What is EBBY?

The Egyptian Board on Books for Young People (EBBY) aims to promote a culture of reading and writing for children in Egypt. Founded in 1987 as the Egyptian Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), EBBY serves as a dynamic hub for children, parents, librarians, scholars, writers, illustrators, publishers, and others who are interested and invested in the field of children's and young adult literature in Egypt.

What is IBBY?

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) was founded in Zurich 1953, as a network of people committed to bringing books and children together. IBBY is a non-profit NGO with an official status in UNESCO and UNICEF. It has a policy-making role as an advocate of children's books and has 72 National Sections all over the world.

‘Tis the season to recognize the talented Egyptian authors, illustrators and translators whose work has been showcased at the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, the IBBY Honor List, and the Etisalat Awards this year. So read on for interviews and reviews and other news. But first …

EBBY Has a New Logo!

In 2013, when EBBY first re-emerged under the patronage of the SHOURA Foundation for Development, the board produced a makeshift logo to tide it through its growing pains. In 2016, ready to shed its infancy, EBBY tasked the creative minds in FP7 Mena with producing a new logo—which they agreed to do pro bono!—with the proviso that beyond being elegant and memorable, it had to achieve the following: to recall IBBY, our international umbrella organization—without imitation; to convey a love of reading; to appeal to children of all ages; and to reflect our Egyptian identity. Mission impossible … but, mission accomplished. Thank you FP7 for our new EBBY cartouche logo, we are deeply grateful! As an added bonus, we got an adorable pharaonic cat to keep our logo company.

A noteworthy chapter in our journey to a new logo was an EBBY logo competition launched in 2015 by AUC professor Nagla Ismail. Her student finalists truly impressed us with their innovative and playful designs, featured below. We thank them and the other student contestants for their wonderful creativity and effort.
**Hans Christian Andersen Award 2016**

*Writing for Children: Interview with Affaf Tobbala*

For the 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award, EBBY nominated Egyptian author Affaf Tobbala. Tobbala has worked in Egyptian Television as a director, screenplay writer and producer, and only started writing for children in 2005 at the age of 64.

In 2005 she collaborated with renowned painter, Adly Rezkallah, to produce her first book *The Silver Fish*, which was given an honorable mention in the New Horizon’s category of the Ragazzi Award, and received the Egypt’s Award for Children’s Literature (then called the Suzanne Mubarak prize). Since then she has published over a dozen books for different age groups. A number of her books were selected for distribution to primary and middle school libraries on the national level and her first novel, *The House and the Palm Tree*, was included in the Arabic Language curriculum at a number of high schools.

EBBY’s Dina Elabd interviewed Tobbala and asked her about her journey to becoming an author of children’s books.

**Dina Elabd:** What is your opinion on children’s books in Egypt?

**Affaf Tobbala:** There has been a lot of growth in the past few years, and yet there is a great deal of potential for further growth. I appreciate literature more than the didactic side of books. If you have good intentions, then they will come out in story. Language, story, characters, dialogue, etc. is all important. How to make the emotional connection etc… Many people don’t pay attention to it and don’t think children can understand this. So they usually put non-literature-like topics.

**Elabd:** Which of your books is your favorite, or are you most proud of?
**Tobbala:** Similar to the saying “Who is your favorite child? The one who get’s sick until he is better, or the one who is traveling until he is back?” I love my books that were not fully appreciated, though I felt they deserved an award. Such as *Awrak adeema* (Old Papers) and *Enshudat el awda* (Homecoming Song).

**Elabd:** Why did you start writing for children, when it wasn’t your background?

**Tobbala:** I married young at 18, so I didn’t have time to tell stories to my kids. But when my daughter had children, I would tell them stories and they seemed to like it. So when they got older, they told me to write these stories.

**Elabd:** Who is your favorite children’s writer or what is your favorite children’s book?

**Tobbala:** I hadn’t read any of these when I started writing. I read *Le Petit Prince* with my daughter, and very few other things. I would read adult literature. I felt it was important to write for children, as the didactic stories would make me angry. I liked funny things. All the stories are repetitive, basically the same story... like based on princes, judges, khalifas, and men with three children.

**Elabd:** What do you think is the most important thing in books for children? What do children like?

**Tobbala:** I believe good children’s books are also loved by adults. The child is a human at the end of the day—he will like mystery, he wants to feel emotions, and care for the characters. Like *El beit w el nakhla* (The House and the Palm Tree), which is read even in the German School and Hayah International Academy, although it’s a story about an old woman. So you don’t have to write about children for children. I don’t write what kids like, but I will make them like it through my story-telling techniques.

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**Shortlisted for the 2015 Etisalat Award:**

*Enshudat el awda* (Homecoming Song) by Affaf Tobbala

*Enshudat el awda* (Homecoming Song) by Affaf Tobbala, tells the story of Tat, the duckling, and Najlaa, the little girl, and recounts the relationship of empathy and solidarity that grows between them and inspires them to live up to the challenges they encounter.

Through the parallels between the stories of the duckling and the girl and the sense of disability that unites them, with their determination to overcome it, the book conveys a concept of disability that compares it to any other obstacle that a person faces. This brings it closer to a child’s minds, while at the same time encouraging children with disabilities to engage with the world around them.

The quasi-poetic language of the book and the abstract and tender illustrations, with pastel and tranquil colors, creates an open world fraught with emotion and love. This indirectly asserts the positive link between the reader and the two protagonists, thus enhancing the book’s message without being direct or overdramatic.

*Review by Amal Gamal*

emilyramy@gmail.com

**The winners of the Hans Christian Andersen Award will be announced at the IBBY Press Conference at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair on 4 April 2016.**

Watch this [short film](https://youtu.be/d2L6mrEc6eM) produced by IBBY and Nami Island Inc, the official sponsor of the award, to meet the 2016 HCAA Shortlist candidates: [https://youtu.be/d2L6mrEc6eM](https://youtu.be/d2L6mrEc6eM)
IBBY Honor List 2016

This year EBBY’s jury (including two outside jurors) had a particularly challenging time selecting books for the IBBY Honor List, but not for lack of choice; rather, we’re spoilt for choice. Egypt has not submitted Honor List selections since 2012 (see previous Egyptian Honor List candidates on EBBY’s website) and since then, Egypt has seen a number of excellent works produced.

EBBY, therefore, proudly announces its biennial Honor List selections for 2016:

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What is the IBBY Honor List?

“The IBBY Honor List is a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published books, honoring writers, illustrators and translators from IBBY member countries. The IBBY Honour List is one of the most widespread and effective ways of furthering IBBY’s objective of encouraging international understanding through children’s literature. The titles are selected by the National Sections which can nominate one book for each of the three categories.”

For more information, visit the www.ibby.org website.

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Shortlisted for the 2014 Etisalat Award: Sana fi Qena (A Year in Qena) by Hadil Ghoneim

Sana Fi Qena (A Year in Qena) by Hadil Ghoneim is an intelligent, humorous, and delightful journey into a world ruled by the seasons and the mindset of an agricultural society. It’s about a 13-year-old boy who joins his family for a year in Qena to care for his aging grandmother, fully equipped with an anti-boredom kit that he relies on to avoid engaging with his surroundings. From awkward collision to happy collusion, the boy learns to find ways to engage with the agricultural, social, culinary and cultural life of this Upper Egyptian village as he tries to make friends, prove his worth to his family, stay connected with Cairo and ultimately grow up.

This charming story, wonderfully illustrated by Yasser Gaessa, is a crossover book to be experienced across the spectrum of ages.

Reviewed by Yasmine Motawy

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언론의 도움으로 추천해 주신 독자 여러분께 감사드립니다.

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Reviewed by Yasmine Motawy
Reviewed by Dina Elabd

worth a read. It is a story of overcoming differences and definitely appreciating them as strengths. It is an uplifting story for the reader. This is an uplifting story, satisfying, and yet unexpected ending for the reader. It is a story of love and trust, and definitely worth a read.

Daniela Kulot’s picture book Crocodile and Giraffe—Real Friends is translated into Arabic as Crocodile and Giraffe—Real Sweethearts. Aside from the minor censorship, the translation is completely natural and allows the essence of the story to shine through. The simple and colorful illustrations communicate the varying moods of the story, as Crocodile and Giraffe’s friendship is questioned and ridiculed in their respective towns. Kulot skillfully decides to leave the depth of the protagonists’ friendship to the illustrations and uses text to demonstrate dialogue and relevant events. She culminates the story with one such event, providing a simple, satisfying, and yet unexpected ending for the reader. This is an uplifting story of overcoming differences and appreciating them as strengths. It is a story of love and trust, and definitely worth a read.

Yasmine Motawy’s interview with painter and cartoonist Yasser Gaessa, nominated for the IBBY Honor List 2016 in the illustration category for Sana fi Qena (A Year in Qena) by Hadil Ghoneim.
The Art of Translation: Laura Kfoury’s Interview with Abier Megahed

EBBY’s Laura Kfoury interviewed Abier Megahed, nominated for the IBBY Honor List 2016 in the translation category for Altemsah wa alzarafa sadikan hakan (Crocodile and Giraffe—Real Friends) by Daniela Kulot, about the challenges and rewards of the art of translation.

Laura Kfoury: What languages do you translate into and from?
Abier Megahed: I translate only from German to Arabic.

Kfoury: What do you like most about translating? Least?
Megahed: I like the challenge most when it comes to using simple language for children and yet not losing the spirit of the original text. I do not like typing very much, though it is less of a problem when it comes to children's books.

Kfoury: What is a translation-related lesson you've learned on the job?
Megahed: You have always many options for one translation.

Kfoury: What are some criteria for evaluating the quality of a translation?
Megahed: It has to be accurate, flawless, mirroring the original text in its spirit.

Kfoury: Should a good translation faithfully capture the original text, or add something to the original?
Megahed: It should faithfully capture the original text if possible, and add something to the original if necessary. But most of all, it should capture the spirit of the text.

Kfoury: What linguistic qualities are the hardest to translate from German, into Arabic?
**Book Review: Laylatul Nar (Night of the Fire) by Yacoub El Sharouni (2015)**

Laylatul Nar is a well-deserved choice for the IBBY Honor List, as it tackles a very important issue that is never addressed in children’s literature: marginalized social classes. Remarkably enough, the story is not about class struggle, or friction, or even social mobility, it is about humanizing the people that live on the fringes of society.

The events of this story take place in one of the poorer neighborhoods in Cairo, Menesheyt Nasser. A crisis occurs there when the market—a cluster of wooden shacks on a once vacant land—is burnt to the ground. This catastrophically threatens the economic livelihood of the many families living there: the market needs to be rebuilt before the next morning or the government threatens to seize the land. The plot unfolds from the perspective of the smart and determined thirteen-year-old Mokhtar, who urges his father to lead the people to unite and rebuild the market on stronger foundations, literally overnight.

With elegant words and a smooth pace, El Sharouni portrays a vivid and unique environment with its own adaptable and resilient architecture. Themes are not forced down the reader’s throat; instead, they form the subtext of the story. Ultimately, Laylatul Nar is a galvanizing, optimistic story about the power of community. It is about how when people unite they can collectively achieve “supernatural miracles.”

While the book deserves a better layout and illustrations, the story compensates and is no doubt worth reading for children and adults alike.

Review by Omar El Hadidy
akahidy@aucegypt.edu

**Megahed:** Cultural differences with a certain inherent vocabulary that does not exist in the target language are a major challenge. For example, snow and all that’s associated with it, or festivals, customs and traditions. Also idioms and figures of speech can be a challenge. But a good translator always finds a solution; therein lies the art of translation.

**Kfoury: What are the online tools that you find the most useful in translating?**

Megahed: There is a website called arabdiction. It is a kind of online dictionary.

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**Ser Alkhatija:**

**مقابلة ناديٍّه الخولي مع يعقوب الشاروني**

EBBY’s Nadia El Kholy interviewed Yaacob El Sharouni, selected for the 2016 IBBY Honor List in the writing category for Laylatul Nar (Night of Fire), about the secret art of writing for children.

"ناديه الخولي: متي قررت ان تصبح كاتبًا؟

يفقود يعقوب الشاروني: لقد وجدت نفسي أكتب الفصول في سن مبكرة جداً منذ كنت في المرحلة الابتدائية. وأذكر أن أستاذ اللغة العربية، وأنا في السنة الثالثة الإبتدائية، وجدته مندغل من أتام إحدى الحضور، وعندما أفتحني بالسؤال: "ماذا تكتب؟" أجيب فوراً: "رواية".. وكان استاذًا متقبئًا، فأخذ يقرأ فترة مما كنت، ثم فوجئت به يقول لي: "ربنا يفتح عليك.. أكمل روايتك" - واعترفت أنى هذه أول جائزة حصلت عليها، ومن أكثرها تأثيرًا في مجري حياتي.

لماذا كتب: أكتب لأنى وجدت عندى الكثير أريد أن أقوله للآخرين .. كنت دائمًا أحب القراءة، وكانت مكتبة والدى حافلة بالأعمال الأدبية والتاريخية والجغرافية، وسير الشخصيات، كنت أقرأ في كل هذا، مع مجلات أدبية وثقافية كان يحرص أنى الأكبر يوسف الشاروني، الكاتب المعروف، على أن ينشرها، فكتبت أشارك الإقراءة، وهو أكبر مني بخمس سنوات، وعندما كنت في المرحلة الثانوية قررت كل يوم أنه يقرأ أنى إلى كلية الأدب من كتاب عم الفيلسوف - وقابلي هذا إلى أن ألقى على نفسي كثيرًا من الإسهال. وكانت أنتصر أنى وجدت هذه الإسهال بعض الإجابات، أردت أن يشاركني الآخرون في التنوع على تلك الإجابات. وهكذا تقتربت المتىودى "وجهات نظر". كانت البودلية التي توجهنى وأنا أكتب أعمالًا الأدبية، لأعبر عن آثار

اهتمامي من شتى مجتمعية وفكرية عن طريق الفن وليس على حساب الفن.
Winner of the 2015 Etisalat Award: *Al khurug min al fuqa’a* (Exiting the Bubble) by Ibrahim Shalaby

The 2015 winner of the Etisalat Award, YA Category, is *Al khurug min al fuqa’a* (Exiting the Bubble) written by Ibrahim Shalaby and published by Egypt’s Dar al-Balsam.

This brilliant book revolves around a 12-year-old leukemia patient, Samir. Samir takes us with him along his journey of being a young cancer patient. From the moment he discovers that he is ill till he recovers and becomes a cancer-free individual. Despite being a story about a cancer patient, it’s an endlessly positive book—both on an emotional and intellectual level. Samir learns to be closer to God, to thank him continuously, to be grateful for everything he’s been given, and to look at life from a different perspective; ultimately, with Samir, we learn to escape our usual bubble. Samir allows us to witness his chemotherapy, blood transfusions, and even the moment he falls in love for the first time within the walls of his hospital. As Samir learns various life changing lessons so does the reader. This is a marvelous book that isn’t just suitable for children, but could also be a life-changing read for adults as well.

Reviewed by Sara Abdeldaiem
saelayed@aucegypt.edu

IBBY Egypt Newsletter

March 2016

Issue No. 3

الخولي: ما الذي يجعل تقرير الجلوس والبدء في الكتابة؟

الشاعروني: بدأ وأنا في التاسع، أكتب ما كنت اسميه “منكراتي أو يومياتي” - كنت أكتب ضعيفة سطور أو أكتب عددًا كبيرًا من الصفحات كل يوم - أسجل خبراتي اليومية، كما أسجل مشاعري ومواقيف من كل ما يحدث حولي. هكذا تعلمت أن أخوّل الخبز والمشاعر والأفكار إلى كلمات على الورق - وأما في الكتابة، هذه النظرة النهائية وأنا كتابتي إلى الصدق مع نفسى، هي وسيلة التي صقلت من خلالها موهبتي الأدبية، وأكتشفت من خلالها موضوعات عدّة كبرى من القصص التي كتبتها في مرحلة المراهقة وبداية مرحلة النضج.

الخولي: من أي ناتئ أفكار؟

الشاعروني: من معايشة المجتمع الذي أعيش فيه، ومن الشخصيات التي أتعرف عليها ومن القراءة المتعددة التي ساعدنتي على أن أجد وجهات نظر تجاه عدد كبير من الشخصيات والآثارات والأفكار.

الخولي: هل تبدأ الكتابة يد خطة، أم تفضل أن تتبع الفكرة؟

الشاعروني: في ملطفات أفكار لعشرات القصص والروايات، ثم أعود إلى هذه الملفات أضيف إليها أفكارًا جديدة، أو أعيد صياغة بعض الموضوعات والقصص وأضيف إليها...

ثم تأتي فترة أشعر أن هذه الموضوعات قد بدأ يلمع خيالي وتفكيري، فاستخرج كل القصصات التي سبق أن كتبتها حول الموضوع، وأبدأ في وضع مخطط للعمل، لكن هذا لا يضمن دائمًا إلا بعد العثور على ما اسميه "مفتاح" العمل الروائي، أو بذرة العقدة والصراع بين الشخصيات - عند العثور على هذا المفتاح، أبدأ في الكتابة - لكن هذا لا يضمن أن كتبتي المخطط له، كما تقدمت في الكتابة. إن الشخصيات تفرز نفسها على الكتابي، والهدف يتحرك طبقًا لنطاق الأحداث وتروّبا، وقد تضمن جوانب أخرى من وجهة نظر خلال الكتابة، فأعطي كتابة كل ما كنت - إن الكتابة التي أرضع عنها هي التي أعدي كتابتي مرة بعد مرة، حتى أشعر أخيرًا بالرضاء عنها.

الخولي: ما هو أصعب شيء في الكتابة؟

الشاعروني: البداية - الصفحة الأولى، بل العبارات الأولى، قد تكون أصعب شيء، وقد تمضى أيامًا وأيامًا أسابيع والعمل يقدم ببطء... ثم تنتهي أماة ملاح كل شخصية، واستقر إلى الخطوط الرئيسية، وفيما بعد نفسى قد استغرقت في الكتابة، بعده توقف إلى أن أنتهى من كتابة السواد الأولى.

هنا تبدأ عملية الصقل، وإعادة الكتابة، وإعادة ترتيب بعض الفصول، وأخذ رأي بعض الأصدقاء فيما كتبته، وقد تستغرق هذه المرحلة شهرًا، وهنا لابد أن تكون حازمة مع نفسى لكن لا تشغيلي مسؤوليات الحياة اليومية عن الاستمرار في نقد وتفريق ما كتبت وإعادة كتابته. وقد أعدي كتابة بعض أجزاء العمل عشر مرات أو حتى عشرتين إلى أن أرضع عنها.
IBBY Board in Action:
EBBY at the Informal Education Conference in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Yasmine Motawy, Balsam Saad and Dina Elabd of EBBY were in attendance at the Informal Education conference in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on October 12-13. Balsam Bookstore was the event’s sponsor, and visitors crowded around the publisher’s beautiful books, taking particular note of the latest publications. Motawy chaired a stimulating session on Animation & Multimedia’s impact on Children’s Education. The conference was an excellent opportunity to meet those interested in supporting, developing and innovating in the area of informal education in Egypt and the region.

Other IBBY notables were Hasmig Chahinian, from IBBY France who spoke on “Bringing Children and Books Together” and delighted the audience with cognitive research that shows how we can create a special bond between children and books and get a child’s brain to categorize reading as a “pleasurable thing” that should be repeated.

The crossword:

What is the most beautiful book you have read?

The crossword: Three women from IBBY France who...
EBBY Board in the Press: Yasmine Motawy

Arabic Literature (in English) drew the spotlight on EBBY’s Yasmine Motawy, who was selected as one of the judges this year for the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Awards. Motawy discussed the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, the Egyptian nominee Affaf Tobbala, and the important role that EBBY seeks to play in the emerging space for children’s literature in Egypt. Read it in arabit.org.

EBBY Board in the Press: Balsam Saad


الخولي: ما رأيك في مستقبل القراءة والكتابة؟

الشاروني: الإقبال على القراءة سبب، وحتى من نستخدمون الشاشات فإن عددًا كبيرًا منهم لم يكونوا قد اعتادوا أن يكتبوا قبلًا أي شيء.

أنا الكتابة، فلو صدق يقول أن الكتابة على الشاشات سيطر كثيرًا من عناصر الكتابة: فنهاك استخدام شائع على الشاشات للكتابة باللهجة العامية، واستخدام الابحاث والأعمال القرائية، وإعمال علامات الترقيم - كما أن الكتابة على الشاشات تحاول أن تحمل الحديث المباشر وجهًا لوجه بما في ذلك تعابير الصوت والوجه. كما أن هذه كلمات جديدة ينتجها الجيل الجديد للتعبير عن أنفسهم - لكن كل هذا لا يزال في مرحلة التحلق، ويحتاج إلى كثير من المتابعة والدراسة.

الخولي: ماذا تحرف إن تقرأ في وقت فراغك؟

الشاروني: أقرأ كثيرًا حول تطور العلم والفلسفة - وأتتبع بحرص مجلة العلوم الأمريكية التي تترجمها الكتبي وتنشرها.

 وأقرأ الروايات التي يكتبها الشباب المصري (اللكبار عادة) ويصف النصر عن مستواها الأدبى لفوق ما هي اهتماماتهم. يكتبون ويختللون

 وأحرص على مطالعة الأعمال الأدبية الموجهة إلى المؤثرين والمثقفين التي تبرز بجوانب مهمة، مثل جائزة نبوءة برى الأمريكية - كما أقرأ في علم الاجتماع وعلم الإنسان - هذا طبعًا بجار الاهتمامات العامة حول الأعمال الأدبية الكبيرة، وحقائق البشر وفروع الحياة في مصر والعالم العربي والعالم بوجه عام.

الخولي: ما هي المشاريع التي تعمل عليها في الوقت الحالي؟

الشاروني: الصحراء والبحر من أهم الموضوعات التي تتشغلي حالياً، وأكتب حالياً رواية أطلقها على شباب الدين برمي الابن البلدين إليهم يا فتاتي، في تدخل الرياضيات في جانب قريب دير سانت كاترين.

الخولي: هل هناك انتشار في الكتابة للأطفال، مقابل انتعاش سوق القصص والروايات للكلاب؟

الشاروني: مسابقات أدب الأطفال التي تعلن عنها عدد كبير من البلد العربي وتحصل لها جوائز سخية، هي التي تبقى المشغولة في مجال الكتابة للأطفال والشباب الصغير، لكنها لا يقلن سجلكهم في حركة النشر للأطفال.

أما في مجال النشر للكلاب، فقد تلاحظون مراجعة مزمنة من الروايات، منها قليل جيد، تتغير السوق، يقرأها الشباب بشغف، أي من الشباب والآباء يقرأ وراءهم عن المستوى في كثير من الأحيان.

الخولي: هل القائمين على عملية التربية والتعليم يستفيدين من المؤلفات الخاصة بالأطفال بطريقة فعالة تساعدهم على أداء عملهم بكفاءة؟
الشاروني: في مصر ومعظم أقطار العالم العربي، هناك انفصال شبه تام بين المكتبة المدرسية والفصل الدراسي.. وقد نجد عددًا كبيرًا من المدرسين لا يعرفون ما الذي يوجد داخل المكتبة المدرسية التي يعملون فيها.

بينما العالم كله يؤكد أن التلميذ الذي لا يتعرف على الاستفادة من المكتبة المدرسية هو تلميذ لم يتعلم، ولن يستطيع مواصلة التعلم في عالم تتضاعف فيه المعارف مرة كل شهر.

ولابد من وضع "الآليات" لربط الفصل الدراسي بالمكتبة، مثل مطالبة التلاميذ عندما يكتبون أسبوعيًا ما يكلفون به من موضوعات تعبير أو غيرها، أن يذكروا مرجعهم على الأقل من كتب المكتبة (وبدون الاعتماد بآية صورة على الإنترنت) وإلا ضاعت على التمديد درجات أعمال السنة - ثم الاهتمام بالقراءات الصيفية، تكون المناقشة حولها في أول أسابيع كل سنة دراسية جديدة هي أول درجات أعمال السنة التي يحصل عليها كل طالب.

**EBBY Board: Behind the Scenes**

The EBBY Board has been working hard behind the scenes to officially launch EBBY and to establish the standing and ad hoc committees necessary to work effectively towards achieving its mission. Here's a hero shot of the ladies at a meeting held in February 2016.

(Left to Right) Laura Kfouri, Nevine Rateb, Balsam Saad, Nadia Kholy, Lobna Reda, Yasmine Motawy, Dina Elabd, and Rana Harouny

Stay posted for news of EBBY's official launch event in May 2016!