Our BELMA experience
Serbian textbook market – facts

- In Serbia we have an approval system – every textbook has to be officially approved before entering the market.
- Teachers choose textbooks for a four-year cycle (at the moment the cycle is limited to just one year because of curricular changes).
- 85% of textbooks are paid for by parents, and 15% are paid for by the state.
Kreativni centar – facts

• Started as a children’s books publisher in 1989, but has also developed a textbook production since 2004
• Most awarded Serbian children’s books publisher
• 30 years in educational publishing - started with preschool materials
• EEPG member since 2005
7 BELMA Awards
Lucky year - 2013
We got two awards
Why the BELMA award is important for us

• Confirmation of quality for us - there is no award for textbooks in Serbia
• Confirmation of quality of textbooks for teachers and students
• Possibility to learn and grow, using experience of European colleagues
• Important achievement for textbook authors
• Good opportunity for debate about our textbooks with educational experts
• Good branding opportunity – for general public
• Foreign Rights selling opportunity
Quality of textbooks is our key value

• We do not have a national textbook award in Serbia - our sales results are only evaluation that we have
• Since 2004 there were only a few official textbook evaluations made by Serbian experts, the first organized in 2006
• We use the BELMA criteria when we want to explain the characteristics of good textbook
• We cannot say that the BELMA award is crucial for decision makers in schools, but it definitely helps
• Some of our awarded textbooks have been among our bestselling textbooks
When we work on our textbooks we need to find a balance between the criteria of the BELMA jury and the demands of our own approval juries

- EXAMPLE 1 BELMA Criteria: Socialization
  - 'Added value' to learning materials which pursue the development of additional skills (social skills, intercultural awareness...) beyond the actual competences taught
  - Our approval jury discourages any stepping out from the program
  - In our Serbian language textbook for upper grades we had an area where we wanted to connect the subjects of literary examples with questions about some social problems, but we had to delete it from the textbook because the jury thought that it is not the part of school program
Challenges in making a good textbook

- EXAMPLE 2 Amount of lessons and pages
- It is a common opinion that our school program is overloaded with too many facts
- Authors have to include all those facts in their textbooks, which is why Math textbooks for upper grades may look too extended and loaded to BELMA jury who encourage airy design
Educational topics in the media

- Media love the international award – bigger publicity than any domestic award
- Even journalists who are specialized in educational topics are not familiar with BELMA award
- We try to offer full information about the award and the EEPG in our press material
- The award is a good opportunity for opening the debate about education and textbooks in general
Marketing tools

- Digital Media (Web site, Social Media,..)
- Promotions at Schools
- Printed Materials (Catalogues, Flyers,..)
- Bookfairs, Bookstore, Branding
Frankfurt book fair is a great place for announcing the winners, it creates special buzz for other publishers and media also.

Shortlisting was a good idea - opportunity to be present in media even if we do not win.

We announce in media that we are shortlisted.
Award is a good occasion for discussing educational topics in advertorials.
Award is a good occasion for publishing relevant content – interviews, reports, opinion pieces...
Using award for general branding
(Belgrade Book Fair)
Celebrating award with our Instagram followers 😊
• European award is important when selling foreign rights
• Great feedback from Chinese publishers
• Well recognized in the neighboring countries
• Preschool materials attract special attention (especially Math books)
• All awarded books have a special BELMA tag in our Foreign Rights catalogue and on our Foreign Rights web site
• The certificate itself attracts foreign publishers at the Frankfurt bookfair
Books from the series *Fun World of Geometry* are designed to develop mathematical skills, independence and persistence in children, but also teach them how to be precise and notice patterns. These books will improve their confidence in problem solving and help them successfully prepare to start school. Titles *Let's play with lines* and *Shapes* contain additional material such as die cut memory game, puzzles in different shapes and tracing paper.

Group of authors
Illustrator: Boris Kuzmanović

21x24 cm, 46 pp., paperback, full colour, die cut memory game and puzzles.

Award on BELMA competition 2017 (Best European Learning Material Award) organized by The Frankfurt Book Fai, the IARTEM (the International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media) and the EEPE (European Educational Publisher's Group)

*Let's play with lines* sold in China.
Spot the difference!
Thank you!

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What’s your BELMA experience?