

international play association
promoting the child's right to play

TRIENNIAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2023 – NOVEMBER 2026

IPA World | International Play Association

A Message from the President

This is my final triennial report as President of IPA World, and I find myself reflecting on what a remarkable, challenging, rewarding, and at times overwhelming journey it has been.

I joined the IPA World Board in 2011, drawn — as so many of us are — by a deep belief that play is not a luxury, not an afterthought, but a fundamental human right that shapes the health, happiness, and future of every child. I became President in 2017, and what I could not have fully anticipated then was the sheer weight of the responsibility, and the extraordinary privilege, of representing the global play community at the highest levels of international advocacy.

To my fellow Board members and to everyone who has served on Council over these years: I want to say something that I think is important to name. This work is hard. Genuinely hard. We are volunteers. We carry IPA alongside our professional lives, our family commitments, our communities, and all the other responsibilities that fill our days. There are early morning calls, late night emails, time zones that refuse to cooperate, and moments where the to-do list feels endless and the resources feel thin.

And yet — we keep showing up. Because we believe in this. Because children deserve someone in their corner at the global table. Because play matters, and someone has to say so loudly and consistently on the world stage.

My advice to those who follow: be kind to yourselves. You are doing something extraordinary in the margins of an already full life. Give yourselves permission to be playful in how you approach the work — because if anyone should know the restorative power of not taking yourself too seriously, it's us. Laugh. Celebrate small wins. Support one another. The work will continue to be bigger than any one of us.

To the incoming President and Board: you inherit something precious. IPA World stands at the start of a new chapter, with foundations built to last. I wish you every success, and I will be cheering you on — loudly — from the sidelines.

It has been the honour of my professional life.



Robyn Monro Miller AM
President, IPA World (2017–2026)
Board Member since 2011



IPA WORLD BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023–2026

Robyn Monro Miller AM	Australia	President
Tam Baillie	Scotland	Board Member
Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee	India	Board Member
Mike Greenaway	Wales	Board Member
Victor Koong	Hong Kong, China	Treasurer
Krister Svensson	Sweden	Board Member/Membership Officer

IPA WORLD COUNCIL 2023–2026

Council members are elected by their national branches. The following individuals served as branch representatives on IPA World Council during this triennial period.

Australia	Alli Coster; Kim Maroney
Brazil	Janine Dodge
Canada	Marjorie Cole
England	Chris Martin; Paul Soames
Germany	Peter Hoefflin
Hong Kong, China	Alice Wong; Anita Ma; Josephine Jim; Patrick Lee
India	Preeti Prada Panigrahi
Ireland	Helen Lynch
Japan	Hitoshi Shimamura
New Zealand	Shyrel Burt; Dr Damien Puddle
Nigeria	Adefunke Ekine
Northern Ireland	Jacqueline O'Loughlin
Portugal	Frederico Lopes
Republic of Ireland	Helen Lynch
Scotland	Sarah Goldsmith; Stacey Marko
Sweden	Nik Dee Dahlstrom; Suzanne Axelsson
Taiwan	Shu-Fang Chen
Thailand	Pongpanot Deekong (Amp)
Ukraine	Maryna Stoliar
USA	Deb Lawrence
Wales	Marianne Mannello

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Introduction

The period from September 2023 to November 2026 has brought new challenges to navigate — and new milestones to celebrate. Among the most significant has been IPA World's establishment of incorporated charitable status, a foundational development that transforms the organisation's capacity to seek funding, take on projects, and build long-term sustainability. This triennial has been as much about building the organisation as it has been about the work the organisation does.

Two achievements stand out as the highlights of this triennial. The first is the growth of IPA World's branch network — now spanning 20 countries — with new branches in Thailand and the Republic of Ireland bringing fresh energy and voices into the global community. This branch growth reflects the growing reach of the play movement and the increasing relevance of IPA World as a home for national organisations committed to children's right to play. The second is IPA World's role in the establishment of the UN International Day of Play — a historic achievement that placed children's right to play on the international calendar for the first time, and one that will resonate for generations.

Across three years, IPA World delivered work spanning global advocacy, knowledge production, member engagement, communications, and organisational strengthening — reflecting the collective effort of the Board, Council, and branches across 20 countries.

1. IPA World Conference – Glasgow 2023

The triennial opened with the IPA World Conference held in Glasgow, Scotland, in September 2023 — hosted by IPA Scotland. The conference brought together an extraordinary global gathering:

- 550 delegates from 41 countries
- 400 presentations, with 20 options available in each breakout session
- 6 plenary sessions and 3 in-conversations
- 48 children participating in-person, with 1,000+ children taking part in participatory activities and panels
- 16 bursaries provided, supporting delegates who would not otherwise have been able to attend
- 63 conference volunteers and 80 conference committee members
- 4 conference evening social events – including 128 delegates dancing Strip the Willow together at the ceilidh
- 5 young musicians (and 8 older ones)
- 4 days of sunshine

A significant outcome of the Glasgow conference was the passage of a formal conference motion to advocate for the United Nations to declare a World Day of Play — the foundational mandate that launched IPA World's participation in the IDOP working group. The Glasgow World Café on 6 June provided an opportunity to gather children's and members' voices to contribute to the global IDOP campaign. The conference set the strategic direction for 2023–2026: expanding advocacy, developing new publications and resources, strengthening branch networks, and pursuing governance reform.

A further outcome of the Glasgow conference was the production of 'Born to Play' — a book coordinated by IPA Scotland drawing on the knowledge and presentations from the Glasgow gathering. IPA Scotland also led the production of a series of associated documents from the conference, extending the reach and legacy of the Glasgow event beyond those who attended in person.

2. UN International Day of Play

Advocacy for and activation of the United Nations International Day of Play (IDOP), held annually on 11 June, was one of IPA World's most sustained and visible contributions across the triennial. IPA World was a member of the working group that established the International Day of Play at UN level — a foundational achievement that speaks to IPA's standing as the pre-eminent international voice for children's right to play.

IPA WORLD ON THE IDOP WORKING GROUP

IPA World served on the official working group responsible for the establishment of the United Nations International Day of Play. The consortium, led by the LEGO Foundation and UNICEF, brought together partner organisations committed to placing children's right to play at the heart of a global UN day. Working group partners included:

- UNICEF
- Save the Children
- Eurochild
- BRAC
- The Concerned for Working Children
- The LEGO Group and The LEGO Foundation
- INGKA
- Arup
- KidZania
- Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDAL)
- Right to Play



IPA World working group session: 'Activating IDOP — 2025 and Beyond.'



Work in progress at the UN Day of Play Coalition working group, New York, February 2024

IPA World was listed third among the consortium partners — a reflection of its standing as the pre-eminent global membership body dedicated to children's right to play. IPA World remains an active member of the ongoing global coalition that continues to champion International Day of Play and to grow its reach and impact beyond its inaugural year.

IPA World President Robyn Monro Miller AM represented the organisation at working group meetings, including in-person participation in New York (partial funding) and a series of online meetings.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND LOBBY KIT

- IPA World developed an IDOP lobby kit and campaign resource package, equipping members, branches, governments, and civil society organisations with practical tools for national advocacy.
- The kit included evidence-based talking points, calls to action, guidance for engaging government ministers and local authorities, and branded campaign materials — all made freely available to all IPA members and branches.
- IPA World submitted a formal letter of support to the United Nations affirming the significance of IDOP and the centrality of play as a fundamental human right under Article 31 of the UNCRC.
- Three successive IDOP campaigns were delivered, each building on the last in reach, coordination, and member participation.
- The 2025 IDOP theme — 'Protect Play, Protect Childhood' — was adopted as a rallying call across the membership, with IPA World coordinating a unified global response.



IPA World's 2025 International Day of Play campaign: 'Protect Play, Protect Childhood' – 11 June 2025

BRANCH ACTIVATION ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLAY

The response of IPA branches in championing International Day of Play within their own countries has been outstanding. Branches across all IPA regions organised events, media campaigns, government lobbying, and community celebrations – making IDOP one of IPA World's most powerful annual platforms.

- Multiple branches reported increased government and public awareness of Article 31 rights, with several achieving significant national media coverage.
- The collective impact of branch activity across 20 countries built year-on-year momentum, giving the day growing global significance.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA NORTHERN IRELAND: 'PLAYING OUT' REPORT LAUNCH

IPA Northern Ireland, in partnership with PlayBoard NI, published 'Playing Out – Understanding Play Deprivation in Northern Ireland' for International Day of Play 2026. The report examined play deprivation in the context of modern childhood, drawing on Bob Hughes's foundational research in Belfast in the early 1980s – acknowledging that while the pressures have changed, the central issue remains: when children's environments become restricted, they lose time, space, freedom and choice to play.

The report highlighted that play deprivation is unequal, with poverty, inaccessible environments, and social attitudes creating additional barriers. It called for children's rights to be translated into action through play strategies, playable neighbourhoods, protected school playtime, and genuinely inclusive design.

The launch took place at the Northern Ireland Assembly and was attended by Junior Ministers Aisling Reilly (Sinn Féin) and Joanne Bunting (DUP), alongside Jacqueline O'Loughlin as Chair of IPA NI – a powerful demonstration of cross-party political engagement with children's right to play. The report is available at www.playboard.org and, although rooted in the Northern Ireland context, carries global relevance.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA JAPAN: IDOP 2026

IPA Japan demonstrated exceptional national leadership in activating the International Day of Play, with a multi-layered campaign reaching communities across the country.

- IPA Japan produced original guide posters showing people how to celebrate the day, with options ranging from sharing on social media to making a flag, joining seminars, or introducing the day in newsletters — each linked to detailed guidance via QR code.
- Tokyo Play and IPA Japan each organised online seminars in both lunchtime and evening timeslots, each attracting more than 100 participants. The evening seminar featured a lecture by Takahisa Matsusaka (Vice Representative, IPA Japan) on 'How to Protect Play: from Early Years Education and Primatology Perspectives.'
- Month-long campaigns ran across three cities throughout June 2026 — Sapporo, Setagaya (Tokyo), and Nagasaki. In Sapporo, 199 play centres participated; in Setagaya, the city took its own official initiative with the message 'Children are made from playing', with a play event at a major train station square.
- A landmark achievement on the day itself was the establishment of the Japan Playing Council — a new national body formed by regional and national play organisations including Japan Adventure Playground Association, Japan Mobile Play Network, Japan Playwork Association, Tokyo Play, and Play Fukuoka. More than 300 people joined as founding supporters, and a memorial symposium was held to mark the occasion.
- The UR Agency (Japan's national Housing Agency) joined the IDOP campaign for the first time in 2026, organising monthly campaigns and events in a local area — with potential for this to extend to council housing communities nationwide.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA PORTUGAL: IDOP 2026

In only its first full year as a formally established organisation, IPA Portugal delivered a creative and nationally resonant campaign for International Day of Play 2026, built around the theme: 'Facing the Principle of Uncertainty through the Principle of Play.'

The campaign responded to the growing social, economic, environmental, and emotional challenges affecting children's daily lives, positioning play as a fundamental source of joy, resilience, belonging, and wellbeing. IPA Portugal launched the national challenge '11 + 6 + 31' — inviting children, families, schools, municipalities, and community groups to:

- Play in 11 different spaces;
- Play with 6 unexpected everyday objects or materials;
- Enjoy at least 31 additional minutes of free play.

The challenge was designed to make play accessible and meaningful in everyday environments, with the number 31 deliberately referencing Article 31 of the UNCRC. Participation came from schools, municipalities, families, professionals and partner organisations across Portugal, with activities including free play in schools and public spaces, intergenerational play experiences, and community celebrations.

IPA Portugal was officially established as an NGO on 6 June 2025 — just five days before the inaugural celebration of the International Day of Play on 11 June. On this occasion, IPA Portugal launched an initiative under the motto 'Play Every Day — United for Every Child's Right to Play', as adopted by IPA World. Directed at municipalities, schools, play and leisure provision entities, local projects, companies, communities, and families, the campaign challenged adults to provide time, create space, and allow children to find play in their own ways within their daily environments.

IPA Portugal also announced its formal constitution as an NGO across media outlets, raising public awareness for both IDOP and the establishment of IPA Portugal — the Portuguese Association for the Right to Play — through interviews in major online newspapers and appearances on radio shows. Additionally, IPA Portugal liaised with the Working Group on Play of the Portuguese Network of Educational Cities to disseminate the Time to Play initiative, which challenged schools nationwide to provide two consecutive hours of outdoor free play for children.

The IDOP campaign generated strong social media engagement and coincided with IPA Portugal's first anniversary as a formally incorporated organisation — a powerful statement of the branch's momentum and commitment.



IPA Taiwan members celebrating International Day of Play, holding an IPA World Member sign alongside a local legislator.

3. UN Engagement, Advocacy, & Global Voice

IPA World strengthened its role as a credible and courageous global advocate for children's rights across the triennial, engaging with UN mechanisms, issuing public statements, and maintaining active high-level representation.

UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD — PHILIP JAFFÉ

IPA World maintained an active and valued connection to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through Philip Jaffé, a member of the UNCRC. Jaffé presented at an IPA World member webinar and was present at the Glasgow Conference World Café that formally launched IPA's participation in the IDOP working group. In 2025, IPA World worked with Philip Jaffé on a potential UNCRC statement of support for children's right to play for International Day of Play 2025 — an initiative that, if realised, would mark an extraordinary formal recognition of play within the UN child rights system.

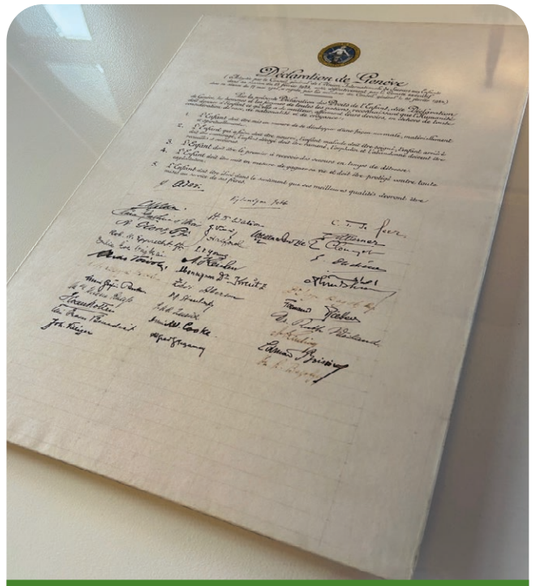
This relationship has been an important asset for IPA World, providing direct engagement with the international child rights monitoring body and ensuring that IPA's expertise in children's right to play continues to inform UNCRC processes.

THE GENEVA DECLARATION — CENTENARY RECOMMITMENT

On 20 November 2024, IPA World President Robyn Monro Miller AM (self-funded) attended the centenary recommitment to the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child — a landmark event held in Geneva to mark 100 years since the original Declaration was adopted by the League of Nations on 26 September 1924. The recommitment was unveiled by the City of Geneva and co-signed by notable figures in children's rights, including the current Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and former Chairs.



IPA World President Robyn Monro Miller AM with Philip Jaffé (member, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) beside the Geneva Declaration 2024, City of Geneva, 20 November 2024.



The original 1924 Déclaration de Genève — the first international instrument to recognize the rights of children, adopted by the League of Nations, and on display at the centenary ceremony.

IPA World endorsed the renewed Declaration and committed to circulating it to members to raise awareness in the wider community.

CITIES FOR CHILDREN

IPA World holds a seat on the Cities for Children initiative, represented by Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee (India), with Robyn Monro Miller AM as alternate representative. Cities for Children is an international platform connecting organisations committed to making cities more child-friendly, and IPA's participation reflects its standing as a global voice for children's rights in urban planning and design contexts.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLAY (IDOP) CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION (CSO) GROUP

IPA World is a member of the International Day of Play (IDOP) Civil Society Organisation (CSO) group — an international coalition of civil society organisations working collaboratively to celebrate and advance the UN International Day of Play. The group brings together global peaks and organisations committed to activating IDOP within their communities and networks, ensuring the day achieves meaningful reach and impact beyond the UN institutional framework.

GLOBAL STATEMENT ON ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY

IPA World contributed to and co-signed the 2025 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play (AOP10), an international evidence-based document led by Outdoor Play Canada and developed through a three-year global collaboration coordinated by researchers including Dr Mark Tremblay and Dr Louise de Lannoy. IPA World assisted in the promotion of the statement and hosted a webinar launch event to share the document with members. A number of IPA World's member organisations were also signatories. The statement represents a significant contribution to the global evidence base for children's access to outdoor play and reinforces IPA's position within the international research and advocacy community.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

- IPA World engaged with the General Comment 17 (GC17) review process, calling on all members to contribute to the international review of its implementation.

IPA World Official Statement

A WORLD THAT FAILS ITS CHILDREN IS A WORLD THAT HAS LOST ITS WAY

The International Play Association (IPA) World speaks on behalf of members in nearly 50 countries. We speak for children. And we are compelled to speak now.

We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the systematic violation of children's rights in conflict zones around the world. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises every child's right to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, and participation in cultural life. That right depends, fundamentally, on safety. Safety that is being stripped from children — in Gaza, in Iran, and in conflict zones across the globe.

Gaza

The scale of what children in Gaza have endured is staggering. Documented by the United Nations, UNICEF, Save the Children, and researchers at the University of Cambridge, the figures tell a story of catastrophic loss: children killed in numbers that have shocked the world, schools destroyed, education interrupted, childhoods erased. When schools are attacked, it is not only buildings that are destroyed — it is children's futures.

Minab, Iran

On 1 March 2026, during strikes on Iran, the Shajareh Tayyebeh Girls' School in Minab was hit. At least 165 schoolgirls and staff are reported to have been killed. The school was, by all accounts, separate from any nearby military site. There are no circumstances under which the killing of children at school is acceptable. International humanitarian law exists precisely to prevent this. It must be upheld.

What We Call For

IPA World calls on the international community to take immediate and sustained action:

- **All states must respect and uphold international humanitarian law, including the absolute protection of schools, hospitals, and civilian infrastructure.**
- **The UN Security Council must act decisively to protect children in conflict zones.**
- **All signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child must meet their obligations — including Article 31 — for every child within and beyond their borders.**
- **Unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza must be granted without delay.**
- **An immediate independent international investigation into the Minab school strike must be conducted, and those responsible must be held accountable.**

Children are not combatants. They are not collateral. They are children — and they deserve to live, to learn, and to play.

Every child deserves to play. Every child deserves to live.

Robyn Monro Miller AM

President, International Play Association (IPA) World

5 March 2026

4. Play Rights Magazine

Play Rights Magazine grew in quality and reach across the triennial, establishing itself as a valued knowledge resource for IPA members and the broader play community internationally.

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE AND EDITOR

A dedicated International Editorial Committee was formed during the 2023–2024 period to strengthen editorial oversight. Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee (India) was appointed as Editor, bringing substantial expertise in children's play, urban design, and child rights advocacy. The committee draws representation from IPA Council members and specialists across eight countries:

- Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee (India) — Chair and Editor
- Tassy Thompson (Norway)
- Mishu Matluba Khan (Bangladesh and Wales)
- Dr Tolu Okoruwa (Nigeria)
- Chris Martin (England)
- Marjorie Cole (Canada)
- Michael Dietrich (Germany)
- Helen Little (Australia)
- Anupama Nallari (India)
- Maria Nordstrom (Sweden)



EDITIONS PUBLISHED (2024–2026)

Five editions of Play Rights Magazine were produced across the triennial, each focused on a distinct theme:

- Edition 1 — Polices for Play
- Edition 2 — Planning for Play
- Edition 3 — Play and Inclusion (Part 1)
- Edition 4 — Play and Inclusion (Part 2)
- Edition 5 — Play and Innovation

FREE DISTRIBUTION

Play Rights Magazine is distributed free of charge to all IPA members and made publicly available via Issuu and the IPA World website, with back issues permanently accessible online. This free distribution model reflects IPA World's values of equity and inclusion, ensuring that members in all countries and contexts can access high-quality knowledge resources regardless of their organisation's resources.

5. Webinar Series and Digital Knowledge Sharing

IPA World's member webinar series brought expert knowledge directly to members across time zones throughout the triennial.

All webinars were professionally edited and published on the IPA World YouTube channel (youtube.com/@internationalplayassociati5755), creating a permanent and publicly accessible library of high-quality professional learning content freely available to the global play community.



IPA World Global Webinar – 'Playing and Being Well', presented by Dr Wendy Russell, on the eve of the UN International Day of Play, 10 June 2026.

WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Dr Mariana Brussoni and colleagues presented on the Canadian Position Statement on Risky Play — a landmark evidence-based statement on the importance of risk in children's play for health, wellbeing, and development.
- Dr Wendy Russell presented on play and wellbeing, drawing on her research into the relationship between children's play experiences and outcomes for mental health and flourishing.
- Philip Jaffé presented on children's rights and the work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, reinforcing IPA World's active connection to the UNCRC.
- Palestine Play Projects shared their frontline work supporting children's right to play in conflict-affected areas of Gaza, providing IPA members with a direct connection to grassroots practice under extraordinary circumstances.
- Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee presented 'Decoding the new SPACES Guide from WHO, UNICEF and UN-Habitat' — introducing IPA members to the UN guide on creating urban public spaces for children, with a focus on how it conceptualises and supports play across formal playgrounds, streets, neighbourhood environments, and liminal spaces.
- IPA Scotland and Palestine Play Projects jointly presented the launch of the Arabic translation of the IPA Access to Play in Crisis Toolkit, celebrating the crowdfunding achievement and its reach into communities most in need.



The frontline work of Palestine Play Projects – supporting children's right to play in conflict-affected areas of Gaza

6. Resource Development and Translations

A sustained priority across the triennial was expanding the accessibility of IPA's knowledge base through new resource development and translation into additional languages.

ARABIC TRANSLATION OF THE ACCESS TO PLAY IN CRISIS TOOLKIT

A major achievement in 2026 was the completion of the Arabic translation of the IPA Access to Play in Situations of Crisis Toolkit. Coordinated by IPA Scotland and made possible through a dedicated crowdfunding initiative — which demonstrated the power of IPA's membership to mobilise collective resources — the translation extends the toolkit's reach to Arabic-speaking communities across the Middle East and North Africa. Palestine Play Projects (PPP) provided crucial partnership, connecting the resource directly to grassroots projects supporting children in conflict-affected areas. IPA World acknowledges all individuals and organisations who contributed to the crowdfunder that made this translation possible.

ADDITIONAL TRANSLATIONS

A Persian translation of an IPA resource was identified as work in progress during the triennial period and is carried over as ongoing work into 2026–2029.

'GROWING UP SLOWLY, PLAY IS THE WAY!' FILM

In 2025, IPA members were invited to participate as early viewers of 'Growing Up Slowly, Play Is the Way!' — a newly produced documentary film funded by the Bright Day Foundation, a United States-based charitable organisation. IPA World President Robyn Monro Miller AM was filmed and interviewed for the documentary, contributing IPA's international perspective to the film's advocacy content. The film features 20 best-practice schools and play centres and delivers a powerful call to action on children's right to play, with key messages including:

- How today's children are play-deprived, creating a global health emergency.
- How play-based learning in schools is working to build children's learning and love of learning.
- How play environments support healthy brain and body development.
- How children raised in play-based communities are thriving as adults.
- A call to aggressively advocate for play in every corner of the world.



IPA members received a special two-week early preview in November 2025, in celebration of United Nations World Children's Day on 20 November. Members were invited to provide feedback via survey following viewing, contributing IPA's collective voice to the film's development and promotion.

7. IPA Play Research Network

The IPA Play Research Network was formally established in July 2024, with an inaugural meeting held and Terms of Reference adopted. The network creates a dedicated space for IPA members engaged in academic and applied research on children's play, and its establishment marks an important step in consolidating IPA's role as a knowledge organisation with genuine research capacity.

- Convened by Stacey Marko (IPA Council), with co-convenors from the broader membership representing different geographic regions.
- The network held its founding meeting in July 2024, establishing governance, purpose, and initial priorities.
- Membership is open to all IPA members actively engaged in non-commercial academic or approved research on play or play spaces, conducted within an ethics framework.
- The network is developing an online research repository to be hosted on the IPA World website, providing open access to play research from across the membership.

The Research Network is an area of active development, with further consolidation and expansion of the network's influence and membership anticipated in the 2026–2029 triennial as it moves from formation to active programming.



8. Communications – Promotional Video and New Website

IPA WORLD PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

In 2026, IPA World completed a new promotional video telling the story of the International Play Association – its history, values, global membership, and ongoing work to champion children's right to play. IPA World acknowledges with deep gratitude the pro bono contribution of Play Australia to the creation of this video. The video premiered at Board and Council level in 2026 and is now available as a resource for all IPA members and branches.





NEW IPA WORLD WEBSITE

IPA World successfully launched a new website in 2026, replacing its longstanding but outdated web presence with a modern, accessible platform that better reflects the organisation's profile and work. The launch was made possible through the combined efforts of the Board and Council, and represents a significant improvement in IPA World's capacity to communicate its mission to members and the wider public.

9. Branch Development and Regional Strength

The strength and engagement of IPA's branch network grew considerably across the triennial. Branches demonstrated increasing capacity for national advocacy, regional collaboration, and international knowledge sharing.

The case studies included in this report represent only a small sample of the breadth of work undertaken by branches across the 20 countries represented on IPA World Council. Every branch is committed to the mission of IPA World — to advocate for children's right to play — and each operates with different levels of capacity, dependent on volunteer engagement, access to paid staff, and the resources available within their national context. The diversity of what branches are able to achieve, often on very limited resources, is a testament to the passion and dedication of IPA's global community of play advocates.

IPA ASIA PACIFIC CONFERENCE – JUNE 2025

A major milestone for regional engagement was the IPA Asia Pacific Conference held in June 2025 in Melbourne, Australia — a dedicated regional gathering that brought together IPA branches and members from across the Asia-Pacific to share practice, build relationships, and strengthen collective advocacy for children's right to play. The conference demonstrated the growing vitality of IPA's regional networks and generated significant momentum heading into the Christchurch World Conference in 2026.



Delegates at the IPA Asia Pacific Play Conference, Melbourne, June 2025 — themed 'Play: Protecting, Preserving, Promoting.'



IPA Asia Pacific branch and Board representatives, IPA Asia Pacific Play Conference, Melbourne, June 2025.



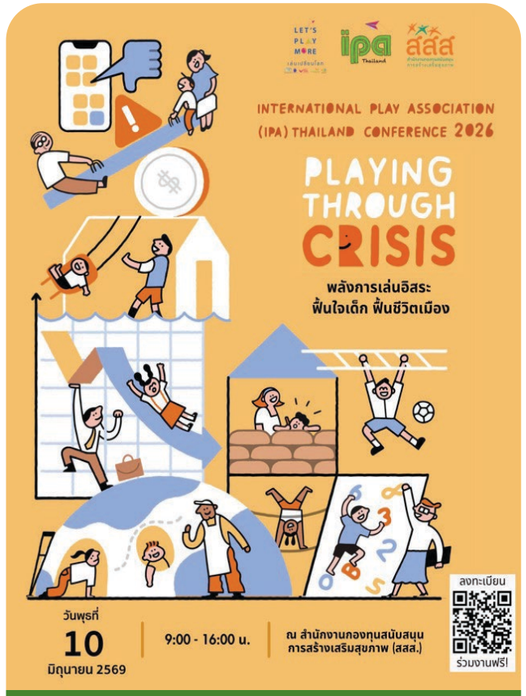
Victor Koong (IPA World Trustee) at the IPA Asia Pacific Conference, Melbourne, June 2025.

BRANCH-LED CONFERENCES – THAILAND AND USA

The strength of IPA's branches was further demonstrated through the hosting of major national and international conferences during the triennial.

IPA Thailand held its inaugural IPA Thailand Conference on 10 June 2026, timed to coincide with International Day of Play. Themed 'Playing Through Crisis', the conference attracted approximately 200 participants drawn from civil society organisations, policymakers, and practitioners — a remarkable achievement for a branch in its first years of membership.

IPA USA released 'Children at Play in Nature, Classrooms, and Neighborhoods' — a major on-demand conference featuring 42 sessions with presenters from Canada, England, India, New Zealand, Poland, Scotland, and the USA. Available to IPA members at accessible pricing, with all sessions available through December 2026, the conference significantly extended IPA USA's reach and demonstrated the potential of digital formats for global knowledge sharing.



IPA Thailand Conference 2026 — 'Playing Through Crisis', 10 June 2026, International Day of Play.

NEW BRANCHES

Two new branches were established during the triennial period, bringing IPA World's Council to 20 member branches:

- **Thailand –** establishing IPA's presence in Southeast Asia and connecting Thai play advocates with the global network.
- **Republic of Ireland –** creating new opportunities for collaboration across the British Isles alongside IPA Scotland, IPA Cymru Wales, IPA England, and Playboard Northern Ireland.

BRANCH COLLABORATION

Branches demonstrated growing confidence in working beyond their own national contexts – both through coordinated cross-branch advocacy campaigns, through formal international partnership agreements, and through community coalitions that brought together multiple organisations around a shared vision for children's play.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – LET'S PLAY FESTIVAL 2025, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Now in its third year, the Let's Play Festival is a landmark example of what is possible when organisations unite around a shared commitment to children's right to play. The festival is led by the Let's Play More Network – which includes IPA Thailand – and is supported by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation.

In 2025, more than 30 organisations dedicated to promoting free play joined forces to create diverse play spaces and active booths across a three-day festival held from 21 to 23 November in Bangkok. Over 100 play workers – both volunteers and paid staff – were on the ground throughout the event to support children's play. Across the three days, the festival welcomed around 12,000 registered participants, with the total number of visitors, including parents and children, likely to have exceeded 20,000 people.

Looking ahead, IPA Thailand aspires to take this model of celebration and collaboration further — with a vision to support play festivals across all 77 provinces of Thailand, ensuring that every child has the right and access to play, wherever they live.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – AN EXTRA HOUR OF PLAY IN THE SCHOOL DAY

In a powerful example of cross-branch collaboration, IPA England, IPA Scotland, IPA Cymru Wales, and IPA Ireland joined together to advocate for the introduction of an additional hour of play within the school day. The campaign was a bold, evidence-based initiative grounded in the recognised developmental benefits of play for children's learning, wellbeing, and social development — calling on schools, policymakers, and the wider education community to treat play not as a reward or a break from learning, but as an essential component of a healthy school day.

The initiative generated significant national attention, engaging educators, parents, and government stakeholders in conversations about the role of play in formal educational settings. The campaign was timed to align with International Day of Play (IDOP) activation, amplifying its reach and connecting it to the global movement for children's right to play.

Inspired by the campaign's theme, IPA Australia (Play Australia) independently developed and ran its own equivalent initiative in the Australian context — a testament to the cross-national resonance of the idea and the capacity of IPA's global network to spark parallel action across hemispheres.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA SCOTLAND AND IPA BRAZIL: SPIRIT OF BRAZIL PARTNERSHIP

In 2026, IPA Scotland and IPA Brazil entered into a formal partnership agreement under the banner of Spirit of Brazil — a pioneering example of branch-to-branch international collaboration within the IPA World network. The agreement builds on already strong cultural ties between Scotland and Brazil, channelling those connections into shared play-related activity with lasting potential.

Fundraising activities are being undertaken independently in both Scotland and Brazil, with proceeds shared on a 50-50 basis. This shared fund creates the possibility for a joint cross-national play project in 2027, subject to further discussion between the branches — an exciting development that exemplifies the kind of branch-level initiative IPA World is proud to support and celebrate.

BRANCH ADVOCACY AND EVENTS

Branches across the IPA network demonstrated exceptional capacity for national advocacy and community engagement, mounting campaigns and events that placed children's right to play at the centre of public and policy conversations.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA TAIWAN: CULTURAL GAMES DAY, MARCH 2026

In March 2026, IPA Taiwan hosted a public Cultural Games Day — a celebration of the traditional and unique play culture of Taiwan, showcasing childhood games and play practices that are distinct to Taiwanese heritage. The event was a joyful exploration of cultural identity through play, drawing on games and traditions that carry deep meaning within Taiwanese communities.

IPA World President Robyn Monro Miller AM attended as guest of honour, joining participants in a day that demonstrated the powerful connection between play, culture, and identity. The event was a significant success, bringing together children, families, community members, and play advocates in a shared celebration of Taiwan's rich play traditions.

BRANCH CASE STUDY – IPA USA: SCREEN-FREE WEEK ADVOCACY



IPA USA demonstrated bold national advocacy leadership by sponsoring Screen-Free Week (4–10 May) as a platform for highlighting how screens are replacing children's play. In 2026, IPA USA sent proclamation requests to all 50 state Governors and Departments of Education, calling on leaders to formally recognise play as a biological necessity for children's healthy development. IPA USA announced plans to extend this approach to the International Day of Play and to the IPA USA National Day of Play — building a layered national advocacy calendar with play at its centre.

The initiative was complemented by the Annual Children's Book Week, with IPA USA's quarterly newsletter PlayBlast featuring curated children's book recommendations from partners, and a global data collection effort on how Screen-Free Week was celebrated across countries.

IPA USA also launched a Children in Crisis initiative, supporting members in states experiencing natural or government-led disasters. Following catastrophic floods in Texas Hill Country that killed 119 children and adults, IPA USA provided play days to impacted communities. In 2026, the initiative was active in Minnesota. Two revised Children in Crisis handbooks — one for early childhood and primary carers, one for parents and community supports — were developed and distributed, including to the Minneapolis School Superintendent during a period of significant community crisis.

10. Governance Reform and Organisational Strengthening

The 2023–2026 triennial saw sustained and deliberate work to strengthen IPA World's governance structures — building the institutional foundations for the organisation's next phase of growth.



IPA World Council in session — one of four annual online meetings held across the triennial. Council members visible include Victor Koong, Robyn Monro Miller AM (President), Hitoshi Shimamura, Suzanne Axelsson, Krister Svensson, Shyrel Burt, Dr Damien Puddle, Debra Lawrence, IPA Thailand, Marianne Mannello (IPA Cymru Wales), Marjorie Cole (Canada), Frederico Lopes, Helen Lynch, Jac O'Loughlin, Mike Greenaway, Stacey Marko, Sudeshna Chatterjee, and Janine Dodge.

COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

- IPA World Council maintained four meetings per year — a frequency established in the previous triennial and sustained throughout 2023–2026 — significantly increasing member engagement and the pace of decision-making.
- Online voting was introduced, enabling more democratic participation across IPA's geographically dispersed membership.

CODE OF CONDUCT WORKING GROUP AND ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

- A dedicated Code of Conduct Working Group was established to develop a comprehensive Code of Conduct for Board, Council, and members — a structured consultative process ensuring the final document reflected the breadth of IPA's membership and values.
- The Code of Conduct established clear behavioural standards across the organisation, applicable to all IPA members, elected officers, and representatives.
- A zero tolerance policy for unacceptable behaviour was adopted alongside the Code, reflecting IPA World's commitment to being a safe, respectful, and inclusive global organisation.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

One of the most significant governance achievements of the triennial was the establishment of a standing Ethics Committee — providing a structured, independent mechanism for upholding IPA's ethical standards and handling conduct matters with fairness and transparency.

A position paper on the establishment of the Ethics Committee was submitted to the Board of Trustees and Council in May 2026. The structure and Terms of Reference were formally approved by Council in September 2026.

The Ethics Committee comprises five members: the two most recent past presidents of IPA, serving ex officio; and three IPA members who have previously served on the Board of Trustees or Council, elected by the Council for a three-year term renewable once. No current Board or Council member may serve concurrently on the Committee, ensuring genuine independence.

The Committee operates independently from the Board and Council in its investigative and deliberative functions. Its role is investigative and recommendatory — the Board of Trustees retains authority to determine sanctions. The Committee has jurisdiction over alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct or related policies, matters referred by the Board or Council, and — in defined circumstances — complaints submitted directly by IPA members.

The establishment of the Ethics Committee signals clearly that IPA holds itself to the same standards of respect, fairness, and integrity that it champions for children around the world. It is one of the most enduring governance legacies of the 2023–2026 Board.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PRESENCE

- IPA World's social media performance across the triennial was exceptional. In 2024 alone, the social media following increased by 45% — a remarkable single-year growth reflecting the impact of IPA's advocacy around the UN International Day of Play. Across the full triennial period, the overall social media footprint grew by 30%, with sustained increases in reach and engagement across both Facebook and LinkedIn.
- The IPA World YouTube channel (youtube.com/@internationalplayassociati5755) grew significantly as a platform for knowledge sharing across the triennial, with increased subscribers and engagement. All webinars produced during the triennial were professionally edited prior to publication, ensuring consistently high quality across the channel's growing library of content.

RIGHT TO PLAY AWARDS

The IPA World Right to Play Awards were conducted again during the triennial, with 15 awards issued to recognise outstanding contributions to children's right to play across the global membership. The number of nominations received continues to be high, reflecting the depth of talent, passion, and commitment within IPA's global community and the growing recognition of the Awards as a meaningful honour.



FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- Significant work was undertaken to transition IPA World's banking arrangements, including transfer of accounts to the CAF Bank (Charities Aid Foundation) — ensuring secure and appropriately structured international financial management for the organisation.
- The transition involved significant complexity, including tracing membership levels and fees across 27 IPA countries and 154 membership categories, and required close collaboration between outgoing and incoming treasurers.



11. Ongoing Work and Priorities for 2026–2029

A number of important initiatives are underway at the close of the triennial, providing the incoming Board and Council with clear priorities to build on:

- **Climate Change Working Group:** A working group is being formed to develop IPA World's response to the intersection of climate change and children's right to play — an area of growing urgency and member interest, as highlighted by IPA Scotland's call to view play in crisis through a climate lens.
- **Membership Structure and Pricing Review:** There is an identified opportunity to review IPA World's membership structures and associated pricing to ensure they reflect the organisation's current scale, diversity, and financial sustainability needs.
- **Play Rights Magazine — advertising:** Building on the success of the magazine, work is underway to introduce limited advertising to generate revenue to support the ongoing costs of production, ensuring the magazine can continue to be distributed free of charge to members.
- **Denmark Branch:** Denmark is in the final stages of being endorsed as an IPA World branch, with formal welcome anticipated in 2027. This will mark a significant re-establishment of IPA's presence in Scandinavia and a return of Denmark to the IPA World family.
- **IPA Play Research Network:** Further consolidation and expansion of the Research Network's influence, programming, and membership — building on the strong foundation established since its formation in July 2024.
- **International Journal of Play — Special Edition:** IPA World has been invited to edit a special edition of the International Journal of Play. This will be co-led by Dr Brendan Heineman (Australia) and Dr Sudeshna Chatterjee (India), bringing together IPA's global membership and knowledge network in a peer-reviewed publication context.

12. Conclusion — A Foundation for the Future

The three years from September 2023 to November 2026 have been characterised by two defining qualities: a relentless commitment to raising the profile of children's right to play on the global stage, and the deliberate embedding of governance mechanisms that create a solid institutional foundation for the years ahead.

IPA World enters the 2026–2029 triennial with a new website, a growing library of freely accessible publications and webinars, an active branch network spanning 20 countries, and strengthened governance structures — including a Code of Conduct, an Ethics Committee, and an established Awards programme.

From membership of the working group that established the UN International Day of Play, to five editions of Play Rights Magazine distributed freely across the world; from the Arabic translation of the Crisis Toolkit to the IPA Asia Pacific Conference; from new webinar recordings permanently available on YouTube to a new promotional video and website — the achievements of this triennial reflect the collective commitment of IPA's global membership to every child's fundamental right to play.

The incoming Board inherits a strong base to build upon, and new opportunities to pursue. Having secured charitable status, IPA World now has the potential to take on funded projects — opening doors to grants, partnerships, and resourcing that will strengthen the organisation's capacity to deliver on its mission. The foundations have been laid. The work continues.





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