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Akala launches pledge campaign for The Reading Agency

Award-winning hip-hop artist Akala is giving 10% of all pledges collected through an exclusive new campaign to The Reading Agency. This follows his work mentoring a budding young writer via the recent MyVoice – write or wrong? project, in which The Reading Agency was a partner.

Akala and Pledge Music – the organisation enabling artists and fans to work with charities to make music for change – have now created a special pledge campaign web page:

www.pledgemusic.com/artists/akala

He says: “Like much of what I do, Doublethink was inspired by something I have read, in this case George Orwell’s 1984. I thought that The Reading Agency would be a great fit for this pledge campaign, because their work is aimed at really spreading the gift of reading as far and wide as possible.”

MyVoice - write or wrong? awarded bursaries to young people aged 13 and 19 years. It supported them in exploring contemporary issues such as freedom of expression; preventing violent extremism and portrayal of young people in the media. Open to any young person, MyVoice aimed to create conversations and dialogues across languages, cultural perceptions and narrative disciplines. Working in partnership with writers, local library services and publishers, part of the MyVoice package for bursary winners included being mentored by a professional writer to support and develop their writing. (Please see “Notes to editors” for more MyVoice information.)

Akala, winner of the 2006 Best Hip-Hop Artist MOBO Award, and whose latest album Doublethink will be released on 3 May 2010 mentored MyVoice bursary winner Maryam, 18, from Birmingham whose interests are journalism, poetry and short stories. (Please see “Notes to editors” for more information.)

Akala is also the founder of The Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company, a music theatre production company aimed at ‘hard to reach’ young people. Its main objective is to create social cohesion between young people from varying social/economic backgrounds.

“We’re thrilled at Akala’s decision,” says Reading Agency director Miranda McKearney. “He, like The Reading Agency, is committed to finding new ways to inspire young people to love reading. We both see the weaving together of music, lyrics, hip hop and reading as an important way ahead.”

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read
readingagency.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It is funded by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. (www.readingagency.org.uk)
- MyVoice – write or wrong? was run in Birmingham, Blackburn (Darwen and Pendle), Bradford, Leicester, Luton, Manchester and Oldham, Slough and Waltham Forest. It was a partnership project between Creativity, Culture and Education and The Reading Agency; funded by Communities and Local Government. For more general information, please visit: www.readingagency.org.uk/young/myvoice/
- Creativity, Culture & Education (CCE) transforms the lives of children and families by harnessing the potential of creative learning and cultural opportunity to enhance their aspirations, achievements and skills. For general information, please visit: www.creativitycultureeducation.org
- More general information about Akala can be found at: www.akalamusic.com/
- MyVoice bursary award winner Maryam recently showcased some of her poetry at Birmingham Central Library. Here is an extract from Forgotten War-Child:
"I own 99 pairs of guns but not one seems to satisfy me,
So I guess I own 99 personalities but MY one seems missing.
I just wanna paint my room pink and come home to a cuddly toy.
I don't wanna come home and be stripped of my dignity by AK's from a convoy."