International Association of School Librarianship

PRESIDENTIAL POINTS

As we gear up to celebrate Volunteer Week (April 16-22, 2023), it is important to acknowledge the critical role that volunteers play in shaping our communities. In our IASL community, volunteers are essential to the important work of our association. I would like to express my deep gratitude to our executive members, board members, special interest group (SIG) members and chairs, *School Libraries Worldwide* journal editors and editorial board members, our annual conference organizing team, and all other volunteers who give their time to IASL.

Raman Deep from India is busy making plans and determining the next theme for International School Library Month in October 2023. Lucy Green and Melissa Johnston from the US are busy copy editing articles for inclusion in our open source journal, School Libraries Worldwide. Katy Manck and her team are busy reviewing professional and workshop proposals and a group of Research SIG members are just wrapping up the reviews of the research proposals for the International Forum on Research in School Librarianship, a part of our annual IASL Conference.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of IASL. For more than 50 years, people from all over the world with a deep commitment to school libraries have given their time, energy and passion to our association. There are so many opportunities to volunteer for IASL. Please reach out to me if you are interested in getting more involved in IASL.

Left to Right - Mihaela Banek Zorica, Nancy Everhart, Melissa Johnston, Barbara Schultz-Jones, Ross Todd

Right now volunteers are busy planning to welcome you to Rome, Italy. Every IASL conference is a chance for all of our amazing volunteers to come together to celebrate school libraries, share new ideas for practice and research, and to meet new members who we hope will volunteer in the future. For more information about the conference, please visit www.iasl2023.com.

One of the biggest upcoming volunteer opportunities is as a conference organizer. We are still looking for conference bids for the 2024 Annual Conference. Virtual, in person, or hybrid events are welcome. The IASL Secretariat can help with registrations and promotion. Please find more information here - https://iasl-online.org/meetings/host.html - and reach out to me if you would like to talk more about conference hosting.

Happy Volunteer Week and thanks for all you do to lift up local, national and international communities.

Yours in school librarianship,

Jennifer Branch-Mueller, PhD
President, IASL
jbranch@ualberta.ca

CONTENTS

ISLM 2023 Poster Design Contest

BY RAMAN DEEP, CHAIRPERSON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH COMMITTEE (ISLM)

The ISLM Team is conducting a poster design contest to celebrate the International School Library Month 2023. The budding artists from all over the world are invited to contribute original creative works based on the ISLM theme 2023: **"The School Library: My Happy Place where Creativity and Imagination flourish."**

The chosen theme would allow the participants to express their fantasies or thoughts about reading; libraries, books and the results would be shown on your creative posters. The winning posters (according to the different categories) would serve as the ISLM's official posters and bookmarks.

Please note that this Contest is open to:

1. K-12, i.e age 3-20 students can participate (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle/Junior High and High/Senior High School Students).

2. All the Illustrators of Children's and Young Adult books from all around the Globe are welcome to participate in the Poster Design Contest

Suggested Guidelines

The creative piece has to:

- be unique, original and handmade. And can be designed on A3 or A4 pages (US letter or legal size paper);

- avoid copyright issues, avoid copying pre-existing ideas from various websites, or incorporate copyright protected characters (e.g., Disney or other comics characters);

- be realized using one or more techniques (drawing, painting, collage etc.), using pencil, crayons, watercolour, oil paint, and so on.

Please, kindly note that:

- Photographs, other 3D objects, and printouts will not be accepted;

- You can send us your artwork and details using the form available at the link provided;

- The poster needs to be scanned properly in high resolution. While scanning your poster, make sure that no other object is visible around it;

- the posters will be displayed during the IASL 2023 Conference in Rome (http://www.iasl2023.com)

- The deadline to submit entries is May 15, 2023.

- ISLM Poster Contest participants (pupils/students and professionals - authors, illustrators and designers), while submitting their poster, allow - free of charge - the IASL and the ISLM Team to include their works in the IASL newsletter, website and ISLM webpages, flyers, bookmarks, and other means of communication and publication.

Aside from that, participants can tell us about their creative posters, the ideas expressed, and the message associated with their poster along with their introduction. All of this may be captured in a 2-minute video and can be shared in the Google form link.

These videos will be displayed on the official social media channels of the IASL, and all participants will receive an e-certificate.

P.S. Please note that all submitted videos will be considered for sharing on the IASL Facebook page. You may register and submit your work at the given link: https://forms.gle/oUApK4xxNrcY5XLK9 and also visit IASL's official Facebook Page For any additional information/queries, please don't hesitate to contact Chairperson, Ms. Ramandeep at islmbookworm2012@gmail.com.

Mentoring is Win Win!!

BY K.E. HONES, NBCT LIBRARIAN

I have had the opportunity and privilege to mentor librarians and teachers over the years. Since 2021 I have been virtual mentoring with library students at Montana State. These students work in schools in several states, including Alaska, Montana and Oregon. From 2018-2020, I tutored and mentored beginning teachers. Our district had a master teacherprogram and from 2014-2018 I led a team of five librarians and teachers focusing on research and lessons that provide diversity, equity, and Inclusion for ALL students. From 2004 til 2020, I mentored teachers at Stanford and in my district seeking National Board credentials. From these experiences, I KNOW that mentorship provides benefits for both mentors and their mentees.

As a mentor, I model interpersonal and leadership skills with suggestions for what and how to communicate with school teams and the importance of working with administrators (we have same goal "student learning"!) I share knowledge, including day

Delores Park, San Francisco

to day school library management, developing student service program in the library and of course tips for ongoing weeding. I encourage confidence by recognizing and emphasizing mentees skills, ideas and resources, I create new perspectives by asking mentee to discuss topics and offering current research articles.

Mentees are important because this relationship offers growth to the mentor with gaining new knowledge, including the most recent library trends. Mentees help mentors

focus on goals. This relationship encourages mentors to develop strategies to listen and encourage and these skills transfer to daily school library work!

Developing this relationship can help both of you learn new things, build your networks, and grow as professionals.

What do you have to offer as a mentor to students new to the library profession? For beginning teachers? What can you learn about yourself as a mentor?

Light in the Library!

BY MADHU BHARGAVA, HEAD LIBRARIAN, THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY, INDIA

On 30th January 2023, The Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad Library opened the magical window once again for the students to gaze upon two child authors as stars of the day!

Samarth Chitta, a Bangaluru based 11 year old author and podcaster and Tamaara Nambiar, 11 years old student of The Aga Khan Academy, Hyderabad, a gifted poet glittered amongst the students of their age group.

Samarth has two books, 'Konnichiwa Izumi: Adventures in 2040' and 'Walking Talking Tree' published and Tamaara has just recently published 'Undiscovered', a collection of poems and illustrations.

The session was mesmerizing for the audience of students who listened to the authors intently and intensely.

Samarth Chitta - giving autographs

Help Us Make Our 2024 ALMA Nominations

BY KASEY L. GARRISON, PHD, IASL CHILDREN'S & YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE SIG CHAIR

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2023

Photo: Randy Fontanilla

Source: https://alma.se/en/

It is that great time of year where we get to meet the newest Astrid Lingren Memorial Award Laureate. Last month, the ALMA committee announced Laurie Halse Anderson as the 2023 Laureate (https://alma.se/en/) ! An American author writing novels for young adults for almost 30 years, Anderson tackles important themes including rape and sexual violence in one of her most popular titles, Speak (1999). As such, you may find some of her books on censored and banned lists in some libraries, which really shows the power in her writing and her commitment to social justice.

Each year, the announcement of the new laureate also sparks the nomination process for the next year's laureate and IASL has again been asked to nominate for the four categories of author, illustrator, storyteller and promoter of reading. This is an honour as we are just one of three international organisations making nominations!

This year, we have streamlined the nomination form so it will be much easier for you to put forward your nominees for a living Author, Illustrator, Storyteller, or Promoter of Reading.

This shortened form includes just 5 questions:

- Nominee Name
- Nominee Country
- Reason for Nomination (3 sentences)
- Top Books (authors, storytellers and illustrators) or activities (promoter of reading)
- Links to other information (optional)

Access the form here: https://forms.gle/xsQuUBVUV4Z9bmhD8 and make your nomination by 15 April.

Then the Children's and Young Adult Literature SIG will compile the results and put forward IASL's 2024 ALMA Nominations for each category. Thank you for participating and happy reading!

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

Let's Chat about Information Literacy

BY DR. LESLEY FARMER, CHAIR, INFORMATION LITERACY SIG

Teacher librarians are needed more than ever to deal with AI, particularly new generative AI tools that can produce realistic text and images. At the same time, these tools – and educators' heightened interest in them – can be leveraged to increase information literacy instruction and practice.

Certainly, for librarians, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Dall-e bring up issues of intellectual property, bias and misinformation. The products generated are only as good as the source pool that they draw upon, and the algorithms themselves are originally constructed by humans, which then adds another dimension of bias. Even sharing the process by which AI can generate information can enlighten the school community and motivate them to develop and use critical thinking skills more often.

Discussing the impact of generative AI also constitutes a valuable information literacy lesson. Drawing upon existing materials, AI seems to seamlessly synthesize digital information, which can jumpstart information tasks such as research, coding and visual arts creation. Such AI tools are already impacting how artists and programmers work. At the same time, librarians should point out that the original sources of information are seldom identified, which brings up the importance of attribution and intellectual property.

What, then, are ways to leverage generative AI to foster information literacy? Here are several starting strategies.

- Research how algorithms and generative AI tools are developed.
- Track the evolution of AI.
- Critique AI writing.
- Trace AI essay assertions and their citations (which are often bogus).
- Locate and read other source material about the same topic.
- Test the same AI prompt to see if different text or images emerge.
- Justify claims/stances with citations.
- Show how transforming information from one format to another (e.g., essay to poem or infographic) impacts the information – exemplifying transliteracy.
- Discuss legal concerns with Dall-e and other AI art generators.
- Discuss ethics and intellectual property, particularly in terms of digital information and its dissemination.
- Analyze case studies where AI use led to cheating.
- Bring artists and programmers to talk about their use of AI (physically or online).

Teacher librarians can also work with teachers in identifying ways to address AI use in class. Such activities can be done in workshops or generated as a joint document (e.g., Google doc), which can result in a schoolwide set of guidelines.

- Use AI as a tool to provide basic information – and then compare it with textbook information.
- Have students do I-papers, in which they write a log about their research process as they take news from resources.
- Have students transform AI content into another format.
- Use AI as a way to jumpstart student writing or to break their writer's block.
- Examine the use of word processing AI tools such as spell-check or apps such as Grammarly.
- Have students create review questions and answers as a study method.
- Have students write and create images in class to build their confidence.
- Have students link their personal experiences to subject matter to make it more meaningful and original; this practice also helps in developing authentic assessments.

Generative AI offers a unique opportunity to rethink information literacy and align it with today's technology. Indeed, this generation of students have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience a new set of technology tools from the ground up. How exciting!

- bit.ly/41yAYLN
- Advice, Articles and Tips from Common Sense Education: http://bit.ly/404kV7i
- Harris, C. (2023). ChatGTP and Schools Workshop Slides: bit.ly/3KJlIG5 and Dropbox link to materials: bit.ly/3GUemxp
- Klepper, D., & Valdes, M. (2023, March 20). Digital literacy: Can the republic 'survive an algorithm"? AP News: http://bit.ly/41cY8XI
- What will ChatGPT and the next generation of AI tools mean for international education? (2023, Feb. 15). ICEF Monitor: http://bit.ly/3Gw6cuT
- Heikkilä, M. (2023, Feb. 14). Why you shouldn't trust AI search engines. MIT Technology Review: http://bit.ly/40XCiro

2023, 6th Hybrid IASL/ZimLA Pre-Conference on School Librarianship - Call for Papers 2023

BY MR JERRY MATHEMA, ZIMLA PRESIDENT 2021-2023; IASL PAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR - AFRICA

Call for Papers 2023 (IASL) International Association of School Librarianship Africa Sub-Sahara & the Zimbabwe Library Association's joint Hybrid 6th Annual Pre-Conference in School Librarianship in Gweru, Zimbabwe, on Monday the 2nd of July 2023.

Important Dates:
Deadline for submission of proposals: 31 May 2023.

Notification of acceptance of proposals: June 10, 2023.
IASL Region 1: Africa Sub-Saharan and ZimLA cordially invite library and information professionals working in the school, public and tertiary colleges libraries, educators / researchers who either work in Library & Information Science educational training institutions or have an interest in school & public librarianship to submit proposals for recent research /professional papers/poster presentations for a Pre-Conference to be held before the Zimbabwe Library Association's 56th Annual Conference and General Meeting in the City of Gweru, Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

Main theme
Theme "Innovative technologies shaping the future of school libraries"

Sub-themes
- Current technology trends in school libraries
- Future technology trends in school libraries
- Effects of technology on school library design
- Technology and the changing roles of school librarians
- Impact of technology on school libraries
- Digital literacy skills

Papers and posters (print and electronic) are encouraged in any areas related to innovative technologies in school, public and community librarianship.

Guidelines for Submission of Abstracts for Papers and Posters

Topic guidelines
Research/Professional Paper/Poster presentations must cover one of the sub-themes.
Proposals should be submitted by e-mail and must include :
- Title of paper
- Abstract (200-500 words)
- Name of the presenter(s) and country of origin
- E-mail address (es)
- Telephone numbers

Presentation format Paper/E-paper/ Recorded Presentation
Each presenter will be allowed twenty (20) minutes maximum to present a paper. An additional ten (10) minutes are allowed for questions and answers.

Poster/E-Poster Presentation:
Posters/e-posters should be 100 x 122 centimetres. Screen prints, charts, drawings, photographs, and other graphics with text, to illustrate the presentation, are encouraged. Lettering should be simple, bold, and easily legible from a distance of 1.22 metres.

Posters may accompany hand-outs (if possible but optional).
N.B. Papers/Posters (print, electronic and recorded) must be in British or American English; a certificate of attendance; and an honorarium will be given to presenters after the pre-conference.

Submission Deadlines (2023)
- First for Papers Call – 16 February
- Second Call for Papers – 16 March
- Final Call for Papers – 16 April
- Submission of Abstracts – 16 May
- Review and Acceptance – 31 May

Submission of full Papers/posters (print, electronic and recorded presentations) and Registration on -10 June 2023.

Contact Mr Jerry Mathema, ZimLA President 2021-2023; IASL past Regional Director - Africa @+263772755776 (Whatsapp) @+263292479053 (Masiyephambili College)
- iaslzimlapreconference@gmail, com,
- jkmath1972@gmail.com,
- librarian@masiyephambili.com

For further information on the conference organization, visit our website: https://iasl-online.org, http://www.zimla.org.zw/, https://zimbabwereads.org/zimla/

Libraries in the Land of Dawn Lit Mountains

BY RASHMI KUMBAR (PHD), ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF GUJARAT, INDIA

A noted educationist and social activist, Mr Sathyanarayanan Mundayoor is largely credited with creating libraries for the children in rural Arunachal Pradesh, a north-eastern state in India and known as the 'Land of Dawn Lit Mountains'. Awarded the 'Padma Shri' for the noble work of setting up community libraries in Arunachal Pradesh, his commendable journey of creating libraries with the support of local youth is inspirational for library and information science professionals.

Fondly called by children as 'Uncle Moosa' (a pen name that Mr Sathyanarayanan took while writing columns in a local newspaper) he left a secure job as Revenue Officer in Mumbai in 1979 and relocated to Lohit in Arunachal Pradesh. Initially while working as an education officer at Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, he organized book exhibitions and founded the first community library in Etalin, in Dibang Valley. Within two years, the Etalin Library grew into a library network in Lohit district. In 2007, as part of Lohit Youth Library Movement, and in collaboration with Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC) and Vivekananda Trust, he started Bamboosa Library in the government town of Tezu. Further, under his leadership, thirteen libraries came up in Wakro, Chongkham, Lathaw and Anjow. When asked as to how as a person with no library science background got involved with libraries, Uncle Moosa termed it as

Online Talk on 'Impact of Youth Library Movement' at SLIS, CUG

a 'calling' that led him to the cause of creating libraries for children in remote villages of Arunachal Pradesh.

School of Library and Information Science, at Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, India had an opportunity to organize an online talk by Mr Sathyanarayanan, on the topic 'Impact of Youth Library Movement' on 1st March 2023. During his talk, he expressed that there should be no barriers to access books in libraries as they are democratic organizations.

Sharing his experiences of creating libraries for children of reading deprived communities, he was determined to take the books to the doorstep of the readers. He credits the local youth for ensuring that the community libraries work smoothly and commends the young volunteers for their positive approach, consistency in managing these libraries, conducting story sessions, motivating children to join the reading sessions every evening, and making the libraries as 'Happy Places.' During

interaction, he mentioned that as lead readers, volunteers create enthusiasm in children by being up to date with the reading resources and building a rapport with the students. He firmly believes in decentralized approach and draws on the strength of all those involved in the youth library movement, affirming that his role is only that of handholding. The volunteers managing the libraries have a sense of ownership and play the role of reading activists.

The success mantra for the Lohit Youth Library Movement is that 'the libraries are of the people, run by the people, and are for the people.' Spreading joy of reading is the basic pillar of Uncle Moosa's efforts in starting Lohit Youth Library Network which is now a movement that youth of Arunachal Pradesh reckon with!

Reference: *Satyanarayanan Mundayoor* (2023) *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyanarayanan_Mundayoor (Accessed: April 5, 2023).

Relevance of School Libraries in the Era of Digitization

BY RAGHUNATHAN M O, LIBRARIAN, GEMS MODERN ACADEMY, DUBAI
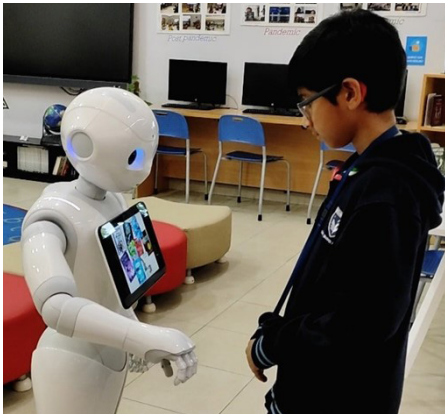
A student in the school library interacting with AI robot

Application of the latest technologies in the school library - online quiz

There is no doubt, the school libraries serve as the ideal space to develop these skills through self- paced learning with the help of reference, research, and intellectual recreation. Are our libraries growing up to these expectations? Are they still relevant in the era of digitisation? How has the role of the librarian changed in this scenario? The contemporary library services in the academic sector, especially the school libraries are facing these questions.

As we know, the resources and services made available by a library create further opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape new ideas and perspectives that are crucial to creativity and innovation. With advancements in technology, the role of librarians has evolved, and library services have expanded beyond traditional book borrowing. Now, students not only have the opportunity to showcase their skills confidently during library sessions, but they also perceive the school library as a hub of teaching and learning.

A school library is integral to developing 21st century skills among students. Inquiry learning requires students to develop a range of skills including problem-solving, decision making and others. So that, the library must serve as the ideal space to develop these skills through self- paced learning with the help of reference, research, and intellectual recreation.

A modern school librarian must think about the use of the school library platform to deliver engaging learning and productive sessions, aimed at developing and enhancing 21st century skills. Then we can find the solution in the libraries that are adaptable and agile, considering students' unique circumstances while still offering opportunities, such as effectively promoting reading.

Librarians have to adapt their roles to match the changing needs of students, giving them more voice, choice and ownership in their reading and learning activities, as well as paving the way for them to further explore their interests. For example, e-libraries provide access to digital resources and promote reading and research. An academic librarian's role as a media specialist requires her/him to use the most recent technology timely, to direct students to reliable and current resources. That is, the school librarian should guide the students to the resources as media

resource specialist and encourage their 'Unit of Enquiry' activity efficiently to develop their academic skills.

The academic libraries are constantly adopting new technological applications for information, learning and research. To be flexible and adaptive with new concepts in learning and research, librarians must do the same. The library has to adopt the most recent technology, which promotes high levels of productivity and reduces workload. The use of various technologies in school libraries can ensure that learning engagement activities are carried out efficiently. The use of Artificial Intelligence in academic libraries is now unavoidable and can aid in lowering inefficiencies and delays in the conventional approach.

By providing educational and pedagogical leadership, the modern librarian must work in tandem as an investigator and creative leader. To provide effective and efficient service, librarians must be outfitted with the most recent information and tools. It is crucial that librarians keep themselves updated on current global changes and students' informational needs. Participating in international conferences and seminars is a great way to keep themselves updated and make an impact. By providing educational and pedagogical leadership, librarians can work as investigators and creative leaders, providing the most recent information and tools to serve their communities effectively and efficiently.

The Latest Findings from SLIDE: The School Librarian Investigation–Decline or Evolution?

BY DR. KEITH CURRY LANCE, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, RSL RESEARCH GROUP, DEBRA E. KACHEL, SLIDE PROJECT DIRECTOR, ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY, CAITLIN GERRITY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

A recent article published in the Peabody Journal of Education highlights the latest research outcomes from the three-year IMLS grant project led by Dr. Keith Curry Lance and Debra Kachel. The Peabody article reveals patterns of inequitable access to librarians in K-12 public schools across the United States. This phase of the SLIDE project analyzed quantitative data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Common Core of Data (CCD) on trends in employment of school librarians related to race, ethnicity, and district characteristics including size, locale, and poverty levels.

Findings revealed that students in majority Hispanic and nonwhite school districts were less likely to have access to a school librarian. The disparities are exacerbated by high poverty rates, rurality, and lower student enrollment. These trends point to an educational equity issue in which access to a school librarian is a privilege more often denied to traditionally underserved groups. Key findings by category are described below.

Racial and ethnic disparities:

- Majority Hispanic districts were almost twice as likely to be without a librarian than majority non-Hispanic

- Though the inequities were less extreme, majority non-white districts were more likely to be without a librarian than majority white districts.

Poverty, racial and ethnic disparities:

- For highest poverty districts, majority non-white districts are more likely to be without any librarians than majority white ones.

- Inequities persist between majority Hispanic and non-Hispanic districts regardless of a district's poverty status.

Locale, racial and ethnic disparities:

- Rural majority non-white districts were more likely to be without any librarians than non-white districts in cities, suburbs, or towns.

- Districts least likely to have librarians are in rural areas serving majority Hispanic students.

Enrollment, racial and ethnic disparities:

- Enrollment size did not account for librarian staffing differences between majority Hispanic and non-Hispanic districts.

- Inequities tended to persist or worsen as district enrollment decreased.

The final phase of the SLIDE project is currently underway. The project team is analyzing the qualitative data resulting from interviews with over 50 school administrators and board members to better understand the decisions that were made surrounding school library staffing. Interview participants come from districts that either gained or lost school library positions since 2015. The forthcoming report will be the first of its kind to explore decision-making around the reported near 20% loss of school library positions.

The SLIDE website has interactive tools to empower users to customize searches, compare data, and use evidence to advocate for more equitable school library staffing decisions. The project website is libslide.org and you can read the open access Peabody Journal article here: https://doi.org/10.1080/016195 6X.2023.2160112.

National Reading Month, International Library Day

BY WAJIRA RANJIKA SILVA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, WESTERN, PROVINCE, SRI LANKA
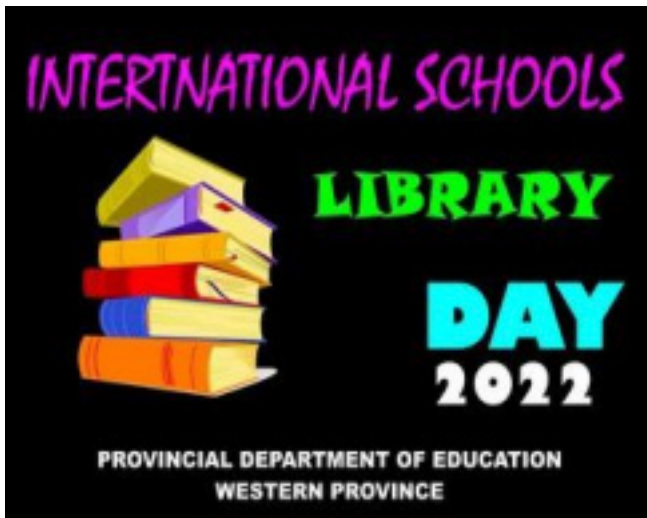
National Reading Month

Sri Lanka is slowly recovering from the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic that swept across the nation for more than 2 years. Resumption of the normal activities in schools have paved the way for students and teachers to enjoy activities such as reading and writing. Reading and writing skills are essential tools required to develop proficiency in literacy, creativity and critical thinking which help the students to be innovative.

As most students attending government schools in Sri Lanka access books from the school library or from a public library, reading habit among the students was severely affected during the pandemic due to closure of schools, public libraries and also due to social distancing protocols. As a result, the creative and critical thinking of the students took a heavy toll as their life centered around online teaching which no doubt enhanced their knowledge but did little to sharpen their reading skills. Therefore, a program was organized to offer this opportunity to a group of students selected from grade 5 to 9 in the 11 educational zones of the Western Province.

Our main objective was to encourage students to read and develop their skills in creative writing and critical thinking. The program included a vibrant and interactive, story-telling session by the librarian of Dharmasena Attygalle Vidyalaya, Kelaniya - Ms. Rangika Weerakkody, and an exciting movie review session under the theme of "film reading" conducted by Ms. Niroshini Fernando, the librarian of Maris Stella College, Negombo. Both sessions were followed by a very engaging and interesting Q &A session with students.

Librarians shared their experience on how they started an online story-telling program for the students and creating an e- Library for students of grades 3. This has instilled a lasting positive impact on students with many students engaging in reading and creative writing even after the conclusion of online educational activities.

The most exciting part of the programme was when students were requested to participate in story-telling. Students of grades 5 - 7 were asked to to create picture stories (cartoons) consisting of a few frames. The students of grades 8 & 9 were given the task of creating cover pages for their dream story books. The students used their creativity to portray their unique ideas onto paper and presented their stories in colourful pictures with use of a few words to explain the story.

With the donations from Atlantic Company, we have distributed certificate to all winners. We believe that this program has encouraged students, as well as teachers, to develop their interest in reading and creative writing to become more accomplished and innovative individuals.

Library Journeys: My Volunteer Experiences as Library Advocate with Aussie Books for Zim

BY HOSEA TOKWE - LIBRARY ADVOCATE, AUSSIE BOOKS FOR ZIM

Library Voluntary Work – My New Beginning
Voluntary work is pleasing, what with the spirit to assist, to give one's time and the satisfaction that comes through empathy. So it so happened from nowhere that I found myself on 19th of March 2017 embarking on my journey as volunteer Library Advocate for Aussie Books for Zim (a Not-for Profit Voluntary Organisation based in Australia) to a remote rural area in rural Mudzi District, to a school Mavhurazi School. I met with School Heads, and various local Stakeholders. This opened a new beginning for me in my great passion for Rural School Libraries.

The Need for Books in Rural Schools.
In Zimbabwe there is a hunger for books in rural schools. According to The African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990, it says "Every child shall have the right to education". Meaning every child must have a right to attend school. Poor school results, inadequate reading material, high failure rate at Grade 7 level in some rural Matebeleland North rural schools are still all testimony of how these schools are lagging behind in teams of academic performance. The five schools each received a huge amount of books.

Library Journeys

Kawondera Primary School.
The first School to receive books was Kawondera Primary School, a school in the western province of Zimbabwe. This School was

National Reading Month

built way back in 1935. At nine a.m. on 23 July 2019 we arrived to the thunderous welcome from the school kids. First we conducted a short Workshop with the schools' School Development Association and Library Committee to impress upon establishing and developing a School Library. Donated books were then presented amid poetry presentations, traditional dancing and skits.

Gert Nel Primary School.
The second School to receive books was Gert Nel Primary School that is located at Chatsworth, Gutu District, Masvingo Province. What is unique about this school is that it was a proud recipient of a funded School Library Construction. A week later on the 2nd of August, 2019 Gert Nel School was a scene of a School Librarians Workshop which attracted Librarians from 20 schools. The Workshop ended with the presentation of School Library Manuals to provide the schools with skills to document donated books and set up their libraries well.

Chinembiri Primary School.
Our next port of call was the Chinembiri Primary School located in Rusape, Manicaland Province or better known as the Eastern Highlands. Here the Aussie Books for Zim team installed metal book shelves and all the previously donated books were shelved. It was a whole day's work that was followed by speeches and photo shots in commemoration of the great day.

Ntepe Primary School.
After two days of resting we were off to Ntepe Primary School a distance of 800km from Harare. This Primary School is located in rural Matebeleland Province, home to the Ndebele speaking people. First we held a sensitisation Workshop with the School Authorities and their School Development Association and Library Committee. The District Schools Inspector promised to organise and coordinate on behalf of Aussie Books for Zim a School Librarians Workshop that will involve 20 schools within the cluster.