

## GROWING UP WITH A BOOK

# Encouraging young people to read

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Primary school students at the book-giving event last year.  
Photo: Marko Bezenšek/Public Library of Slovenske Konjice

For several years, the Slovenian Book Agency has been leading a project to make young readers more aware of the best Slovenian authors, improve their access to good literature and show them how to make the most of public libraries.

The national project Growing up with a book was initiated in 2006 by the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with partners, and has been run and developed by the Slovenian Book Agency (SBA) since 2009. Project partners work with general public libraries, Slovenian primary and secondary schools, primary schools with an adapted programme, educational establishments for children and young people with special needs, and primary and secondary bilingual schools in neighbouring countries (Austria, Hungary, Italy). The Agency also co-operates with teachers of Slovenian at the so-called Saturday schools (USA, Australia), at supplementary Slovenian classes abroad (Belgium, BiH, Serbia, Croatia, France, etc.) and at European schools (e.g. Brussels, Luxembourg, Frankfurt).

**The project aims to improve accessibility of high-quality original Slovenian literature for young readers, promote acclaimed Slovenian authors among primary and secondary school students, and help young readers learn about the operation of the public library system.**

Moreover, the project strives to encourage publishers to include more contemporary Slovenian authors in their publishing programmes for young adults and, in so doing, increase the share of original Slovenian young adult books.

### FRUITFUL CO-OPERATION

Every year the SBA and other participating organisations select two works of young adult literature by Slovenian authors – one for seventh-grade primary school and one for first-year secondary school students. Schools and public libraries receive regular updates on the project, and promotional material and presentation films for both books are prepared in co-operation with the publishers and authors.

**This reading promotion campaign for young people is also supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS) and the Ministry of Culture (MC).**

The MESS stresses the importance of partnerships between schools and general libraries which enable experts from various fields to interact with children and young adults and, consequently, improve reading literacy as one of the Ministry's high-priority tasks. The MC also acknowledges the important role of the campaign in opening the door to the world of books. The books which young readers receive as gifts become welcome additions to their home libraries. Upon a visit to a public library, young readers learn about numerous other reading promotion projects and activities.

### CHEERING FOR READING

Throughout the school year, several supporting activities are held in co-operation with schools, libraries and other cultural organisations. In addition, the SBA organises project promotions at various fairs (Leipzig, Frankfurt, Bologna and the Slovenian Book Fair).

In the framework of the Slovenian Reading Badge project, selected books are read as part of intergenerational literacy programmes.

During EuroBasket 2013 in Slovenia, a campaign entitled No Game Without Drama was carried out in co-operation with the Basketball Federation of Slovenia with an aim to connect books and sport. During, before, and after the championship, several events related to basketball and books took place in bookstores and other interesting venues. The aim of the campaign was to connect culture and sport, use the immense potential of public attention on the basketball championship, integrate social responsibility and culture in the event, and increase the role of books in the Slovenian society.





The SBA and the Basketball Federation of Slovenia continue to promote reading culture. The promotion campaign is now in its fifth consecutive year. In 2016, over 600 books have already been donated to young basketball players.

CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

In the school year 2016/2017 the project Growing up with a book is organised for the eleventh time for seventh-grade primary school students and for the seventh time for first-year secondary school students.

Vinko Möderndorfer's *Kit na plaži* (Whale on the Beach; 22,000 copies) was selected for primary schools, and Marjana Moškrič's *Sanje o belem štrpedu* (Dreams of a White Strpedo, 22,000 copies) for secondary-school readers.

The project opens officially on 8th September, the International Literacy Day. On that day, selected books are delivered to public libraries across the country where they wait to be received by young readers.

At the secondary school level, the number of participating schools totalled 152, or 97%. The total number of first-year secondary school students involved in the project was 16743, or 84% of the total first-year secondary school population.



Books are a favourite pastime for Slovenian basketball players. Photo: The Basketball Federation of Slovenia in co-operation with the Slovenian Book Agency.