

ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL 'ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY' EVENT: HINTS AND TIPS

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We hope that organizers who are new to the 'One Book, One Community' reading event model might find the following checklist helpful. It is by no means exhaustive, and we do encourage you to investigate the websites of long-running 'One Book' programmes (some can be accessed from our links pages) for more ideas.

Here are just some hints and tips for success, offered from our perspective as academic researchers:

■ Visibility: strong & creative publicity

The main reason readers in our study did not participate in OBOC was simply that they had not heard about it! How will you 'make a noise' for your event amidst all the other arts and cultural activities in your community/city?

Consider the various media available to you, and don't forget word of mouth advertisement. Publishers are sometimes willing to help with promoting their authors. They're the experts so ask for assistance.

■ Free books

Our research found that the most effective way of reaching out to people of different ages and cultural backgrounds was to give away some free copies of the selected book. Publishers may be prepared to broker a deal or offer complementary copies; sponsors may be willing to pay for some copies. Even if you can't give any books away for free, there are other ways that you can make the chosen book accessible to diverse audiences:

- Choose a book available in languages spoken/read in your area
- Graphic novel versions or serialized cartoons may engage younger readers
- Audio Books might encourage visually impaired or harried readers to participate.
- Living author who can visit your area

Some of the most successful and lively OBOCs feature a visit from the book's author. Is the author of the selected book willing to participate in activities during your programme? Are they open to trying new things and able to talk to all kinds of participants?

- Variety of events
 - Plan activities which are not dependent on literacy/reading the book; include some which are short & in non-library spaces

We observed that organizers who planned some activities that did not require participants to be print literate generally succeeded in involving a more diverse cross-section of people in their OBOC than programmes focussed primarily around, for example, book discussions. We've included some examples on our vid-cast.

Our study also demonstrated that the use of spaces not usually associated with books and reading (e.g. shopping malls, parks) can be an effective means of making OBOC more socially inclusive.

- Involve schools

Involve young people from the start by inviting them to think about ideas for activities.

- Partnerships with other agencies

Some of the most dynamic programmes from the OBOCs we investigated resulted from great partnerships among representatives from public sector organisations, non-profits and the commercial sector. What did the people representing these agencies have in common? Simply put: a passion for reading.

- Involve leaders from marginalised communities in planning and organizing programming from day 1

Our research demonstrated that organizers who already have good working partnerships with various community groups and 'grass-roots' organisations in their city produce a more culturally and socially inclusive programme.