**A book for you**

On January 14 2017 an information and inspiration meeting was held concerning the project entitled ‘Een boek voor jou’ (‘A book for you’). The book was presented and the tour the authors and illustrators will hold for the benefit of refugee children was discussed. ‘A book for you’ is an initiative of Marit Törnqvist, with the help of publishing house Em. Querido’s Publishing for Children’s Books, the Dutch Council for Refugees and the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

‘A book for you’ contains stories and illustrations by authors and artists such as Annie M. G. Schmidt, Fiep Westendorp, Toon Tellegen, Max Velthuijs, Thé Tjong-Khing, Jacques Vriens, Paul van Loon, Bette Westera, Charlotte Dematons, Philip Hopman and Marit Törnqvist. The authors and illustrators contributed their texts/illustrations for free. The book is compiled for the benefit of the refugee children aged 4 through 12. All stories were translated to Arabic.

In January of 2017 a total of 5,000 copies of ‘A book for you’ were distributed in refugee centers across the country. The goal is to welcome children to the Netherlands with beautiful Dutch stories, written in their own (Arabic) language. This way the children can get acquainted with the Dutch country and culture shortly after arriving, hopefully finding relaxation and sharing the book with their parents. For children speaking other languages, books with no or very little words by Dutch authors were made available by the Dutch section of IBBY and Em. Querido. These were distributed simultaneously with ‘A book for you’.

In the spring of 2017 children’s books authors and illustrators will organize activities in several refugee centers across the Netherlands. The general idea is to organize a simple workshop or other activity related to children’s books with the refugee children and their parents.

During the information and inspiration meeting over ten experts working with refugee children shared their experiences with the audience. Three refugees talked about the reading environment in Syria and the situation in the refugee centers and ten-year old Hanan from Damascus read an extract from renowned Dutch children’s book *Jip and Janneke* in Arabic. A Bosnian-Dutch musician performed several songs. The project’s main subject was discussed throughout the meeting.

Marit Törnqvist: ‘I can hardly express how happy I am about the effort the people involved put into Saturday’s meeting As a whole, the project works to improve the situation experienced by refugee children in the Netherlands. The enthusiastic support of the COA (the Dutch central organ for asylum for refugees) is a big help, it greatly increases the capacity of the project.’