

World Book Night 2016 Evaluation Report

September 2016

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1. Introduction

World Book Night is an annual celebration of reading and books which takes place on 23 April. It sees passionate volunteers give hundreds of thousands of books away in their communities to share their love of reading with people who, for whatever reason, don't read for pleasure or own books. In its sixth year, and its third run by The Reading Agency, World Book Night gave our 187,500 copies of 15 different books through a network of 8000 volunteers, to reach the 36% of the adult population that doesn't read for pleasure.¹



World Book Night books at University of Essex Library

2. Programme reach

Important facts and headlines for World Book Night 2016 include:

- 187,500 books were printed for World Book Night 2016, including 12,500 copies of 15 different books
- Of these, 91,500 books were given away in institutions, including prisons, schools and colleges, libraries and homeless groups. This means 49% of the World Book Night books were given to this audience
- 96,000 were given away by individuals, who each gave out a box of 16 copies of one of our titles
- Our 6000 individual givers collected their books from around 2,100 different library and bookshop Collection Points around the UK and Ireland

3. Evaluation overview

Since 23 April 2016 we've received a wealth of feedback from volunteers and recipients by email and on social media, and have also carried out surveys to assess the World Book Night experience of those who took part. This report will summarise the feedback we've received along with the findings of targeted surveys we produced and distributed via the following routes:

- **Individual givers** – sent out by email and promoted on social media

¹ Source: [DCMS (2015) [Taking Part 2014/15, Focus On: Free time activities](#) p.7]↵

- **Institutional givers** – sent out by email and promoted on social media
- **Recipients** – promoted in the front of the World Book Night editions and on social media.



A group of Sanctuary Housing mums with their copies of *A Baby at the Beach Café*, specially aimed at vulnerable pregnant women & mothers

4. Recipients

After our successful large-scale evaluation of World Book Night recipients in 2015, the results of which can be read [here](#). In 2016 we produced a short survey to continue to monitor the impact on our recipients. The survey was promoted in the front of the World Book Night editions and on social media and incentivized with the chance to win a complete set of the World Book Night books. The survey was completed by 250 recipients, and the following findings were evident:

- **99%** of recipients said that they were pleased to have been given a World Book Night title as a gift
- **77%** had enjoyed or were enjoying reading the book they were given
- **64%** said that receiving the book has encouraged them to read more
- **72%** had already recommended the book to someone else, and 78% have talked to others about books more generally
- **47%** had gone on to buy more books after receiving their book, while 37% had borrowed more books from the library

Many recipients shared positive feedback with us about receiving a World Book Night book, including the following comments:

I used to read every day, but over the last couple of years this has fallen away. Being given this brilliant, engaging and entertaining book has reawakened the love of reading. I did not want it to end! I do not get to the library and cannot afford new books, so this was a real treat. Now that 'Last Bus to Coffeerville' has finished I am raiding my bookshelves for other treasures that I 'never got round to reading' and am finding my evenings much more relaxed for the experience of losing myself in the printed page once again. – Anonymous

Being given a book was fantastic, it made me feel excited about what was to come and eager to be able to pass it on so I could be able to discuss it with others. – Anonymous

5. Givers

Volunteer givers were invited via email to complete an online survey about their experience. The survey was completed by 2,162 individual givers and 701 institutional givers. In total, 2,862 volunteers completed the survey, a 47% response rate. The results showed that:

- An average of **95%** of all volunteer givers rated their overall experience of being a World Book Night giver as Excellent or Good

- The impact on givers' behaviour is huge and positive. An average of **88%** of our givers said that they had talked about books more since taking part in World Book Night, while **64%** said that they had read more
- **40%** have used the library more, and **29%** have looked into other opportunities to volunteer.

Who did they give their books to?

- An average of **91%** of all givers reported giving all, most or some of their books to people who don't read for pleasure regularly. This breaks down as **92%** of individual givers and **90%** of institutional givers
- **28%** of individual givers and **36%** of institutional givers gave some of their books specifically to teenagers or young people
- **60%** of individual givers and **55%** of institutional givers gave most of their books to adults aged between 25-64, with **5%** and **4%** giving to people over 65
- **9%** of individual givers gave most of their books to men and **53%** gave most to women, with **37%** giving equally to both genders. Among institutions, **13%** gave most to men, **46%** to women and **41%** spreading their books equally between both.
- **27%** of institutional givers said they gave books to adults currently engaged in learning to improve their literacy, with **6%** giving specifically to those taking part in the Reading Ahead programme for less confident adult readers
- **Over a quarter (26%)** of both individual and institutional givers gave books to people with health needs
- **9%** of Individual givers and **11%** of Institutional givers gave books to homeless people

We received a large amount of feedback from our volunteer givers, the vast majority of it was positive. The following comments are indicative of the experience that individual givers had:

Another fabulous response from receivers of Shadow and Bone, by Leigh Bardugo. Half the books were given to The Teenage Cancer Trust, at The City Hospital Nottingham. As well as thanks by the staff, I was reminded that people who are receiving treatment still enjoy reading. The remaining books were given to a local school. They were extremely grateful to be receivers again this year. For some students, World Book Night gives them their first cherished experience of owning their very first book. – Ann



A publisher-led giveaway to Hackney Community College in partnership with Ministry of Stories on World Book Night

In short, it felt brilliant. I encouraged a group of friends to set up a reading group as they had previously enjoyed reading before having young families. I have also set up a book swap scheme at work which is encouraging a renewed love of reading among colleagues and encouraged new readers. I gave some books to friends for whom English is a second language and my daughter is helping their reading skills. Finally, I gave some books to some older neighbours who don't get out much. It also gives them a chance to swap books and get more socially active. The experience is one of the best things that I've ever done. – Jack

94% of institutional givers said that World Book Night was very well or well

received in their institution. Again, we received a large amount of positive feedback, including the following two comments:

Coupled with Shakespeare displays in the library the world book night was a great success, a lot more visitors to the library than usual, to pick up a free book. We had quizzes and offered a selection of tasty cakes. Backed by the Reading Agency, and with great posters and signs the event was simply brilliant. Such a buzz, all about books and reading! - Anonymous

I am writing to say thank you for your very kind contribution of the books from World Book Night. I facilitate the West London Support Groups, and when I offered them to the women in my groups there was a very enthusiastic response. One woman who took one wanted to say a very big thank you- she said 'no one ever gives me things' -it is the first gift she has had in a long time, and she said she was going to go and lie in the sun and read it. A lot of our clients are mums who don't have much money to spend on treats for themselves so they are hugely appreciative when they receive a nice gift. Also- its gives all the women a much needed boost that someone thought about them, and cared enough to drop them off at our office so they could be handed out. – Beth

6. World Book Night in the future

Overall, the results of this evaluation support the conclusions of the large scale evaluation of the 2015 event. World Book Night continues to impact positively both on the recipients of the books and the volunteers who give the books out. World Book Night has a broad reach, including people with particular needs such as those engaged in literacy classes and with health needs. A slight area of weakness is that fewer men than women receive books and relatively small numbers of people aged over 65.

As part of the evaluation we investigated how to improve World Book Night for future years. We asked our givers to select activities from a list that they would be willing to undertake to encourage reading for pleasure. The following were the three most popular options:

- Give a book that you already own to an infrequent reader
- Buy a book to give to an infrequent reader
- Help an infrequent reader join the local library.

Key objectives for the future will include:

- To broaden the celebrations to include more general reading promotion and own-book gifting, drawing on givers views about different activities that they would be willing to undertake
- To encourage more engagement from businesses, charities, plus libraries, bookshops and other community reading hubs, unlocking access to even more local activists
- To further extend our reach to those whose life chances we can help by inspiring them to become readers.