compete with their peers and themselves. They are awarded the winning badge for success but at the same time they feel enriched inside."







- Slovenian Reading Badge Society is the NGO heading the Reading Badge movement in terms of professional guidance and organization. The Society implements various programs that encourage children and young people – as well as adults – to read in their free time.
- The movement's initiatives today bring together about 140,000 readers each year.
- Reading is supported by 7,000 mentors (this number includes only primary schools) – librarians, teachers and other experts, as well as authors and publishers; children are also encouraged to read by their families.
- The Reading Badge programs even transcend Slovenian borders to reach Slovenian communities abroad.
- The mission of the Reading Badge, supported by schools, libraries, and similar organizations, is to promote the lifelong development of reading culture and reading literacy.
- Due to its significant role in the national culture, the Reading Badge is listed by the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Slovenian Reading Badge Society is a winner of:
 AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE LITERACY PROMOTION IN
 EUROPE awarded every two years by Federation of
 European Literacy Associations (FELA).
 The award was presented on 5th July 2022 at the 22nd
 European Literacy Conference in Dublin.

The main objectives of Slovenian Reading Badge Society



- **Provides guidelines** for the selection of reading materials and develops the tools needed for their use.
- Shares expert knowledge on the development of modern strategies for encouraging reading.
- Informs about the development of reading, writing and literary culture.
- Ensures efficient and quick integration of the network of participants and an unimpeded flow of information.
- Organizes programmes of specialized education and exchanges.
- Coordinates visits of Slovenian authors.
- **Provides** motivational **book gifts** and works to improve the quality of youth literature.
- Prepares motivational materials and certificates.
- Develops various pilot programmes and projects for different age groups (e.g. a programme of *Intergenerational Reading, Reading Tea Parties*).
- Collaborates with similar organizations in Slovenia and elsewhere (being one of the initiators of the *National Month of Reading Together* network; heading the *Reading Together* promotion programme, etc.).
- The Slovenian Reading Badge Society is **a member** of the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth and is internationally active as a member of the Slovenian Section of IBBY and the Federation of European Literacy Associations.

Illustration: Tanja Komadina.

The Golden Reader Project

- One of the many projects we run in our Society is The Golden Reader Project. Since school year 2003/2004, each student has been given a picture book at the beginning of primary school, and thousands of faithful readers were presented with a book at the end of their primary schooling.
- The books are considered a gift and a motivational tool. They
 promote family reading, help develop reading habits and reading
 culture and help raise young readers who will love and enjoy
 reading all their life.
- The collection of books *The Golden Reader* is one of the most important projects of our Society. We have been building it for 20 years with the support of sponsors and other collaborators.



The Beginning

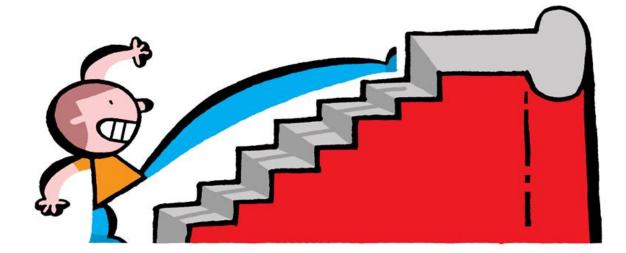
- The publishing and promotional project *The Golden Reader* was developed by **Slavko Pregl**, one of the most prominent Slovenian authors, editors and publishers, who is best known for his youth literature.
- In school year 2003/2004 (when the project began), he was the
 president of the Slovenian Reading Badge Society. He developed
 the project based on his knowledge of the young readers' habits
 and broad insight into the field of books in Slovenia and
 internationally as well.
- He is actively involved in the project to this day and takes care of both its content aspects and its place in the Slovenian cultural space.
- The project began because of the appreciation of the importance of domestic libraries in the development of reading culture, and the desire for quality (modern) books to reach as many young readers as possible.



• The book collection is structurally divided into two parts, as it is intended for two age groups:



- first-graders (and their families); Number of copies: 25,000[1];
- young readers ("Golden Readers") at the end of primary school; Number of copies: 9,000. ("Golden reader": a reader who completes the Reading Badge programme in all nine grades of primary school)



11 The average circulation of printed books in Slovenia is about 1,000 copies.

Illustration: Ivan Mitrevski



Selection Criteria

- The editorial main goal for the selection of books for both age groups is to choose a quality (contemporary) book for children and young people.
- Award-winning and nominated contemporary literary works and popular non-fiction books for children and young people are selected.
- We adjusted the campaign according to the funds we managed to obtain.
- For the first five years, *Golden Readers* were given two books: one belletristic/literary and one non-fiction book.
- From the school year 2008/2009 on, only one book is presented to *Golden Readers*, but we are careful that there is a balance between poetry, fiction, and non-fiction books.
- Occasionally, exceptional editions of canonical texts related to important anniversaries and cultural milestones are selected.
- From time to time, new works have been released exclusively for this collection, edited by experts from various fields.
- This year's Golden Readers were gifted a non-fiction book 50 Abstract Inventions. How to Understand the World (50 abstraktnih izumov. Kako razumeti svet) by Tina Bilban and illustrations by Ivan Mitrevski.
- The book coincides perfectly with one of the main themes of this year's National Month of Reading Together (NMRT)/ Reading Together project Reading of non-fiction books (two other themes are intergenerational reading and promotion of project that support reading literacy and reading culture at home and abroad).
- NMRT is a project that we have been implementing together with the initiators since 2018. The initiators and organizers of the NMRT collaborate to improve the recognition of the importance of reading literacy and reading culture at the national level and facilitate a more comprehensive national engagement plan in this important field. NMRT is complemented by a public awareness campaign called **Reading Together** (headed by the Slovenian Reading Badge Society).



The Extent of the Project

- The uniqueness of the project is, above all, its dimensional emphasis, as the reprint of the selected picture book is given to a whole generation of first-graders in Slovenia and the entire Slovenian cultural space.
- The reprint of the book for *Golden Readers* covers almost 40% of the ninth-graders and is also intended for all *Golden Readers* in the Slovenian cultural space.
- The Golden Reader Project is considered the longest-lasting and most extensive book gift promotional campaign ever in the field of books for children and young people in Slovenia.
- We have donated **704,500 books**! **340,500** books to twenty generations of *Golden Readers*, **339,000** copies of book gifts for first-graders and **25,000** other books of the Slovenian Reading Badge Society.
- A key promotional element of the project is its connection with the economy, as most of the funds for the project's implementation come from the support of sponsors and donors (partly supplemented by public resources since 2009: the Slovenian Book Agency).
- The connection with the economy is also important for the promotion of books for children and young people in the wider community that is not directly related to the field of books and reading culture.
- Following the example of the Golden Reader Project, various successful connections between books and the economy, as well as various public book gift projects and programs have been more courageously established in Slovenia.















Accompanying activities The Golden Reader Project

- When the book is published, a press conference with the participation of Reading Badge representatives and sponsors is organized.
- At the press conference, the entire Golden Reader book collection is presented as well as the current book. This is followed by a conversation with the author of the book, the editor and the illustrator if there is one. If possible, students also take an active part in the press conference.
- This year we celebrate the twentieth year of the Golden Reader Project, so this year's press conference was prepared a little more solemnly. The books are always published with the support of **Telekom Slovenije** (since 2009, partly also with the help of the **Slovenian Book Agency**).
- We presented this year's book together with the authors and representatives of the Society. Also other authors who have participated in the making of books in any way during the last twenty years joined us.
- On this occasion, also an exhibition of all the books published in the collection was prepared.

Accompanying activities The Golden Reader Project

A **central closing event** for the *Golden Readers* is also prepared every year. We include a conversation with the book's creators in the program of the main event and an accompanying entertainment program.

- The event is attended by about **1,200** *Golden Readers* (one-fifth of all *Golden Readers*) and their mentors from all over Slovenia. Traditionally, the best *Golden Readers* from Slovenian schools in Italy (Slovenian minority) also come to this event.
- In 2021, the event for *Golden Readers* could not be carried out live, instead, we organized an online festival of meetings with some of the most prominent Slovenian authors for young readers, which ran for 5 days in May (the conversation with author of the book for *Golden Readers* in 2021, Tone Partljič, was followed by 1800 participants).
- In year 2022 the event marked the end of a two-year celebration of the round anniversary of the Reading Badge movement. At the event, we paid a tribute to deserving reading mentors, long-term collaborators and all those who have encouraged and supported the Reading Badge movement all these years.





Accompanying activities The Golden Reader Project

• In 2023 the event was again attended by about **1,200** *Golden Readers* and their mentors from all over Slovenia. The best *Golden Readers* from Slovenian schools in Italy (Slovenian minority) also come to this event.

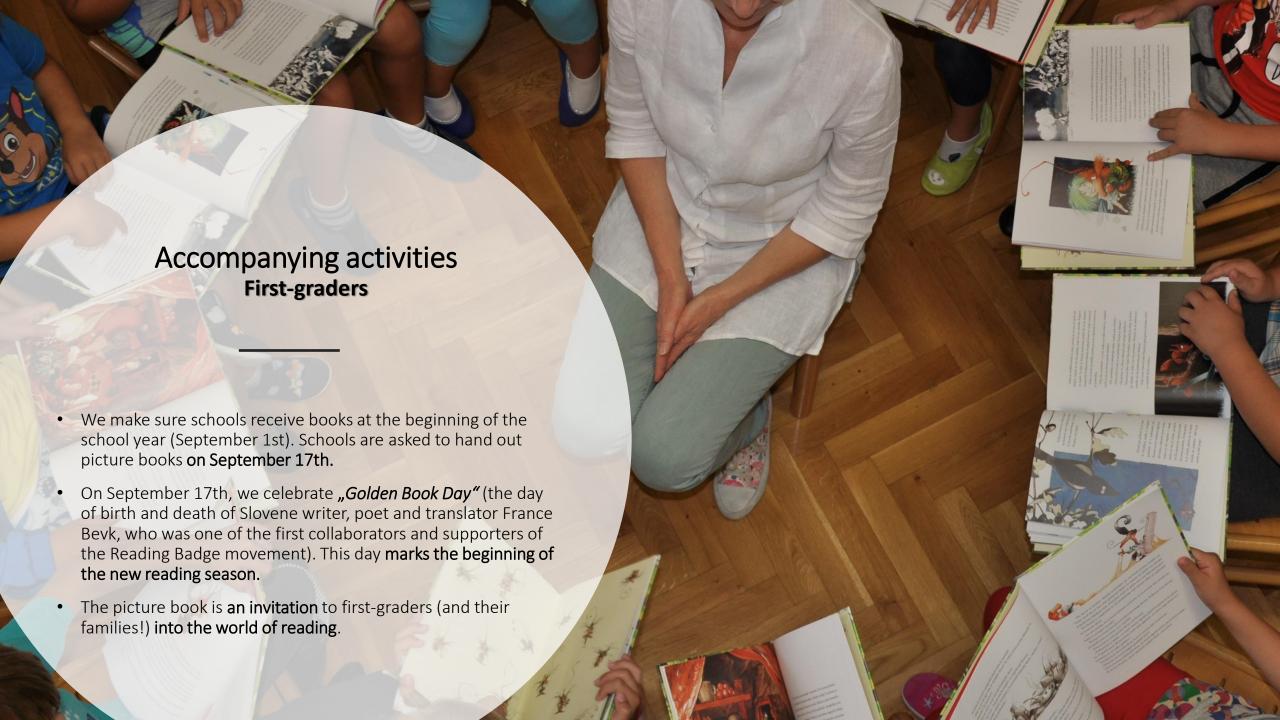








Prireditev za zlate bralke, zlate bralce



Accompanying activities First-graders

• At some selected primary schools, the picture books are ceremoniously distributed to first-graders by prominent Slovenian authors.

• A press release is organized together with the sponsor of the campaign.

 Right now, the distribution of books for first-graders is in progress.

This year's selected book is a picture book called *The Migratory House / The Migration House* (Hiša selivka) by president of The Reading Badge **Marko Kravos** and illustrations by Erika Cunja.

The picture book will be published in honor of the celebration of our president's 80th birthday.





Added value of the project

- The added value of the project is not only in the fact that young readers receive a high-quality book as a gift, the exceptionality and comprehensiveness of the project are also reflected in many other important highlights:
- Enrichment of home libraries;
- Enrichment of **school libraries** three **additional books** per school are donated every year;
- Encouraging family reading;
- Development of reading habits and reading culture among children and young people;
- Children and young people are supported in their search for beauty and values in the rich world of literature, encouraging them to be creative and active participants in the reading community.
- Promotion of intergenerational reading a few additional copies are devoted to the implementation in the coming years;
- Data collection of tracking reading habits a questionnaire completed by mentors for each school separately data analysis is very valuable for the further development of future plans for our Society.
- Promotion of authors and illustrators (performances in schools, public attention) as well as publishing houses where the originals of the books were published;
- Different motivational and informational materials for children and informational and/or educational materials for teachers, librarians, and parents.

Ice magnolias (Ledene magnolije) by Marjana Moškrič and Prešeren.doc (selected and edited by Igor Saksida)

2003/2004



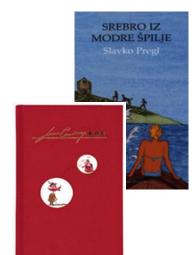
2004/2005

DORDO murjana molikrik

magnolije

Silver from the blue cave
(Srebro iz modre špilje) by
Slavko Pregl and
Cankar.doc (selected and
edited by Anton
Šepetavc)

2004/2005





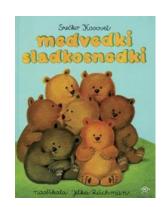
Grammar school boy
(Gimnazijec)
by Igor Karlovšek and
Paths of the book
(Pota knjige) by Iztok Ilich

2005/2006



2006/2007

Distortion (Distorzija) by
Dušan Dim and
Pavček.doc (selected
and edited by Tone
Pavček)



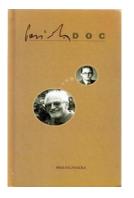
Sweet-toothed bears (Medvedki sladkosnedki) by Srečko Kosovel (Illustrations: Jelka Reichman)

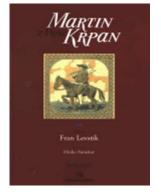


School is not for me (Šola ni zame) by Cvetka Sokolov (Illustrations: Peter Škerl)

2005/2006







Martin Krpan by Fran Levstik (for two generations – first- and second-graders) (Illustrations: Hinko Smrekar)

Noordung.doc (edited by Miha Mohor)

O KRALJU, KI NI MARAL **POSPRAVLJATI**

Of the king who didn't like cleaning up

(O kralju, ki ni maral pospravljati) by Nina May Hroyat

(Illustrations: Suzi Bricelj)

2007/2008 2007/2008

> **POLETJE** NA OKENSKI **POLICI**

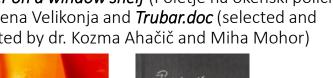
2008/2009

2008/2009

2009/2010

2009/2010

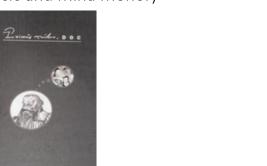
Summer on a window shelf (Poletje na okenski polici) by Irena Velikonja and *Trubar.doc* (selected and edited by dr. Kozma Ahačič and Miha Mohor)





My daddy (Moj očka) by Lila Prap





Pink by Janja Vidmar

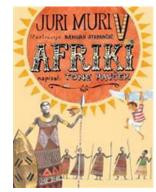


The story of the wind (Pravljica o vetru): Slovakian folk tale (Illustrations: Bogdan Grom)

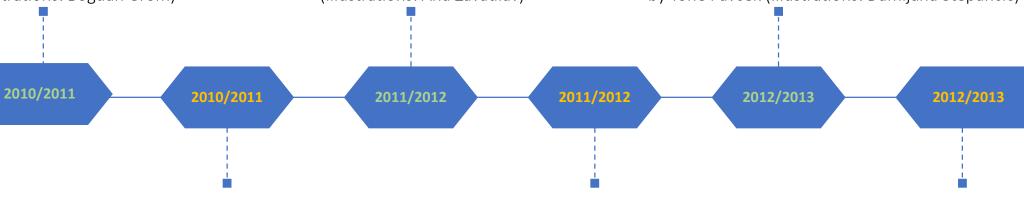
O JAKOBU IN MUCI MICI
ROJSTNI DAN

IL COMPLEANNO
A SZÜLETÉSNAP
DER GEBURTSTAG

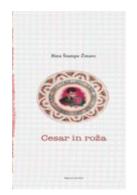
Birthday (Rojstni dan) by Barbara Hanuš (Illustrations: Ana Zavadlav)



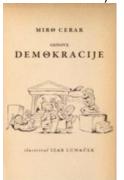
Juri Muri in Africa: About a boy who didn't want to wash (Juri Muri v Afriki: O fantu, ki se ni maral umivati) by Tone Pavček (Illustrations: Damijana Stepančič)



The emperor and the flower (Cesar in roža) by Bina Štampe Žmavc (Illustrations: Alenka Sottler)

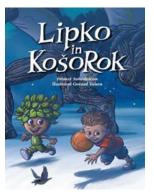


Basics of Democracy (Osnove demokracije) by Miro Cerar (Illustrations: Izar Lunaček)



An Armful of Pebbles (Naročje kamenčkov) by Saša Vegri (Illustrations: Damijan Stepančič)





Lipko and BasketBilly (Lipko in KošoRok) by Primož Suhodolčan (Illustrations: Gorazd Vahen)



A toast (Zdravljica) by France Prešeren (Illustrations: Damijan Stepančič)

2014/2015



Pinocchio reads for the Reading Badge (Ostržek bere za bralno značko) by Tilka Jamnik (Illustrations: Peter Škerl)

2015/2016

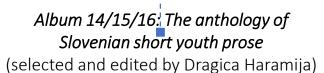
2013/2014

A toast (Zdravljica) by France Prešeren (Illustrations: Damijan Stepančič)



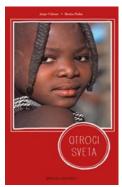
Children of the World (Otroci sveta) by Janja Vidmar and Benka Pulko

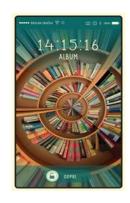
2014/2015

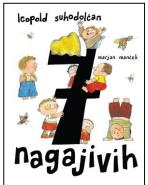


2015/2016









7 naughty ones (7 nagajivih)
by Leopold Suhodolčan
(Illustrations: Marjan Manček)

2016/2017

2016/2017

From Genes to Stars
(Od genov do zvezd) by Sašo Dolenc
(Illustrations: Igor Šinkovec)





How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race (Kako je gospod Feliks tekmoval s kolesom)

ospod Feliks tekmoval s kolesom) by Peter Svetina

(Illustrations: Ana Razpotnik Donati)

2017/2018



A Nook at the End of the World

(Kotiček na koncu sveta) by Anja Štefan (Illustrations: Marjanca Jemec Božič)

2017/2018

2018/2019

Barž ≡ kons by Srečko Kosovel (edited by Igor Saksida) (Illustrations: Damijan Stepančič)



The Shapes of the Sky
(Oblike neba) by Boris A. Novak
(Illustrations: Marjan Manček)

2018/2019



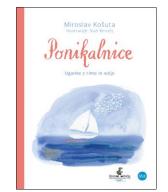


Kuzma the Gremlin Wins a Prize (Škrat Kuzma dobi nagrado) by Svetlana Makarovič (Illustrations: Tomaž Lavrič)



The Laughing Machine and the Squealing Brake

(Smejalnik in cvililna zavora) by Slavko Pregl (Illustrations: Kostja Gatnik)



Swallets: Seventy-Five Riddles and One Solution (Ponikalnice) by Miroslav Košuta (selected and edited by Gaja Kos) (Illustrations: Suzi Bricelj)



How Bibi and Gusti rewound the Hill (Kako sta Bibi in Gusti prezvijačila hrib) by Ida Mlakar Črnič (Illustrations: Kristina Krhin)

2019/2020

2019/2020

2020/2021

2020/2021

2021/2022

2021/2022

2022/2023

Poems from the Gallery (Pesmi iz galerije) by Andrej Rozman Roza (Illustrations: Jakob Klemenčič) Partljič.doc by Tone Partljič (edited by Miha Mohor and Tone Partljič) (Illustrations: Iztok Sitar) Where the Wind Sleeps

(Kjer veter spi) by Damijan Šinigoj (edited by: Gaja Kos)

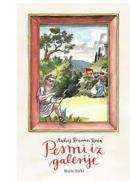
Kjer Damijan Sinigol Veter Spi

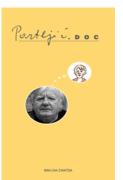
50 Abstract Inventions.

How to Understand the World

(50 abstraktnih izumov. Kako razumeti svet)
by Tina Bilban
(edited by Gaja Kos)
(Illustrations: Ivan Mitrevski)







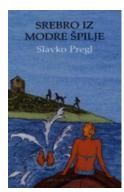
Books from the project Golden Reader translated in other languages



Ice magnolias (Ledene magnolije) by Marjana Moškrič girls, love, teenagers, abuse

Translated to:

Croatian: Ledene magnolije, Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga, 2005



Silver from the blue cave (Srebro iz modre špilje) by Slavko Pregl summer, sea, adventures, treasures

Translated to:

Czech: *Stříbro z modré jeskyně*, Boskovice: Albert, 2015 Bolgarian: *Srebro ot sinjata pešera*, Sofija: EMAS, 2013

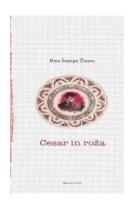
Serbian: *Srebro iz plave pećine*, Beograd: Mono i Manjana; Novi Sad: Ružno pače, 2010



Pink by Janja Vidmar adolescents, Maribor, 1970-1980

Translated to:

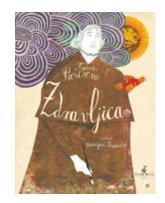
Croatian: Pink: za moju generaciju, Zagreb: Algoritam, 2014



The emperor and the flower (Cesar in roža) by Bina Štampe Žmavc (Illustrations: Alenka Sottler) love, fairytales

Translated to:

Chinese: Guowang yu meigui, Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubansh, 2014



A toast (Zdravljica) by France Prešeren (Illustrations: Damijan Stepančič)

Prešeren, France, 1800-1849, the seventh stanza is the Slovenian anthem

Translated to:

English: *A toast*, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2017

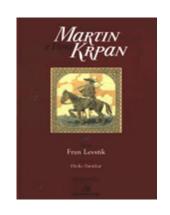


Sweet-toothed bears (Medvedki sladkosnedki) by Srečko Kosovel (Illustrations: Jelka Reichman) poetry, bears

Translated to:

Croatian: Medvjedi medojedi, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1986

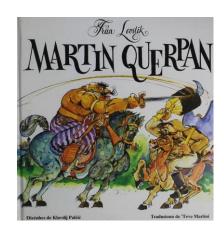


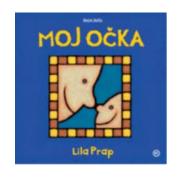


Martin Krpan by Fran Levstik (Illustrations: Hinko Smrekar) Martin Krpan (literary hero), smuggling, salt

Translated to:

Serbian (21), Macedonian (8), German (6), Croatian (8), Russian (3), Italian (2), French (1), Hungarian (1), multilingual (1), Occitan (1), Slovak (1), Spanish (1), Swedish (1)

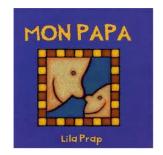


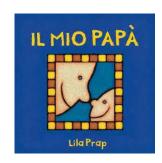


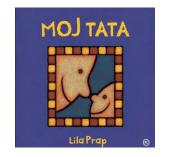
My daddy (Moj očka) by Lila Prap (Illustrations: Lila Prap) fathers, imaginary animals

Translated to:

Chinese (2), English (2), Danish (1), French (1), German (1), Modern Greek (1), Hebrew (1), Croatian (1), Italian (1), Portuguese (1), Serbian (1)









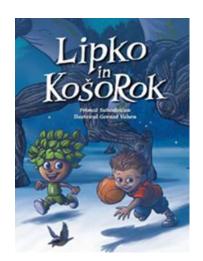


Birthday (Rojstni dan) by Barbara Hanuš (Illustrations: Ana Zavadlav) birthday

Two variations of the picture book (both by Miš Publishing House): One is translated in the languages of foreign minorities in Slovenia (Italian and Hungarian) and in German for the use of children of the Slovene minority in Austria.

The second version is translated into the languages of immigrants (Croatian and Macedonian) and into the Romani language.



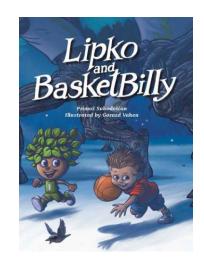


Lipko and BasketBilly (Lipko in KošoRok) by Primož Suhodolčan (Illustrations: Gorazd Vahen) boys, trees, basketball, loneliness, sports, competition

Translated to:

English: Lipko and BasketBilly, Ljubljana: DZS, 2013

basketball, mascot





How Mister Felix Entered a Bicycle Race

(Kako je gospod Feliks tekmoval s kolesom) by Peter Svetina (Illustrations: Ana Razpotnik Donati) cycling bicycle, competition, victory, competitiveness, carelessness, wheels, books for inspiration, conversation and reflection

Translated to:

Chinese: Oriental Babies & Kids Ltd., 2018





A Nook at the End of the World (Kotiček na koncu sveta) by Anja Štefan (Illustrations: Marjanca Jemec Božič)

animals in the imagination

Translated to:

Romanian: *Un colțișor la capătul pămăntului*, București: Mladinska, 2008



Kuzma the Gremlin Wins a Prize (Škrat Kuzma dobi nagrado)

by Svetlana Makarovič (Illustrations: Tomaž Lavrič) dwarfs (mythical creatures), pranks, awards, animals



Czech: Šotek Kuzma vyhrává cenu, Praha: Albatros, 1978

Slovak: *Škriatok Kuzma*, Bratislava: Mladé letá, 1977

Šibal Kuzman škriatok: Nový Sad: Obzor, 1978









The future

We will continue our efforts to run both campaigns again (with the help of sponsors and public resources) in the next school year (and beyond). We wish that our joint efforts will succeed again.

- The Reading Badge will live on, we will continue to build on tradition and constantly adapt to new challenges in the field of reading and the demands of social changes. Its mission, as well as liveliness and perseverance, proved itself again during its 60th birthday celebration (2020/2021) when new forms of promoting reading among young people, their mentors, parents and other educators were required due to the pandemic and lockdown.
- The celebrations, the awards, the vibrant cooperation between readers, mentors and authors related to reading, literature, and books, reminded us how special and valuable our movement (and our projects) is.

Photo: France Bevk, Slovene author (also youth author), poet and translator. 1961: First award ceremony at the closure of the reading for the Reading Badge. Photo from the archive of Prevalje Primary School.

Slovenia - Guest of Honour at the the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023 18 - 22 October 2023



On 18 October at 12.00

Panel »The Magic Touch of Reading Promoters«

The panel will discuss the impact a national reading campaigns can have. Among others, it will be discussed what is the aim of reading promoters, why are children's literature laureates successful reading promoters, which best practices can be shared? The guests of the panel are going to be reading promoters who are experts on creating an interface that authors, publishers and the whole reading community can use.

Expected guests:

Triin Soone - Representative of Estonian Children's Literature Centre **Áine Ní Ghlinn** - The sixth Laureate na nÓg (Ireland's Children's Literature Laureate) **Snježana Berak**: Representative of Croatian Reading Association and Croatian national campaign *Read to me* **Petra Potočnik**: Representative of Slovenian Reading Badge Society

Moderator: Veronika Rot Gabrovec: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, and a member of the Slovenian Reading Association.



We welcome you to join us!

Slovenia - Guest of Honour at the Bologna Children's Book Fair 2024 8 - 11 April 2024



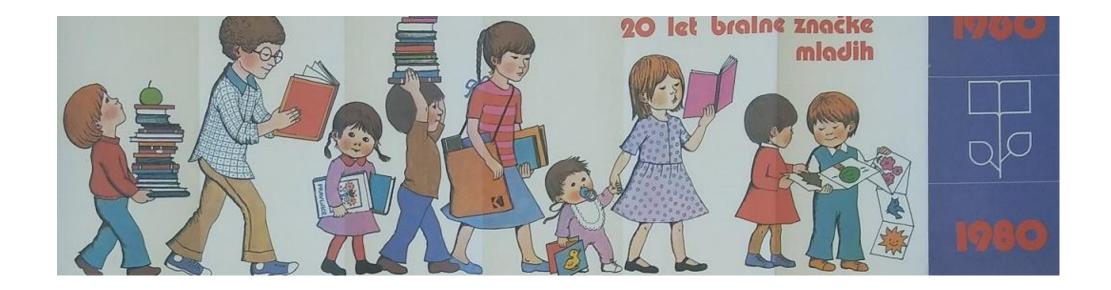


Wednesday, 10 April 2024: SALABORSA LIBRARY (City Center)

CONFERENCE *Slovenia Loves Reading* (work title ©)

- In Bologna 2024, as part of program as honorary guest at Bologna, a consortium of Slovenian experts in the field of reading culture and reading literacy is planning to prepare a Conference.
- The Conference will be intended for foreign experts in the field of youth literature (librarians, reading mentors, reading promoters, literary theorists and critics, publishers, literary agents).
- It will focus on the presentation of selected good practices, experience and knowledge of Slovenian experts in the field of youth literature and thus significantly complement the Slovenian presentation at the Bologna Children's Book Fair.
- More information on associations, institutions and projects in Slovenia engaged in the promotion of reading culture and quality children's literature: <u>Slovenia Loves Reading Publication</u>.

We welcome you to join us!



Sources

- Slovenia Loves Reading Publication: https://app.groove.cm/groovemember/download/nsokg66993dbe8d80d31c48d02c42b0a14304.
- Miha Mohor: The Reading Badge: https://www.bralnaznacka.si/sl/english/.
- The Slovenian Reading Badge Society: https://www.bralnaznacka.si/sl/o-nas/predstavitev/.
- The Slovenian section of IBBY: https://ibby-arhiv.grooveblog.com/post/nagrada-in-priznanja-slovenske-sekcije-ibby.
- Photos: The Slovenian Reading Badge Society arcihevs, Slovenian Book Agency Archives.
- https://www.bralnaznacka.si/en/
- www.bralnaznacka.si/sl/english/



"With Books into the World"

Thank you for your attention!

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