

Open call for children's literature writers and illustrators to participate in an international project "Diversity and Human Rights Literature for Children from Baltic Authors"

Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian children's literature writers and illustrators are now invited to apply for participation in an international project of Baltic creators, which opened to applications from June 27, 2021. During the project, the creators will closely collaborate with each other to co-author tiny books on diversity and human rights topics, which will reach children from a variety of countries worldwide.

The aim of the project is to encourage creative cooperation between Baltic children's literature creators and to promote and disseminate professional Baltic children's literature in the world.

We invite the writers and artists to create tiny books on diversity and human rights topics – equality, cultural diversity, disability, gender roles, ageism, and freedom of speech, for children 5 to 10 years old. We believe these topics are very important in today's world and can make a huge impact on children, therefore it is important to talk about them as early as in childhood.

The format of the tiny books is a short (up to 120 words) illustrated story presented on a foldable A4 sheet of paper that any child can download to their computers, free of charge, print out at home or school, and fold into their own tiny book. Tiny books are easy to translate and disseminate, download and print, but require a lot of creative effort and cooperation between writer and illustrator to produce a high-quality short work of literature. It can convey European and Baltic states values about important topics, and is easily adaptable for workshops and educational activities at any school, preschool, or household.

The collection of tiny books will be accompanied by methodologies on how to discuss various human rights topics with children of the target age group; and on creative uses of tiny books in a classroom or at home – including guidance on how to create their own short, illustrated stories. This methodology will be produced by professional children's psychologists, children's literature critics, and reading promotion specialists.

We hope that this project will not only increase the world literary community's attention on our own respective cultures, but will also open the gates for more translations of children's literature from the Baltic languages.

This project will have a strong marketing campaign, which includes a physical (or, in the case of the pandemic, virtual) project presentation at the biggest children's literature fairs in Europe (for example: Bologna Children's Book Fair, Frankfurt Book Fair, etc.), smaller virtual events in the Baltic states, publications in international news media and literary journals, as well as online channels.

In addition to local and international exposure, each participating author will receive a financial award in the amount of 250 euros (gross).

The project is non-profit, and the tiny books will be accessible to everyone free of charge.

Detailed information about the tiny books that the selected authors will be invited to create:

- A tiny book is a miniature booklet folded from an A4 sheet of paper (one A4 sheet, divided into eight sections of 74 × 105 mm). [Please see here how a tiny book is folded.](#)
- Number of illustrations – 6 sections and a cover (each 74 × 105 mm).
- Text length – up to 120 words.
- The target audience is that of 5 to 10-year-old children.
- Each tiny book will be supplemented by a page presenting both collaborators of the tiny book, and methodology on pedagogical and creative uses for the book.
- Examples of tiny books created by Lithuanian writers and illustrators in 2020 <https://www.ibbylietuva.lt/content/uploads/2020/07/TINY-BOOKS-TO-THE-RESCUE.pdf>.
- Topics for tiny books:

Equality

(Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. So how does equality help to build a better society? How can we make a change to a more equal society or environment? How can we empower those who lack opportunities? Bullying due social exclusion, etc.)

Cultural diversity

(Cultural diversity is about appreciating that society is made up of many different groups with different backgrounds, cultures, interests, skills, talents, and needs. It also means that you recognise that people in society can have differing religious beliefs, have different ethnicities, etc. What can we learn from other cultures? What does it mean to be an ethnic minority? Etc.)

Disability

(A disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). What does it mean to have a disability in today's world? How can we help people with disabilities? Bullying due to disabilities, etc.)

Gender roles

(Gender roles refer to how society expects us to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. How do gender roles affect society and individual lives? How can gender roles be harmful (abuse)? Bullying due to preconceived "norms", i.e. not manly/womanly enough, being "too soft", etc.)

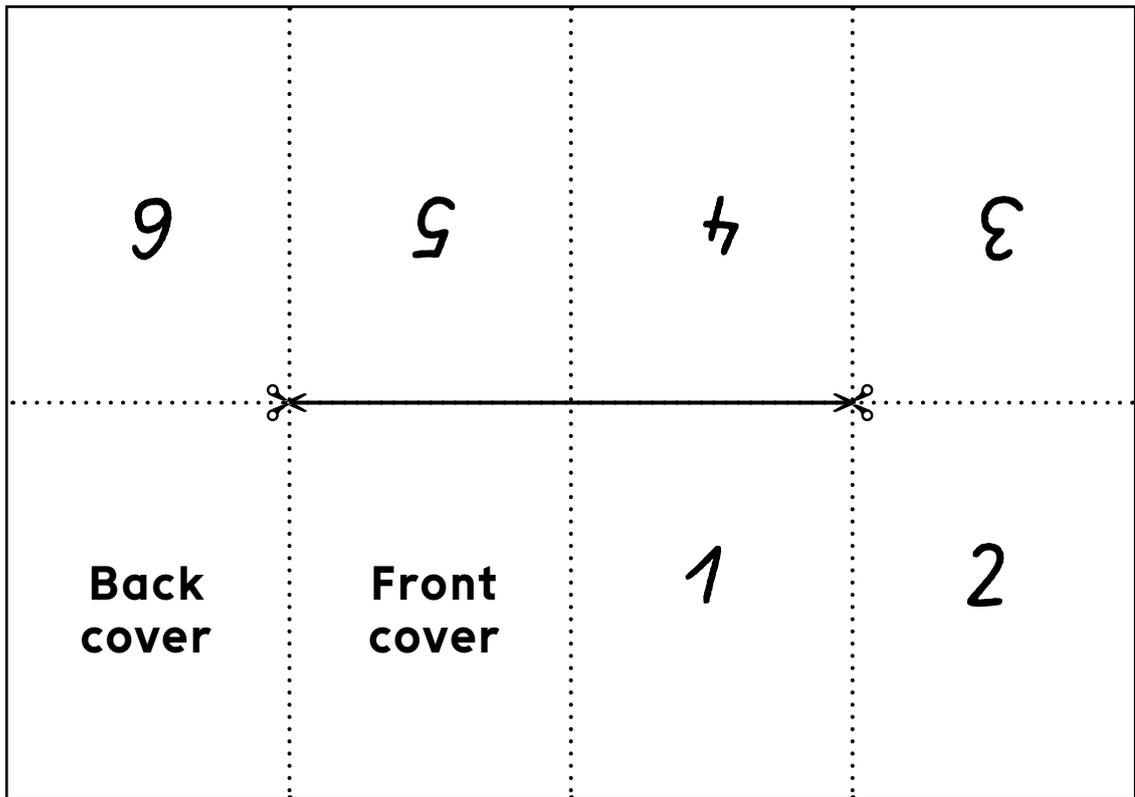
Ageism

(Ageism is stereotyping and/or discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. What prejudices are held against people of different ages? How can ageism affect people's lives? What misconceptions exist about different age groups? Etc.)

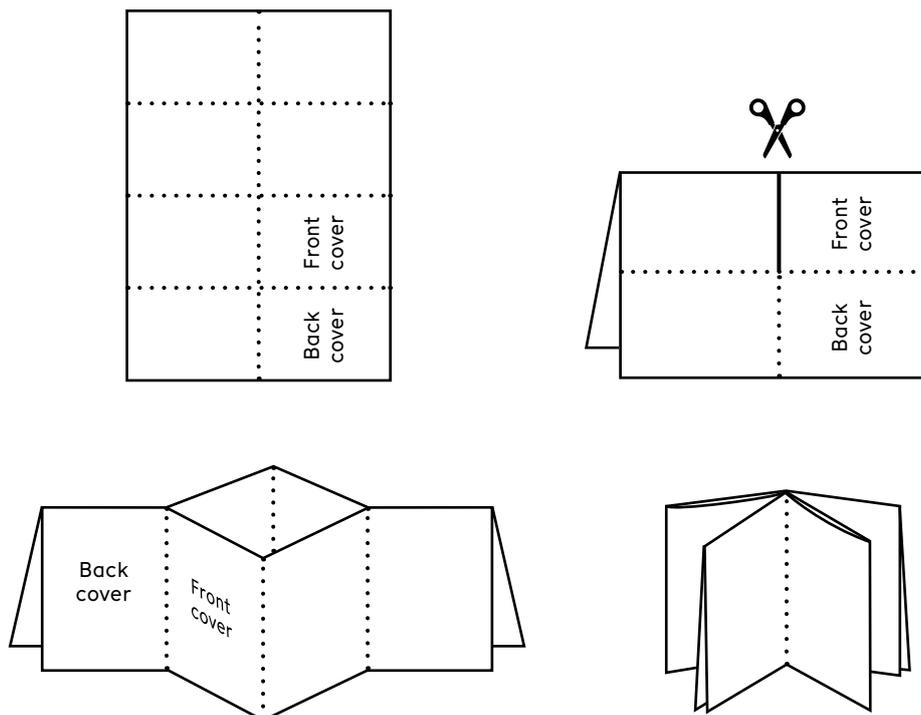
Freedom of speech

(Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority. Does this mean you are allowed to say things even if you know it hurts others? Etc.)

A tiny book layout



Scheme of a foldie



Requirements for applying:

- You must be proficient in English – communication will be in English¹ (tiny books will later be translated and edited by professional translators into more than five foreign languages, and English texts will be edited.)
- You must be a published author (written or illustrated) of at least one book or have your works published elsewhere (i.e. a magazine).
- If you are both a writer and an illustrator, you must choose one role in which you will enter into the project.

¹ You are not required to possess a C1 level in English, but you should be able to communicate in English, as the working language of the project is English and you have to communicate in it with organisers, but paired authors can (of course) communicate in any language they feel comfortable with.

How to apply

- In order to apply, you must fill in the [application form](#) (click). The application is open until June 13, 2021.
- The submitted applications will be reviewed by the project commission, which will form a jury to select the winners.
- Six writers and six illustrators will be selected from each Baltic country (36 authors in total). A writer and an illustrator from different countries will then be paired to create a tiny book (for example: a writer from Lithuania will be paired with an illustrator from Estonia or a writer from Estonia will be paired with an illustrator from Latvia, etc).
- Selected participants commit to produce one tiny book on a topic of their choice from the list of topics above. If they feel like it, the authors can produce more than one tiny book, but that is optional.
- Selected participants will be informed on June 21, 2021.
- The tiny book must be completed and submitted by August 31, 2021.

Other important information

The project is implemented by three organizations from the Baltic states: the reading promotion program “Children’s World” – initiated by a non-governmental Lithuanian organization Centre for School Improvement (lead partner), the Latvian Children and Youth Literature Council (IBBY Latvia), and the Estonian Children’s Literature Centre.

The project is supported by the Baltic Culture Fund.
Institutional partners – The Lithuanian Culture Institute, Latvian Literature, the Estonian Children’s Literature Centre, Lithuanian Section of The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), Center for Child Psychology (Lithuania)

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