

# Global librarians innovating and collaborating for the future

*By Sophia Vivian Adeyeye, Antonija Lujanac, Maria Fe Nicolau, and Mayasari Abdul Majid*

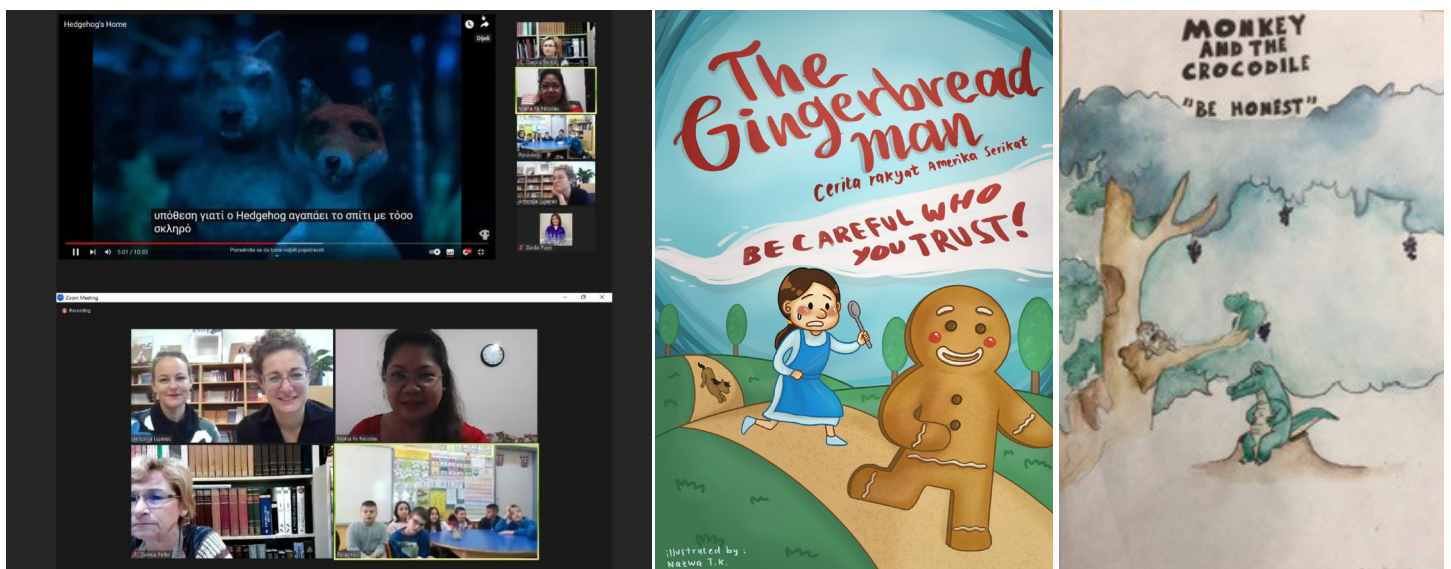
## Snapshot

Four dynamic library professionals from Indonesia, Croatia, Malaysia and Nigeria share how their efforts to keep communities connected during the pandemic have blossomed into online and face to events on such diverse topics as sustainability, artificial intelligence, virtual storytelling and library spaces. The team has also built a growing community that will have a lasting impact on their professional lives.

Our team, Global Librarians, is a passionate group of school librarians and academics from Indonesia, Croatia, Malaysia, and Nigeria, dedicated to sharing best practices in school library management. Formed in 2020 during the pandemic, our diverse team came together with a shared mission to support and transform school libraries worldwide.

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During the pandemic, our innovative efforts focused on fostering interaction and friendship across borders despite global lockdowns. What started as a simple virtual storytelling session quickly gained momentum, evolving into virtual seminars, interactive workshops, and international collaborations. The overwhelming demand for these initiatives highlighted the importance of connection and knowledge-sharing, ultimately inspiring us to take the next step by meeting face-to-face, even across vast distances, to further strengthen our vision.



*Virtual storytelling inspired students to express the moral lessons of the stories.*

Beyond professional collaboration, we saw a growing demand from our students to connect, make friends, and enhance their well-being. As we actively shared our journey on social media, more educators, librarians, and library practitioners became interested in our initiatives, expanding our network and impact across different regions. To sustain this momentum and keep students and schools engaged, we established regular monthly meetings to discuss and innovate new strategies. These meetings became essential in ensuring that our initiatives remained relevant, adaptable, and responsive to the evolving needs of school libraries and their communities.

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Recognizing the need to integrate sustainability and hands-on learning into school libraries, we launched an urban gardening initiative through the collaborative efforts of libraries and schools. This project has demonstrated how school libraries can go beyond traditional roles, serving as hubs for environmental education, sustainability practices, and student engagement.

The success of this initiative was showcased at the annual IASL Conference, where we highlighted how urban gardening enriches students' learning experiences. A memorable example is the terrarium workshop led by our Malaysian team member, which brought students from Malaysia and Taiwan together in an engaging and collaborative learning experience. In addition to urban gardening, we also presented our research "[Library Aesthetics as a Determinant of Effective School Library Use](#)" which involved studies conducted in our respective countries. This research explored how thoughtfully designed library spaces impact student engagement, motivation, and learning experiences, further emphasizing the role of school libraries as dynamic and inspiring environments.

Building on this momentum, we have expanded our impact through in-person workshops, providing hands-on training, and fostering deeper collaboration. In June 2024, we held our first face-to-face workshop in Croatia, where the Global Librarians led a week-long session on [AI in Education and best practices](#) for transforming school libraries. The event brought together local educators and librarians from neighbouring European countries, fostering meaningful discussions on innovation and sustainability in library spaces. As part of our visit, we also engaged with public libraries, sharing insights and exploring ways to adapt successful school library practices to broader community settings.



*Terrarium workshops in Malaysia and Croatia*

The workshops in Croatia and Malaysia led seamlessly into our Indonesia conference in October 2024, which had been planned well in advance. Themed *[Transforming Libraries: Shifting the Paradigm Towards Sustainability, Best Practices, SDGs, and AI Integration](#)*, this major gathering brought together speakers from around the world and participants primarily from Indonesia and neighbouring Asian countries. The event fostered a rich exchange of ideas on the evolving role of libraries in education, emphasizing sustainability and AI integration. The speakers were a dedicated pool of librarian friends who had influenced our passion for Global Librarianship and were eager to contribute to this shared mission. To top it all, they agreed to speak for free and cover their own expenses, a powerful testament to the global commitment to empowering school libraries and fostering knowledge exchange.

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As our network continues to grow, we are preparing for upcoming sessions in Helsinki in June 2025, focusing on the theme of Inclusive Learning Spaces, and in Istanbul in June 2026. More details can be found on our [website](#). These gatherings will provide opportunities to exchange insights, strengthen professional relationships, and explore innovative strategies for transforming school libraries into dynamic learning spaces. Join us as we share practical approaches, success stories, and global best practices to inspire and empower educators, librarians, and stakeholders in reimagining the future of libraries.

Today, our commitment remains stronger than ever. We believe that libraries are not just spaces for books but catalysts for transformation, empowerment, and lifelong learning. As we continue to expand our reach, we strive to make education more inclusive, sustainable, and accessible through innovative programs, hands-on projects, and meaningful global partnerships.

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By fostering collaboration across borders, we are not only strengthening school libraries but also shaping a future where knowledge knows no boundaries. With every workshop, initiative, and connection we build, we reaffirm our dedication to empowering educators, librarians, and students worldwide, ensuring that libraries remain dynamic hubs of inspiration, creativity, and global exchange.

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