

**Laudation of
Jona David
on the occasion of presenting the
JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM JUNIOR Award**

Part of our future is near future. Besides representing the interest of the not yet born, representation of the young generation is also our foremost duty but the young generation - as opposed to the generation not yet born - is able to voice its unique views. It is able to do so especially when the grown-up world around us is open to hear and listen to them. As Jakob von Uexkull, founder of the World Future Council says: „Children have a clear vision. Giving them a voice and listening to what they have to say is imperative to ensure that future generations can grow up healthy and safe in a clean environment”.

When trying to find a nominee for the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Junior Award for the first time this year, we were looking for someone who would stand out from his peers with skills of original thinking and opinion forming. Our nominee is a 10-year old boy from Cambridge, Jona David, who, after creating a video blog about the importance of sustainability for 6-year-old children, was invited as a Child Delegate to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. „There is so much that we can all do, from planting trees to inventing new eco-science solutions. Our survival, and all future generations, are at stake. We need to start now!” – These are the words from Jona.

As child prodigies are not uncommon in the field of music, Jona’s interest has turned at an early age towards ecology, and to be able to take his peers on an exciting journey, at age seven he started writing children’s books about eco-science and education to raise awareness about children’s rights to a healthy environment. By the time he was ten years old, he had published three books in this field and he is presently working on his fourth.

On the 25th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the “Voices of Future Generations”, an international children’s book series was launched highlighting the vision of children for a just, vibrant, and green world; Jona became the first internationally selected and awarded author of the series. Jona is also the founder of King’s College’s Eco-Society, has won several medals worldwide two years in a row in the TSL International Schools Debates and Essay Competition on Sustainability and is a Climate Justice Ambassador, leading a UNEP Billion Trees Future Generations Pledge to plant millions of trees worldwide, and a member of Plant-for-the-Planet.

The example of Jona shows how talent, when encouraged, when given a free course, can unfold surprisingly soon and in surprising richness. Furthermore. it shows that learning is not a one-way street and that teachers with open minds and hearts can also learn from resourceful and courageous children. When we present such young children for ourselves as examples, we encourage all of us to respect and nurture young talent even more.

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