

International Exchange of Bookstart Activities, Its Universality and Speciality

- Case of the 2018 Bookstart International Symposium
In Korea

Book Culture Foundation :
www.bookreader.or.kr

Bookstart Korea www.bookstart.org

Ahn Chansoo

Mr. Peter from EURead asked me to present on the 2018 Bookstart International Symposium ' in Korea. .I am delighted to be speaking about the '2018 Bookstart International Symposium'

This story will probably be about the **universality and specificity** of the 'book gift' activity, also known as Bookstart.

What we learn through international exchange is the universality inherent in the activity of '**promoting reading culture**' amidst the **specificity of differences in each country's history, culture, laws, and systems**. In particular, I think it is very important to ask about the universality and specificity of 'reading culture' that is required in a new era of transition, such as the climate crisis, the development of digital technologies such as AI, labor and jobs, the coexistence of the majority and the minority, and the growth of each individual as a citizen.

My presentation consists of three main parts:

- (1) What is the 2018 Bookstart International Symposium in Korea?
- (2) What have we learned through international exchange?
- (3) What are the good and bad points of international exchange activities?

Attendees of the 2018 Bookstart International Symposium in Korea



2018 북스타트 국제 심포지엄
2018 International Symposium Bookstart
Citizen Action for Reading
Book Culture Foundation
Bookstart Korea

일시 | 2018.10.19. (금) 14:00~17:30
장소 | 서울 프레스센터 국제회의장
패널 |

참가신청

	일본 북스타트 시라이 테츠 대표 시라이 테츠 북스타트재팬 대표는 2009년을 시작으로 오늘날까지 지속해오고 있는 일본 북스타트 운동의 10년을 맞이하였습니다.
	콜롬비아 북스타트 디아나 카롤리나 레이 퀸타로 전무이사 문맹예방이라는 콜롬비아의 핵심 문화 확산을 위해 1994년에 설립된 비영리민간단체입니다. 다양한 독서 진흥 활동과 함께 펼쳐지는 '말론베어의 북스타트' 그 조종인 역할에 관해서 소개합니다.
	태국 북스타트 수타팁 태차야퐁 부대표 지난 35년간 어린이들의 더 나은 삶을 위하여 자원활동을 해온 'Thaiby'의 수타팁 태차야퐁 부대표는 태국 영유아를 위한 독서 운동의 시작, 태국 북스타트를 소개합니다.
	한국 북스타트 안찬수 상임이사 안찬수 책임는사회문화재단-북스타트코리아 상임이사는 인류 공통의 공공사업으로서의 북스타트라는 주제로 발표합니다.

문의 bookread3@caum.net, 02-3675-8793

주최 문화체육관광부 한국출판문화산업진흥원 주관 한국출판문화재단

발제

태국 북스타트 - Bookstart Thailand

- 태국 영유아를 위한 독서 운동의 시작
- Bookstart as the first reading program in Thailand
- 수타팁 태차야퐁 / ThaiBBY 부대표
- Suthathib Thajchayapong / Vice President, ThaiBBY

일본 북스타트 - Bookstart Japan

- 일본 북스타트 운동의 18년
- 18 years of Bookstart in Japan
- 시라이 테츠 / 북스타트재팬 대표
- Tetsu Shirai / Representative, Bookstart Japan

콜롬비아 북스타트 - Bookstart Colombia

- 콜롬비아 북스타트, 조용한 혁명
- Bookstart in Colombia, a Silent Revolution
- 디아나 카롤리나 레이 퀸타로 / 펀다렉투라 전무이사
- Diana Carolina Rey Quintero / Executive Director, Fundalectura

네덜란드 북스타트 - Bookstart Netherlands

- 네덜란드 북스타트
- Bookstart in Netherlands
- 아드리안 랑겐돈크 / 스티프팅 레젠 프로그램 코디네이터
- Adriaan Langendonk / Programme Coordinator, Stichting Lezen

한국 북스타트 - Bookstart Korea

- 인류 공통의 공공사업으로서의 북스타트
- Bookstart as a Common Public Project for Human Society
- 안찬수 / 책읽는사회문화재단 상임이사
- Ahn Chansoo / Director General, Book Culture Foundation

The 2018 Bookstart International Symposium was a three-day event consisting of symposiums, roundtable discussions, and media interviews.



What did the participants say?

Shirai Tetsu, the representative of Bookstart Japan, said of the goal of the Bookstart movement: "The goal of Bookstart is not to teach children to read and write and raise them to achieve excellent grades. The focus should be on ensuring that all children have the right to freely access books and experience the joy of reading."

<18 years of Bookstart in Japan>



Thailand first introduced Bookstart in 2003. A total of 106 households in five regions were the pilot project targets of the Bookstart movement. **Suthathib Thajchayapong** vice president of the Book for Children Foundation (**ThaiBBY**) said, "The targets were poor children in slums and children in welfare facilities," and explained, "The research method for the pilot project of Thailand Bookstart, which was supported by the budget of the Office of the Secretary General of the Education Council, was easy and simple, but the results were very successful."

<Bookstart as the first reading program in Thailand>



Colombia's Bookstart movement was a "**silent revolution.**" "For more than 50 years, Colombia has been in civil war, and children have been exposed to war," recalled **Diana Carolina Rey Quintero**, executive director of Fundalectura. "When we tried to distribute books to local communities, we were told, 'Books make you think. Women don't need to think, so take them.'" Diana said, "Even major media companies participated in the Bookstart movement. We included public service announcements that books are not something only the privileged class enjoy, but something that is part of everyday life." She added, "We enlightened parents and encouraged intergenerational communication so that they could understand how valuable Bookstart is and why it can change people's lives."

<Bookstart in Colombia, a Silent Revolution>



Adriaan Langendonk of the Netherlands **'Stichting Lezen'** was not present on site, but sent a video greeting and a presentation on the Netherlands Bookstart, which was shared with symposium participants.

<Boostart in Netherlands>



lezen
STICHTING LEZEN

KB Koninklijke Bibliotheek
National Library of the Netherlands

BookStart in The Netherlands
General program

Kunst van Lezen
KUNST VAN LEZEN
KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK
EN STICHTING LEZEN

lezen
STICHTING LEZEN

KB

Key figures

- 17,208,000 inhabitants,
- 388 municipalities
- 170,000 babies born per year
- 700,000 children age 0-4 years
- 9,000 locations childcare (341,000 children)
- 7,226 location primary schools
- 150 Library organizations
- 767 Library locations, 194 service points

I, **Ahn, Chan-soo**, represent the **Bookstart Korea** and have spoken about Bookstart as a public project common to all mankind.

“The goal of Korea Bookstart is to deliver the message of social childcare support by providing free Bookstart packages to all newborn babies and to create a social mechanism that can minimize the gap in opportunity and inequality. Therefore, Korea Bookstart emphasizes that all societies have a responsibility to raise their children well, rather than the value of promoting reading, and that this is the responsibility of parents as well as society.”

<Bookstart as a Common Public Project for Human Society>



What was the purpose of the international symposium?

The Bookstart activity in Korea was growing as it became established as a childcare support, reading promotion activity, and library culture activity that fit the reality of Korea despite difficult circumstances. In this process,

- ① we wanted to share wisdom to further develop Bookstart in Korea.
- ② we wanted to widely publicize that Bookstart activity is not an activity that is carried out only in a few countries, but an activity with universal globality.
- ③ we wanted to deepen the understanding of Bookstart by broadening the understanding of Bookstart in each country among librarians, activists, academics, and publishers who are participating in Bookstart activity.
- ④ we wanted to explore the possibility of an international network through Bookstart.

What did we learn through international exchange?

We explored the activities of various organizations and groups around the world that carry out reading promotion activities and activities like Bookstart. Through this, we tried to find out

- ① what values Bookstart in Korea should uphold,
- ② what direction it should move forward in,
- ③ what our strengths and weaknesses are,
- ④ what and how we will learn from each other and move forward if we continue international exchange in the future, etc.

Bookstart in Korea was officially launched in 2003. Before starting Bookstart in Korea, we wanted to learn from the activities of Booktrust in the UK and Bookstart Japan in Japan. As you know, Booktrust in the UK has distributed millions of books to babies since its Bookstart pilot project in 1992. In 2003, **Wendy Cooling**, who came up with the precious idea of 'Bookstart' and put it into practice, was invited to Korea to hold a seminar. The question at that time was whether activities carried out in countries like the UK would be successful if introduced to Korea.



<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/03/wendy-cooling-obituary>

In Korea, while conducting a pilot project in Jungnang-gu, Seoul, and conducting research in parallel with Professor Kwak Geum-ju's Department of Psychology at Seoul National University, we explored the introduction of the British model.

However, **the differences between Korea and the UK** were evident from the beginning. In the UK, when distributing book packages to babies, not only libraries but also public health centers play an important role. **The UK's NHS (National Health Service)** was an important foundation. In Korea, I think cooperation between libraries and public health centers is an important factor when carrying out Bookstart activities, but in the end, Bookstart activities in Korea were centered around libraries. Why was that? It was because Korea's **history, culture, and education** are different from those of the UK.

Diana from **Fundalectura** in Colombia told us about a region called **Guajira** at an international symposium. In Colombia, there are "local mothers who take care of up to 14 children per mother." Before Fundalectura arrived, these mothers were watching TV and taking care of their children. When they went to deliver books there, the local influential people said, "You can't deliver books." When they asked, "Why? Why can't you deliver books?" they said, "Women don't need to think." However, Diana said that Fundalectura delivered books. What was it? **"We planted seeds of thought." This is how a silent revolution begins,** Deanna also said in an interview with the Korean media.



"Bookstart is a 'silent revolution'...
Reading in early childhood is a
cultural right

"<https://www.ibabynews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=69193>

<https://fundalectura.org/>

Diana said this in an interview with Korean media:

“When Fundalectura was founded, the situation in Colombia was really dire. It was a time when promoting reading, distributing books, and improving education were truly luxuries. With the end of the civil war, people who had been living deep in the mountains for more than 40 years began to flock to the cities. Peace has come to those who had experienced war and violence every day, but Colombia is still unstable. Reading promotion movements, including Book Start, are more important than ever. **Fundalectura’s policies had to be completely revised.**”



<https://fundalectura.org/el-derecho-a-leer/>

It is said that Colombia's Fundalectura tracked and investigated children who read books for a year and those who did not, and quantified this as the 'social return on investment (SROI)'. As a result, it is said that 'if the government invests 1 peso in a child, it will later return 5 pesos'. As a result of these efforts, it is said that the Book Start movement in Colombia is more active than ever.

<https://www.seoul.co.kr/news/life/publication-literature/2018/10/19/20181019500083>



<https://fundalectura.org/proyectos/>

What are the good and bad points of international exchange activities?

What we learn here is that Korea and the UK, Korea and Colombia are countries with very different environments (**specificity**). However, the book gifting activity, a 'silent revolution' that seeks to spread the 'seeds of thought', is unfolding even in these different environments (**universality**).

I keep saying this, but what we learn through international exchange activities is the universality of Bookstart, the 'book gift activity.' That is its greatest strength. And I think we need to expand it to a more global level. Now, librarians, teachers, activists, and volunteers who are participating in Bookstart activities are aware that Bookstart is not just a Korean activity, **but a global, universal activity**. If you look at the **Bookstart logos of countries around the world**, you can see that they use animal images that fit the characteristics of each country. I am really curious about what animals they are. I wonder why they used those animals as logo images.

The Jindo dog in Korea, the polar bear in England, the otter in Japan, the elephant in Thailand, the capybara called 'chigüiro' in Colombia, etc. These animals are probably animals that permeate the history and culture of each country. The animals used in the logo are probably animals that are familiar to both babies and caregivers. Likewise, I think the importance of giving books to babies and caregivers and sharing them to read is very simple but powerful.



The disadvantages of international exchange, or rather difficulties, are first of all the differences in language. And as I will say again, the differences in each country's history, culture, laws, and systems. Although each country is carrying out a very similar activity of giving books to babies and their parents, the differences in history, culture, laws, and systems that serve as the background for that activity are not simple.



There was something that surprised Japanese Bookstart activists when they came to Korea. I was also surprised when I went to the Bookstart activity center in Japan. It was that while Japanese Bookstart activities are very refined, orderly, and perhaps even quiet, Korean Bookstart activities are very noisy and lively.



Activities of the Korean Book Start