

## IBBY READING PROMOTION AWARD

### IBBY iREAD OUTSTANDING READING PROMOTER AWARD 2020 – MOSCOW 2021

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The inaugural IBBY iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award 2020 sees two distinguished personalities in children literature being recognized for their exemplary work in promoting reading.

The award was established by the Shenzhen iRead Foundation and IBBY to inspire a lasting commitment to the cause of reading promotion to encourage the spreading of this dedication to others around the globe. We recognize and thank the Shenzhen iRead Foundation for their generosity in making this award possible.

The Jury received 19 nominations for this award. At the end, we had to choose 2 winners. It was a difficult choice as every nominee did outstanding work with significant impact in their own areas. At this point I would like to thank all Jury members and the IBBY Secretariat for a great job done during the jury process.

The 2 winners of the inaugural IBBY iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award 2020 are

Marit Törnqvist from the Netherlands and

Zhu Yongxin from China

Marit Törnqvist was nominated by IBBY Netherlands and IBBY Belgium for her outstanding work in reading promotion. As a writer and illustrator, she developed reading programs that are joyful and inspire children to want to read more stories on their own. Her methodology includes working with children from different countries, resulting in better understanding of each other's culture and life. Marit travels widely, thus enabling her to conduct more workshops and making books and stories available to children in these countries, many of whom may not have the means to read or hear stories.

Marit's work reaches children, families, caregivers and people working around children in her city and in many countries around the world. She brings books to life by using stage performances and music. She also pioneered a program for refugee children by providing books in their own language to help them accept the culture of their new home. She also supports, in many ways, street children, children from disadvantaged neighborhoods and victims of natural disasters. She is truly a towering personality in reading promotion for children of the world.

Congratulations Marit Törnqvist. Although I cannot be with you in person today at this ceremony in Moscow, I warmly congratulate you and thank Vice President Basarat Kazim for making the presentation on my behalf.

Zhu Yongxin, nominated by IBBY China, is well known as a scholar who for more than 30 years devoted his life to continuous research and activities related to reading promotion in China and many other countries. His extensive list of publications in the areas of children literature and children, have been translated into 15 languages.

He also trained many teachers throughout China to become reading promoters so that they can then train others to do the same and promote reading to vast areas of China especially in the more remote regions. He focuses on engaging with parents, teachers and children using comprehensive reading courses to ensure that the culture of reading becomes part of their daily life. With a keen awareness and concern for children with special needs and those who are vulnerable, he successfully developed and produced the first set of audio books for visually impaired children, which is very valuable for many children throughout China.

Zhu Yongxin has been recognized by the Chinese Government and has been involved in many new initiatives relating to the country's reading policies and the promotion of reading. His efforts have yielded significant results in reading culture amongst students, parents and teachers from the rural areas to villages and to cities throughout China. He continues to be the driving force for children's reading in China. He also shares his knowledge and experiences in many countries as he is invited to many speaking engagements overseas.

Congratulations Zhu Yongxin. Again, although neither of us can be together in person at this ceremony in Moscow, I warmly congratulate you and thank President Mingzhou Zhang and iRead Foundation President Wen Li for making this presentation on my behalf in Beijing.

The generous prize money was successfully transferred directly to the winners despite the pandemic and lockdowns. The trophy and diplomas for the winners are symbols of the esteem with which we hold these two outstanding reading promoters.

Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin

2020 IBBY Reading Promotion Award Jury Chair

37<sup>th</sup> IBBY Congress in Moscow, Russia

10 September 2021