

Month,” finally receiving official recognition that year.

Four classic Denzel Washington films, “Glory,” “Mo’ Better Blues,” “Crimson Tide,” and “The Great Debaters” were screened in NCL’s International Conference Hall, two on the afternoon of February 22, followed by a further two on March 7. Between screenings, AIT Cultural Affairs Officer, Mr. Eric Aldrich, led an audience discussion and appreciation of the films and took questions from the lively audience, who found these screenings and discussions of great help in better understanding the significance of African-American History Month. In response to the ongoing global Covid-19 epidemic, as the audience arrived at each event, their temperatures were monitored, alcohol-based handwash provided, and they were urged to put on masks.



AIT Cultural Affairs Officer, Eric Aldrich, leads discussion during Denzel Washington film screenings to commemorate African-American History Month.

■ **The Release of “2019 Annual Report on Reading Atmosphere and Reading Engagement in Taiwan”**

The “2019 Annual Report on Reading Atmosphere and Reading Engagement in Taiwan” is released on March 1. It analyzes the public’s reading engagement and reading interests in 2019, as well as the most borrowed books from public libraries. Using library operation statistics analysis was done on public reading ability, and cities with outstanding performances were commended.

The public’s love of going to public libraries

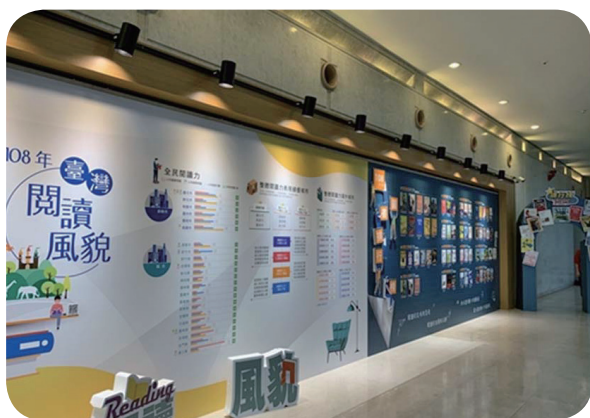
did not decrease in 2019. The public responded very favorably to library services, with each reading engagement metric seeing a considerable increase. The number of patrons using public libraries throughout the island surpassed 100 million for the first time. The number of patrons borrowing books increased to 22.95 million. A total of 81.3 million volumes were checked out during the year. All of these are higher than 2018 (persons visiting libraries increased 22.83 million, a 24.82% increase; persons borrowing books increased 1.28 million, a 5.9% increase; number of books borrowed increased 3.39 million volumes, a 4.35% increase). It also showed the reading power of the digital era in terms of e-reading; e-books borrowed increased 810,000 volumes, a 46.55% increase. This was the highest increase of any metric. These show the amazing results of efforts by the Ministry of Education and public libraries to promote foundational reading habits among the public.

National Central Library Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated, with the support of the Ministry of Education, NCL has in recent years focused on pushing forward public library projects, actively guiding public libraries throughout Taiwan, adding to the library’s holdings, improving service quality, and promoting reading among the general public. Furthermore, through holding workshops, training courses, sharing sessions, and delegations abroad, NCL is leading county and city libraries throughout the nation in improving together professional acumen. Through goals of even better holdings and more professional services, public libraries are able to continuously plant the seeds of education and reading, foster literacy among the public, and thus become an important base in the public’s developing reading ability and improving its competitive edge.

In looking at overall reading interests in 2019, Works related to language and literature continue to be a favorite of the public. In terms of books borrowed, top picks for this year are

no longer limited to kung fu novels, but also include other topics, such as spiritual growth and historical books. This diversification in reading tastes is a welcome development.

In terms of reading engagement, “Cities with Outstanding Overall Reading Ability” saw Taipei City, Miaoli County, and Taitung County topping their respective categories; “Cities with Stark Improvement in Reading Engagement” included Taoyuan City, Yunlin County, and Kinmen County in their respective categories. Of these, Kinmen County saw the greatest percentage of growth and was crowned 1st place in all of Taiwan. In addition, “Cities with Outstanding Reading Engagement in Each Category” showed that the people in Sanwan Township, Miaoli County were the most active borrowers of library books, with each person borrowing on average 17.64 volumes. Sanwan has held this honor for the last 6 consecutive years. The people of Kaohsiung City go to libraries the most, with each citizen visiting an average of 9.76 times. Nearly 80% of people in Taipei have library cards, the highest percentage in Taiwan. The people of Juguang Township in Lienchiang County own, on average, 21.96 books, the highest in the country.



Exhibition of public's reading engagement and reading interests in 2019.

■ NCL E-Learning Campus Spring Digital Learning Promotional Activity

In an effort to increase the professional acumen of librarians, government employees,

and teachers—and in response to the coronavirus pandemic—National Central Library is encouraging the public to make use of the resources on its E-Learning Campus during this quarantine period to keep learning. The event is called “Further Your Academics During the Pandemic” Spring Digital Learning Promotion Event. This event will allow participants to learn what they desire and replenish their minds and bodies. On the NCL E-Learning Campus platform the following courses will be available: New Waves in Education Trends, Basic Public Library Management Acumen, and Global Vision. Eligible participants are encouraged to sign up.

» NCL E-Learning Campus platform:
<https://cu.ncl.edu.tw/mooc/index.php>



The promotional poster for the Spring Digital Learning courses.

■ NCL Offers Express Materials Delivery Service to Assist Researchers during the Pandemic

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, National Central Library is now offering a Knowledge Quick Access materials delivery service to aid in obtaining needed materials during the pandemic. It is also providing instant online reference services and a resource users' guide via its Online Reference Help website to assist patrons in finding what they need in the library.

NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated that in an effort to reduce the use of public transportation, and limit risks of infection by