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# Strong feelings when PRAESA received the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2015

It was an emotional moment when Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) was presented to the South African reading promotion PRAESA by Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke. PRAESA, Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, is the first laureate ever from the African continent.

At the Stockholm Concert Hall PRAESA was represented by Director Carole Bloch, Training Coordinator Ntombizanele Mahobe and Programmes Support Officer Malusi Ntoyapi. In her speech Carole Bloch emphasized how stories actually can change children’s and young people’s lives:

– We believe that the stories we tell, write and read can change lives. Sharing stories inspire us all to struggle against becoming overwhelmed by the challenges we meet each day in our fractured and profoundly unequal society. This is also the impetus behind the Nal’ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign PRAESA runs.

The Minister for Culture and Democracy, Alice Bah Kuhnke, underlined the importance of culture for democracy:

– For me as a minister of both culture and democracy it is very encouraging to see PRAESAs successful work using culture to strengthen democracy. A wide range of culture, arts and literature that reaches both adults and children is a prerequisite for democratic development and for preserving democracy.

Artist Kristina Amparo performed her own songs during the evening, and Swedish rap artist Petter performed his own text Fäller en tår. The program also included a street dance performance inspired by the South African Kwaito music style.

Host for the evening was Ingemar Fasth, Head of Literature and Libraries at Kulturhuset Stadsteatern.

**More information**

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The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) is the world's largest prize for children's and young adult literature. The award, which amounts to SEK 5 million, is awarded annually to a single recipient or to several. Authors, illustrators, oral storytellers and those active in reading promotion may be rewarded. The award is designed to promote interest in children's and young adult literature, and in children's rights, globally. An expert jury selects the winners from candidates nominated by institutions and organisations worldwide. The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is administered by the Swedish Arts Council.