

## ■ Press Conference Announcing the Release of the 2021 Annual Report on Reading Atmosphere and Reading Engagement in Taiwan During the Pandemic, Libraries are a Safe Haven for Calming and Enriching the Heart and Soul

The Ministry of Education held a press conference to announce the release of the 2021 Annual Report on Reading Atmosphere and Reading Engagement in Taiwan which analyses the reading engagement and interests of Taiwan people in 2021, as well as shows the rates of book borrowing in public libraries. Awards were presented to outstanding cities based on a reading engagement analysis from library operation statistics.

In 2021, the nature of people's lives and jobs changed, and as a result their use of libraries also changed. The pandemic caused a decrease in the frequency the people visited public places, resulting in a drastic drop in the number of times libraries were visited during the year. In 2021, Taiwan citizens entered libraries across the island counted a total of 58.59 million times. This is 21.1 million fewer times than in previous years. Despite this, the total number of people borrowing books was a whopping 18.9 million, with 69.77 million books or resources being borrowed. That is an average of 2.98 books per person (whereas in 2020, 21.1 million people visited libraries, a decrease of 26.47%; the number of people borrowing books fell 3.3 million, a 14.86% drop; the total number of books borrowed decreased by 1.038 million, or 12.95%). During the pandemic, online library services had the most pronounced growth. "E-book reading" became a hot trend. The total number of e-books borrowed during the year was 8.06 million (increasing 4.43 million over 2020), a change of 122.04%. These were the first choice of library patrons during the pandemic. The public use of "library internet resources" increased 29.76 million times (an increase of 5.66%). The public chose to visit libraries virtually and make use of available library resources to enrich themselves and their studies.

In looking back at reading interests in 2021, language learning books were the most popular genre. Nearly half of the public enjoyed reading works of literature. Patrons ages 35-44 were the most active

library reading group and have been the ones that borrow the most books for many years till now. From the borrowing rankings, it is easy to see that self-help and personal growth books in the philosophy genre are the most popular among readers. This year's rankings also show that health and diet, home organizing, and financial management books are also very popular. Perhaps this is because of the pandemic and many people working from home. Many more people are paying attention to healthy eating topics and learning various investment and money management strategies through books, looking to create more sources of income during the pandemic.

In terms of reading engagement, for "Cities with Overall Excellent Reading Engagement" in the "Special Municipalities" group, including Taipei City, Tainan City and Taichung City. For the "Counties and Cities" group, including Keelung City, Hsinchu City, Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, Changhua County, Yilan County, Taitung County, Penghu County, and Kinmen County. In addition, "The City with the Most Outstanding Reading Engagement across All Categories" went to Sanwan Township in Miaoli. Its residents love reading, with an average of 18.94 books borrowed per capita each year. It has won this category for eight years in a row! The residents in Taitung are most fond of visiting libraries, at a rate of 3.70 times a year per capita. Finally, 90% of Keelung residents have a library card, which is the highest percentage in Taiwan.



*A Group photo for the release of the 2021 Annual Report on Reading Atmosphere and Reading Engagement in Taiwan.*