



Tiziana Mascia, left, accepting the Award for Innovative Literacy Promotion in Europe

# INNOVATION IN EUROPE

## Professional development program in Italy receives literacy promotion award

By **Ann-Sofie Selin**



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([aselin@abo.fi](mailto:aselin@abo.fi)), an ILA member since 1993, is a special education and literacy teacher at Cygnaeus School in Finland. She is the chairperson of the Federation of European Literacy Associations.

The European Literacy Network has a long and well-documented history. In Denmark, approximately 70 years ago, our Scandinavian colleagues gathered to share knowledge on this very subject. The ideology of working toward literacy for all has endured and the activities have increased considerably. The Nordic collaboration evolved into some 30 European associations gathering under the umbrella of the International Reading Association (IRA), now the International Literacy Association (ILA). Today, we are the Federation of European Literacy Associations (FELA), the European partner of ILA.

In August, in Copenhagen, the 21st European and the 18th Nordic Conference on Literacy continued the tradition of disseminating research and practice. A total of 500 participants attended the conference, 385 with presentations. Both the speakers and the participants were from all over the world. The Nordic conference 70 years ago has transformed into a truly international conference. Literacy for all is a human right. The conference and the work all of us do is a representation of cohesive forces.

One of the initiatives of the European network is the Award for Innovative Literacy Promotion in Europe, which is presented at the European literacy conferences every other year (with the next in Dublin in 2021).

First presented in Brussels at the 10th European Conference on Literacy in 1997, the purpose of the award is to recognize, celebrate, and reward innovative work in

Europe carried out by or for a FELA member association. It must constitute a change in literacy activities within the country and can involve pedagogy, research, contributions to thinking about literacy, professional development, remediation, organization of the association, publication, publicity, or recruitment of members.

The Awards Committee consists of past European chairpersons of FELA, formerly IDEC (International Development in Europe Committee) of IRA/ILA. The award has been presented to projects in Croatia, Estonia, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and, this year, Italy.

The themes have included bibliotherapy for war-traumatized children, children's literature, parents in prisons reading for their children, deaf children, Romani in libraries, and many more innovative literacy projects.

The recipient this year was Invito alla Lettura - Rai Scuola for its aim of improving the professional development of teachers in Italy in the field of literacy.

Invito alla Lettura is a distance learning program addressed to teachers

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of kindergarten, primary, and secondary school, and it includes three TV and web series of 30 episodes. Its main goals are improving the quality of teaching literacy and promoting good reading practices that can be replicated by classroom teachers. The program can reach a wide audience and those areas of the country where there is greater need for training, disseminating the new knowledge of literacy achieved today through international research. It is produced by the national TV service, RAI Cultura, and CEPPELL, the Centre for Books and Reading, a branch of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities.

The project was initiated by Tiziana Mascia, a PhD candidate in the Faculty

of Education of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, whose research focuses on literacy instruction and professional development. She received the award in person during the conference on behalf of the youngest European member association of FELA, Associazione Literacy Italia.

To view the Invito alla Lettura episodes, visit <https://www.raiplay.it/ricerca.html?q=invito%20alla%20lettura>.

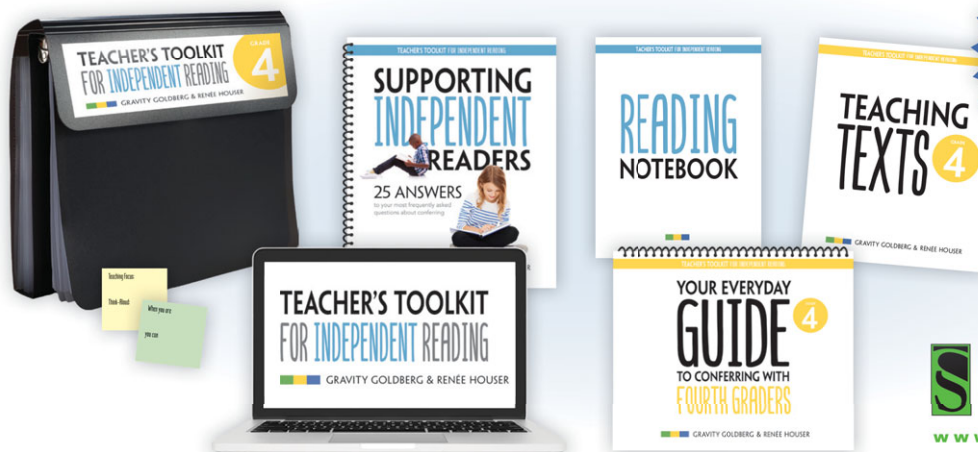
For information on the Award for Innovative Literacy Promotion in Europe, visit [literacyeurope.org/awards](http://literacyeurope.org/awards). ■

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