

PRESS RELEASE

Bologna Children's Book Fair: the global book community appeals to international institutions:
"Let's join forces more than ever to promote reading among young people: it is vital to democracy"

"Uniting publishers, bookstores, libraries, schools, families, child development specialists and the
media is the surest way to put books back at the center and foster critical thinking"

On the occasion of the Bologna Children's Book Fair, international book organizations signed an appeal for renewed commitment from national, regional and international organizations towards reading promotion.

The appeal, below, was signed by the International Publishers Association (IPA), the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), the Italian Publishers Association (AIE), the Syndicat National de l'Édition (SNE), and the Bologna Children's Book Fair at the conclusion of the event *Building the Future Generation of Readers: Best Practices and Policies for Reading Promotion*.

The statement reads:

"The undersigned organisations call upon UNESCO, the European Commission, and all national and international institutions to renew their commitment to supporting initiatives that promote book reading especially among young people, as an indispensable tool for strengthening and developing open and democratic societies."

"The exchange we have had here in Bologna on best practices adopted across different countries reinforces our conviction that the surest path forward lies in engaging the broadest possible network of stakeholders, including: authors, publishers, bookstores, libraries, schools, families, child development specialists, and the media. It is fundamental that such initiatives are decisively supported by national and international public institutions through sustained, long-term funding that is capable of recognizing and enhancing local and regional specificities."

"We are facing a pivotal moment: children and teenagers today live in an environment where unguided and uncritical use of smartphones and tablets makes increasingly difficult to sustain focus and develop critical thinking, qualities that reading books nurtures in a unique way. Putting books back at the center means investing in the future of democracy."

Mari Yasunaga, Programme Specialist, Section of Youth, Literacy, and Skills Development, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems - Education Sector of UNESCO, attended the event organized by AIE and BCBF in collaboration with SNE, FEP, IPA and IBBY. Some of the world's most successful reading promotion initiatives were presented, including: #ioleggoperché in Italy, with its pilot program #ioleggoperchéLAB-NIDI; various initiatives promoted in France and South Korea; and the United Kingdom's National Year of Reading.