

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**IBBY ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2020 IBBY-IREAD OUTSTANDING READING PROMOTER AWARD**

4 May 2020

Ahmad Redza Khairuddin, Chair of the IBBY Reading Promotion Jury of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) announces the inaugural winners of the 2020 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award. IBBY is very grateful to the generous support and sponsorship of the Shenzhen iRead Foundation from China.

The 2020 winners are:

**Marit Törnqvist from the Netherlands and Zhu Yongxin from China**

**Marit Törnqvist** is a writer as well as an illustrator. She has developed reading programmes for children that focus not only the story, but also on the experience of reading itself. Her reading-aloud activities strive to create a warm and joyful atmosphere that make children want to come back for more and inspire them to pick up a book and read. She encourages children to identify with the stories that they read, leading them to narrate their own stories and holds reading and illustrating activities with groups of children from different countries, resulting in a closer understanding of each other's life and culture. She also conducts bibliotherapy programmes for children living in difficult circumstances, often helping them to face the grim realities of life by encouraging them to express their own stories.

She started a programme that provides books for refugee children in their own language so that they can read their own stories as a first step towards accepting the culture of their new home. In Iran, she has contributed, both professionally and personally, to giving support to street children, children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, refugees and victims of natural disasters. Törnqvist's work reaches children as well as families, caregivers and people working with children at home and around the world. She is a towering personality in reading promotion for children of the world.

**Zhu Yongxin** is an established and well-known scholar with many publications relating to reading promotion for children. He has devoted his life to continuous research and activities related to reading promotion. As an educator, he is regarded by many as the inspiration and role model in the field of reading promotion. He and his team have trained many teachers throughout China to be reading promoters so that they can then take on the role and responsibility to train others. His programmes help schools in carrying out comprehensive reading courses for parents, children and teachers with a strong focus on rural areas. He also focuses on children with special needs, the vulnerable and those living in remote areas. His efforts have led to the development and production of the first set of audio books meant for visually impaired children in China.

Zhu's knowledge and experience have brought him recognition from his country's Government and he has been able to influence and propose a number of new initiatives relating to the country's reading policies, including the promotion of children's reading. He donates much of

his professional fees and royalties to reading promotion activities, where he is also a frequent volunteer. He continues to be the driving force for reading promotion for children in China and is recognized internationally as an expert in the field of reading promotion.

Each of the winners will receive the sum of RMB Yuan 200,000 (approx. USD 28,000) and an extra RMB Yuan 150,000 (approx. USD 21,000) for a non-profit children's reading promotion project of their choice.

The 2020 Jury members in alphabetical order by country are:

Nora Lía Sormani from Argentina, Ahmad Redza Khairuddin from Malaysia/Chair, Basarat Kazim from Pakistan, Anastasia Arkhipova from Russia, Carole Bloch from South Africa, and Sophie Hallam from the United Kingdom.

The other nominees for the 2020 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award were:

**Julinda Abu Nasr**, Beirut, Lebanon; **Jorge Argueta**, San Salvador, El Salvador; **Kirsten Boie**, Barsbüttel, Germany; **Murti Bunanta**, Jakarta, Indonesia; **Hugo Waldemar Cubilla**, Buenos Aires, Argentina; **Zahira Dadashova**, Baku, Azerbaijan; **Zohreh Ghaeni**, Tehran, Iran; **Ma. Regina González Díaz**, Talca, Chile; **David Harrison**, Somerset West, South Africa; **M.G. Neil P. Karunarathne**, Matale, Sri Lanka; **Kathleen Moran**, Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland; **Sathyanarayan Mundayoor**, Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh, India; **Anne Pellowski**, Winona, MN, USA; **Irina Rocheva**, Tula, Russia; **Ali Asghar Seidabadi**, Tehran, Iran; **Wang Zhigeng**, Beijing, China

**Contact:**

For more information, full biographies of the winners and their work, as well as information about IBBY, go to [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org) or write to Executive Director Liz Page at [liz.page@ibby.org](mailto:liz.page@ibby.org)

***About the International Board on Books for Young People – IBBY***

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is a non-profit organization, which represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together.

**IBBY's mission is**

- to promote international understanding through children's books;
- to give children everywhere the opportunity to have access to books with high literary and artistic standards;
- to encourage the publication and distribution of quality children's books, especially in developing countries;
- to provide support and training for those involved with children and children's literature;
- to stimulate research and scholarly works in the field of children's literature;
- to protect and uphold the Rights of the Child according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.