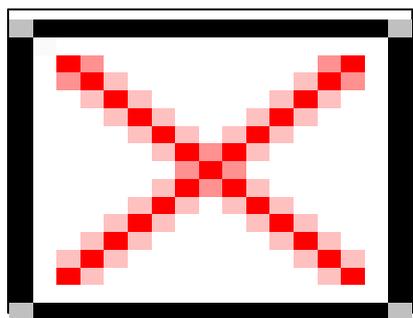




THE JHALAK PRIZE: A NEW PRIZE FOR BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS WRITTEN BY WRITERS OF COLOUR



A new prize has opened, [The Jhalak Children's YA Prize](#) [1] for books for children and young adults written by a writer of colour. This new annual prize will seek out the best of books for children and young adults written by British/British resident BAME writers and award one winner £1,000. The winner will also receive a unique work of art created by an illustrator of colour under the expanded Jhalak Art Residency.

Co-founder and director, Sunny Singh said: "For the past five years, the Jhalak Prize has been focussed on building and celebrating our community of writers of colour in the UK. 2020 has brought us unprecedented challenges but we have also found ever greater solidarity, support and hope in our community. In addition to the **Jhalak Children's & YA Prize**, we have a host of new initiatives planned, all focussed on boosting writers of colour, throughout the year and we look forward to sharing them with our community in the upcoming months."

The judges for **Jhalak Children's & YA Prize** include pioneering author and publishing legend, Verna Allette Wilkins. She is joined on the jury by award winning writers Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Candy Gourlay. The organisers describe the judges as embodying - in themselves, their support for fellow writers and their work - not only literary quality but also the ethos of the **Jhalak Prize**

As readers of **Books for Keeps** know, the second **Reflecting Realities** report by **CLPE** noted that in 2018 only 4% of children's books published in the UK had a minority ethnic hero. The survey included all new books for children aged between three and 11. At the same time, the percentage of minority ethnic pupils at UK schools currently stands at 33.1%. It is also important to note that these are books featuring characters of colour and not by writers of colour. Writers of colour - and indeed illustrators of colour - remain woefully under-represented in children's and YA publishing, as the 2017 report for the **Book Trust** by Dr. Melanie Ramdarshan Bold demonstrated. Between 2007 - 2017, less than 2% of creators of children's books were British people of colour.

This **Jhalak Children's & YA Prize** will run in parallel to the **Jhalak Prize**, and has been developed with input from experts in the field. Many of the pioneers of research into the lack of diversity, as well as experienced writers across the genres, have been consulted in the development of this new prize.

The longlist will be announced on 9 March 2021 and the shortlist on 13 April 2021. Winners will be announced on 25 May 2021.

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Links:

[1] <https://www.jhalakprize.com/>