

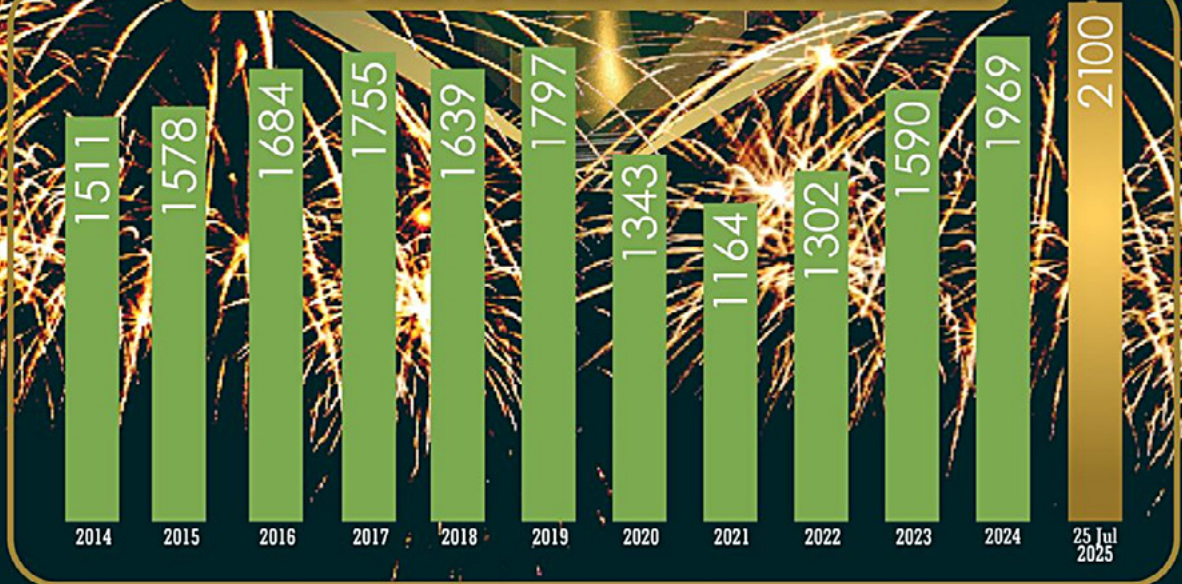


Main feature: South African Librarians' Day 2025

## LIASA CELEBRATING AN ALL-TIME HIGH



MEMBERSHIP TOTALS FOR THE LAST 11 YEARS AND CURRENT YEAR



Other features: Youth Day 2025    Mandela Day 2025    Prominent librarians report



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**Membership**

We are excited to share and celebrate a remarkable milestone as LIASA’s membership continues to grow, reflecting the strength, relevance, and unity of our professional community.

This growth is more than just a number. It is a testament to the trust our members place in LIASA as a recognised professional body, and to the collective belief in the importance of advancing the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector in South Africa. Each new and returning member brings fresh energy, ideas, and commitment which strengthens our voice, broadens our reach, and reaffirms our shared purpose.

Together, we are building a powerful network of professionals dedicated to transformation,

innovation, and excellence in the LIS field. To every member, thank you. Your continued support and active participation drive LIASA forward. We look forward to growing even further together.

Here’s to an empowered future and to the incredible community that makes it possible.

**Renewal**

The following are ways that you can renew your membership:

Visit the LIASA website using this link <https://www.liasa.org.za/>, navigate to **Members** tab on the menu bar and click **Current Membership Renewal** which will prompt you to log in and start the renewal process. Alternatively, contact the Membership and Operations Coordinator,

Thandolwethu Majozi, via email at [membership@liasa.org.za](mailto:membership@liasa.org.za) or via office telephone on 012 323 4912.

**Conference**

We are excited and truly looking forward to seeing many of you, and meeting some for the very first time, at our upcoming LIASA Conference.

For full details about the conference, including the programme, speakers, and registration information, visit our Conference Page using this link <https://www.liasa.org.za/page/conf2025> or contact the office.

LEBOGANG MASALESA PL(SA)  
APHELELE NDZIMANDE PL(SA)



**EDITOR’S NOTE**

Welcome to the September 2025 issue with its main focus being on South African Librarians’ Day (SALD) on 10 July. It was celebrated by our profession in a variety of ways. We also feature three Librarian of the Year Award winners. Hopefully these articles will encourage more library professionals to join LIASA and set a new membership record.

NOHRA MOERAT PL(SA)

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Dear LIASA Member

The LIASA community, especially those in the Western Cape Branch, bids a sad farewell to Mercia Sias, who passed away on 13th May 2025. Mercia was a passionate librarian and a LIASA stalwart for many years. She was a runner up in the Librarian of the Year Award in 2016 and was the Western Cape Librarian of the Year in that same year.

A passionate community worker, Mercia’s love for community development and advancement led to her leading the Groenheuwel Library in the Drakenstein Municipality among many other leading roles that she

**Mercia Sias**



played in the municipality in her career.

Mercia held a Masters in Librarianship as well as various professional leadership roles in LIASA, including that of PACLIG as well as the LIASA Western Cape Branch Chair.

Mercia will be remembered for always being of assistance when LIASA required it and being visible among the broader LIS community during this time.

Our condolences to her family and friends during this time. May Her Soul Rest In Peace and may contentment be placed in the hearts of her loved ones.

THE LNO TEAM

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## From the President



Charlie Molepo

### Strengthening Professional Recognition in LIS: LIASA's SAQA Re-accreditation Journey

LIASA has successfully completed its re-accreditation process with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), reaffirming its role as a leading professional body in the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector. This milestone underscores LIASA's commitment to professional excellence, ethical governance, and sectoral transformation.

Following the expiry of the professional body accreditation period in March 2025, LIASA submitted its final documentation by the 27 February deadline for reaccreditation. The submission was comprehensive, addressing SAQA's requirements through a consultative and rigorous

process. A virtual site visit was conducted by SAQA, attended by LIASA Past-president Nazeem Hardy and the LIASA Board Executive Committee. Key gaps previously identified, particularly around the Ethics Committee, Risk Management structures, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and Competency Criteria were successfully resolved. As a result, LIASA was reaccredited until March 2030 without any conditions.

We are currently developing a two-year strategy to guide the awarding of professional designations. This includes a mid-year review cycle to assess candidates based on RPL and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities. As of 8 January 2025, 30 RPL applications had been received, with evidence being compiled to track completed and pending submissions. The CPD Committee has reviewed these applications, and designations will be awarded to qualifying members.

In response to SAQA's feedback, LIASA has strengthened its leadership structures. Rebecca Senyolo now chairs the CPD and Ethics Committee, with Dr Nthabiseng Raduvha as deputy chairperson. Committee members include Shanita Bhim, Romeo Matumba, Manda Hough,

and Marcia Mabjola Moreana. The committee will oversee CPD activities and facilitate CPD point allocation. Engagements with CHELSA are ongoing to ensure alignment of training efforts, and constitutional amendments are planned to reflect updated committee names.

Sector-specific events have seen cross-sectoral participation, reflecting LIASA's growing influence. Following the recognition of IGBIS as a Community of Practice (CoP), several new CoPs have emerged. Notably, the Wikipedia CoP was launched during South African Librarians' Day on 10 July 2025. This initiative was a collaboration between LIASA, the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR), Wikipedia South Africa, and the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). LIASA pledged support for its SWIP project, reinforcing its commitment to digital inclusion and multilingual knowledge dissemination.

LIASA has escalated its dispute with the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) Board regarding the appointment of a non-librarian to head the institution. The matter has been referred to the Public Protector for investigation, reflecting LIASA's dedication to upholding professional standards

and institutional integrity.

**LIASA has reached a significant milestone in its membership, recording 2,100 members by 25 July 2025—the highest ever during this period.** The Association aims to reach 2,500 members by the time of its Annual Conference, scheduled for 30 September to 3 October 2025 at the Boardwalk Hotel, Casino and Convention Centre in Gqeberha. The conference has been earmarked as a G20 site event, with the Deputy Minister invited to officially open proceedings.

During the Annual General Meeting, LIASA will introduce a new fee structure aligned with best practices among professional bodies. This includes differentiated fees based on designation levels, making membership more accessible to early-career professionals. A new category for Library Assistants will also be introduced, reflecting LIASA's inclusive approach to professional development. Looking forward to welcoming members to Gqeberha. This year's conference will see for the first time the Gala Dinner held on the Friday night, and it promises to be memorable.

CHARLIE MOLEPO PL(SA)

## Growing a Community of Practice for Digitisation Professionals in SA

### The Isivivane SoLwazi – Digitisation Dialogue Coalition (ISDDC)

**A**cross South Africa, hundreds of professionals are hard at work digitising our shared cultural and documentary heritage — yet many of them do so in isolation, without access to a broader network of peers engaged in similar work. **The Isivivane SoLwazi – Digitisation Dialogue Coalition (ISDDC) offers the hope of transforming that reality.**

Initiated as a government-supported platform, the ISDDC is developing into a pan-institutional space for collaboration, dialogue, and coordination within the digital heritage and archives sector. But beyond its structural role, it holds the potential to become something even more powerful: a grassroots community of practice for all the staff and professionals actively involved in digitisation, from libraries and archives to museums and other memory institutions.

At its core, the ISDDC is about building connections. It

is intended to be a space where individuals working with scanners, metadata, digital preservation, and user access systems can discuss openly and supportively the real-world challenges they face. It's a space where you can:

- Ask questions about a new piece of equipment
- Share feedback on a vendor or service provider
- Compare digitisation workflows or software choices
- Celebrate a milestone in a long-running digitisation project
- Seek advice from someone who's been down the same road

This kind of peer-to-peer interaction is vital for professional development, especially in a field like digitisation, where the pace of technological change is rapid. Still, formal training opportunities remain limited or uneven. It helps build collective confidence, fosters innovation through shared problem-solving, and promotes a sense of belonging to a broader professional ecosystem.

Importantly, the ISDDC builds on a long but uneven legacy of earlier national initiatives — such as the **Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA)** project, the South African Digitisation Initiative (SADI), and the pioneering work of the **Wits Digitisation Centre** — all of which demonstrated the value and viability of collaborative, locally-rooted digitisation efforts. While these initiatives had a real impact, many were time-bound or project-funded, and their momentum has since dissipated. The ISDDC represents a new chapter, grounded in continuity, and aiming for sustainability and national reach.

Work is already underway to strengthen the ISDDC as a technical forum. A public website is live, a draft governing framework is being circulated to stakeholders, and membership (which is free) is now open to institutions, companies, and organisations active in digitisation and digital preservation across SA.

The next step (and one we hope to see catalysed in the coming months) is the formation of active, open channels of regular communication and engagement among practitioners. These will serve not only as learning spaces but as safe spaces, where honest discussion, mentorship, and mutual support are encouraged and valued.

South Africa needs this. Our digitisation landscape is rich in expertise, but fragmented. The ISDDC offers a way to connect the dots from the ground up. If you're involved in digitisation — whether you're a scanner operator, metadata specialist, digital curator or systems librarian — you belong in this conversation. The ISDDC needs your voice, your experience and your curiosity.

To learn more or to apply for membership as a stakeholder, visit: <https://isddc.org.za>

NIKLAS ZIMMER

DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP AND DATA CURATION  
MANAGER  
FCTEC (FIRST COAST TECHNOLOGIES)



Prof Langa Khumalo, Mandisa Chikwatamba, Ingrid Thomson, Charlie Molepo, Prof Lefose Makgahlela and Bobby Shabangu

## *LIASA celebrates South African Librarians' Day at UNISA with key partnerships and a commitment to digital inclusion*

**L**IASA commemorated South African Librarians' Day on 10 July 2025 with a vibrant celebration held at the Anton Lembede Building, University of South Africa (Unisa), Pretoria.

This special event brought together prominent stakeholders, including the National Library of South Africa (NLSA), the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR), CHELSA, and members of the Wikimedia movement, in a collective effort to advance multilingual knowledge, digital inclusion, and library advocacy. Under the theme "Twelve Languages, One Nation, One Wikipedia", the programme of this hybrid event was co-facilitated by Romeo Matumba, LIASA board member and Collen Mafoko, Librarian at Unisa.

Guests were welcomed to this exciting event by former LIASA President, Segametsi Molawa, the current Director of IRD at Unisa. She reiterated that Librarians' Day is an important day for librarians and information service providers in South Africa and that all librarians would be proud of this significant day. "We know that as librarians, we are making a difference in people's lives. We touch people's lives because we want everybody to get access to

information", she concluded.

Delivering the purpose of the day, LIASA President Charlie Molepo called for a moment of silence in solidarity with the people of Palestine, highlighting the ongoing destruction of culture and violations of human rights. In his address, he urged participants to continue demonstrating the vital role of libraries in democratising knowledge, preserving indigenous knowledge, promoting information and knowledge sharing in indigenous languages, and fostering cultural exchange and heritage preservation.

He further emphasised that librarians actively contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by advancing quality education, reducing inequalities through equitable access to information, and supporting initiatives that promote inclusive, informed, and sustainable communities. He concluded by assuring everyone that LIASA is committed to supporting the SWIP Project to amplify local voices.

One of the highlights of the day was the launch of the LIASA Wikipedia Community of Practice, an initiative designed to build a network of librarians and information professionals

dedicated to contributing to Wikipedia in South Africa's official languages. By empowering library staff to edit, translate, and create open knowledge content, the project aims to expand access to locally relevant information in the digital space.

The launch began with a short address by Bobby Shabangu, President of Wikimedia South Africa, and was followed by presentations from programme coordinators Jeff Nyoka and Ingrid Thomson, who outlined the objectives and plans of the initiative.

In line with this commitment, LIASA also formally signed and declared its pledge of support for the SADiLaR-Wikipedia (SWiP) Project. The pledge reaffirms LIASA's commitment to promoting multilingualism, preserving indigenous knowledge, and increasing access to information through collaborative, open-access platforms.

Other key speakers included Prof Langa Khumalo, Chief Director of SADiLaR, and Mandisa Chikwatamba, Acting CEO of the NLSA, representing both the NLSA and the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC). They highlighted the crucial role of libraries in preserving and promoting indigenous languages and commended

LIASA for its proactive efforts in bridging the gap between traditional librarianship and digital knowledge activism, emphasising its role as an agent of change within South African communities.

On behalf of the LIASA Board, Jan Moeketsi reminded attendees about the upcoming Annual Conference in Gqeberha and encouraged professionals to take up LIASA's professional designation. He also noted the organisation's record-breaking membership growth.

The vote of thanks was delivered by President-Elect Prof. Lefose Makgahlela, who expressed gratitude to all stakeholders and attendees for contributing to the success of the event.

This collaborative celebration acknowledged the significant contributions of librarians and strengthened LIASA's dedication to fostering innovation, inclusivity, and progress in the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector. It also demonstrated that South African libraries are not merely repositories of books but play an active role in creating a knowledgeable, inclusive, and well-connected society.

Viva Librarians Viva!

# Celebrating “Twelve Languages, One Nation, One Wikipedia”

## A MULTILINGUAL MOVEMENT FOR OPEN KNOWLEDGE IN SA

**S**outh Africa’s multilingual identity, characterised by its 12 official languages, forms the foundation of its cultural richness and democratic vision.

The celebration of “Twelve Languages, One Nation, One Wikipedia” embodies this national ethos by advancing the principle that knowledge should be accessible, inclusive, and reflective of all voices. This initiative recognises Wikipedia as more than a digital encyclopaedia, it is a platform for democratising knowledge, promoting linguistic diversity, and empowering communities to engage with and contribute to digital content in their native languages.

This day will be marked by a series of nationwide activities hosted in libraries, schools, and community hubs, aimed at bridging linguistic, digital, and socio-economic divides. Libraries will take centre stage as vehicles for social transformation, bringing together librarians, students, researchers, and the general public to participate in events that promote multilingual literacy, digital participation, and local

knowledge preservation.

Among the most engaging activities are multilingual book readings and storytelling sessions, conducted in various South African languages such as isiZulu, Sepedi, Afrikaans, Xitsonga, and isiNdebele. These will feature a blend of oral traditions, translated literary works, and contemporary narratives, highlighting the crucial role of language in fostering cultural identity and community belonging (UNESCO, 2023). These efforts not only encourage reading in mother tongues but also strengthen the visibility and vitality of indigenous languages in the digital age.

A major component of the celebration will be Wikipedia edit-a-thons and digital skills workshops, where participants are invited to edit, translate, or create articles on the platform in their native languages. Supported by facilitators and librarians, these sessions offer hands-on training in digital literacy, information evaluation, and citation practices. Such initiatives are aligned with global efforts to decolonise the internet and make digital knowledge more representative and inclusive (Mabweazara,

2019). They also reinforce that multilingual participation is essential in countering content inequity on widely used platforms like Wikipedia.

The celebration further acknowledges the transformative role of librarians, who have evolved from custodians of books into stewards of digital and multilingual knowledge. On this day, librarians will be honoured for their efforts in preserving indigenous languages, mentoring local Wikipedia contributors, and creating community archives that reflect the lived experiences of South Africans. By doing so, librarians support the national agenda of inclusive education and access to information as enshrined in the Constitution and guided by the Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter (DAC, 2014).

Two national initiatives will be spotlighted during the celebration: the LIASA Wikipedia Community of Practice and the SWiP (Strengthening Wikipedia in South Africa) project. The LIASA initiative brings together professionals in the LIS sector to collaborate on multilingual Wikipedia contributions, fostering

a sustainable community of practice for open knowledge dissemination. SWiP, on the other hand, aims to train a new generation of editors to amplify African languages and stories online. These projects contribute to a broader continental goal of reclaiming African narratives and ensuring that they are preserved in local languages for future generations (CIS-A2K, 2021).

Ultimately, “Twelve Languages, One Nation, One Wikipedia” is not just a celebration, it is a movement that affirms South Africa’s commitment to language equity, digital empowerment, and community-driven knowledge creation. It invites everyone regardless of linguistic background, to take part in building a more inclusive and accessible internet. As South Africans participate in storytelling, editing, and learning, they are making a collective statement: that every language matters and knowledge belongs to everyone.

DR OLUWAYEMI IBUKUN OLUWA ODULARU  
PL(SA)  
SENIOR LECTURER  
WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

## SA LIBRARIANS’ DAY LAUNCH OF WIKIMEDIA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP)

**S**A Librarians’ Day 2025 saw the official launch of the LIASA Wikimedia Community of Practice under the theme “Twelve languages, One nation, One Wikipedia”.

At the launch, LIASA pledged its full support and active participation in the SWiP Project which is a national initiative led by South African Centre for Digital Languages Resources (SADiLAR), Wikipedia and Pan South African Languages Board (PanSALB) to increase local language content on Wikipedia.

**Through this pledge, LIASA commits to:**

- Mobilising librarians across all provinces to contribute to Wikipedia in all twelve official languages
- Establish and support the LIASA Wikipedia CoP, a collaborative space for training, mentorship and multilingual content development
- Promote digital literacy and open knowledge principles in libraries, schools and communities
- Advocate for language preservation and revitalisation through culturally relevant and locally sourced information
- Empowering communities by

ensuring equitable access to knowledge in their mother tongue.

### What is the SWiP Project?

SADiLaR-Wikipedia-PanSALB (SWiP) is a collaborative initiative aimed at bringing together communities of language practice such as universities, language directorates and language entities and other organisations like LIASA practically to advance and celebrate the use of the official South African languages encouraging these language CoPs’ to actively participate in contributing to Wikipedia.

### Why a LIASA COP for Wikipedia?

To quote IFLA (2016) “If Wikipedia is the virtual (online) door to knowledge, while libraries have been a real door (offline), the two communities should work together to provide new levels of access to information to humanity.” There is a track record of Wikipedia related work within LIASA. In the old structure, there was a Community of Practice for Wikimedia Projects. The CoP had been set up by Wynand van der Walt and Ingrid Thomson in 2019, after a paper presented at the LIASA Conference. That CoP focussed largely on #1lib1ref campaign,

although there were attempts to challenge CoP members to participate in other projects and campaigns. Several webinars were offered on the #1lib1ref and WikiSource with guest wikibrarian presenters. These efforts have created a small cohort of South African library professionals who are using Wikimedia projects and tools or who are interested in using Wikimedia projects. A number of these librarians have attended courses offered by AfLIA (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions) on Wikipedia and Wikidata.

But there is a gap of knowledge, skills and integration, as well as a scepticism and reluctance around Wikimedia. This is where the CoP comes in.

### So, the new CoP would:

- Advocate for and educate librarians around Wikiverse and its projects and campaigns by becoming familiar with these and how they could participate through individual engagement, or how these could be integrated into library workflows. Editing Wikipedia (or working on the other projects and campaigns) aligns with librarians’ professional values, expertise and commitment to

open access to information so this would be part of that conversation. This requires advocacy and education.

- Foster digital and information literacy both for ourselves and for our communities.
- Promote opportunities for community outreach programming to enable libraries and librarians to connect with ourselves and the communities we serve.
- Promote opportunities for recording local knowledge, in our South African languages.
- Share information about projects such as Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, Wikisource and Wikidata.
- Projects and campaigns of interest to the library sector include Wikipedia (encyclopaedia), Wikimedia Commons (repository of multimedia), Wikisource (for preservation and transcription of public domain publications), Wikidata (metadata) as well as other campaigns such as #1lib1ref, #WikilovesSouthAfrican libraries, #Everybookitsreader and other campaigns or thematic editathons we Wikibrarians set up.

INGRID THOMSON PL(SA)

# Learning to 'Play the Game'

CoCT libraries celebrate SA Librarians' Day and the 2025 SILL Graduation

**O**n 10 July 2025 Brackenfell Town Hall buzzed with anticipation as librarians from every branch library in the City of Cape Town gathered for South African Librarians' Day (SALD) and the annual graduation of the SILL programme.

The hall in the century old suburb, its stone façade warmed by winter sun, provided a fitting arena for a celebration that linked heritage with fresh vision. This year's theme, *Learning to Play the Game*, urged every participant to approach library leadership with the curiosity and strategic insight of a dedicated player who studies the board, learns the rules, and then dreams up original moves.

Inside, volunteers had turned the venue into a vibrant playground. Each round table held a different game set: chess, scrabble, dominoes, and a printed deck of "strategy cards" that listed practical leadership challenges. Even the route to the stage was transformed. A colourful hopscotch grid stretched down the centre aisle, inviting every graduate to bounce lightly from square to square before mounting the steps. The light hearted ritual reminded the audience that leaders thrive when they honour the joy of learning.

The programme began precisely at 09:30 when MMC Councillor Francine Higham stepped to the lectern for the opening address. She traced the SILL journey from its launch in 2022, when motivated staff completed a 5 week sprint in Central Library, through 2023 and 2024, when cohorts explored open scholarship, foresight studies, and community centred design at libraries across the peninsula. Councillor Higham celebrated the programme's measurable impact: promotions earned, partnerships forged, and thousands of citizens introduced to new services. Her words set a tone of confident momentum.

Steering that momentum behind the scenes was Christelle Lubbe, Head of Professional Services & Programmes (PSP), who served as coordinator for the entire cycle. In her brief welcome and in-between the programme, she had described SILL as "a training ground and a friendship league," a place where participants test ideas without fear and then carry those ideas into their branches. Ninnie Steyn, Director of Library & Information Services (LIS), followed with an



Cadence Marinus, winner of the 2024 LIS CoCT Writing Competition (English 14-18 category), delivers an impassioned "Ode to the Librarian"



Valencia Hendricks hopscotches along a neon taped grid to collect her certificate, cheered on by fellow graduates



LlBee joins Mayco Member for Community Services and Health (MMC) Cllr Francine Higham to hand Amanda Mgodeli her SILL certificate



The COCT LIS Director Ninnie Steyn presents Christelle Lubbe with a bouquet in recognition of her work, with Dr Flippie van der Walt (left)

acknowledgement to the mentors, our Library Management Team (LMT) who return each year to guide new cohorts, proving that leadership is not a solo sport but a relay in which experience is handed forward.

After the formalities, the hall transformed into a living scorecard of success. Slides flashed across the screen, each one a testament to measurable growth: 84 librarians have completed the SILL Academy since 2022, while graduates have attended 15 LIASA conferences and delivered two award winning presentations. Their voices now resonate in print, with 11 articles published in *LIASA-in-Touch*, and their influence is felt in practice, with ten members serving on working groups and another ten playing acting managerial roles. Advancement is tangible; 11 alumni have already been promoted to higher posts, and three have committed to completing a Master of Library and Information Science. Together these numbers reveal a programme that is not only expanding but continuously sharpening the professional game.

At eleven, the spotlight shifted to the graduates. One by one they hopped through the aisle's numbered squares, earning cheers for every nimble landing. The playful entry underscored three lessons at the heart of this year's curriculum. First, every branch is its own game board, yet each board belongs to a wider civic league. Second, timing turns an ordinary move into a winning gambit. Third, a leader wins only when the community wins. Certificates embossed with the City's seal recognised not only academic effort but also the potential for graduates to enact change and their personal development.

The entire assembly then rose for the Librarians' Pledge led by Area Manager East; Dr. Flippie van der Walt, an annual tradition affirmed aloud in clear steady voices. Librarians promised to safeguard intellectual freedom, foster lifelong learning, and ensure that every resident, regardless of age or circumstance, enjoys unfettered access to information.

A communal lunch concluded the festivities. Delegates lingered over board games; ideas leapt across tables the way chess pieces leap across sixty four squares, each move sparking another. The 2025 SA Librarians' Day and SILL

(continued on page 7 ▶)



The 2025 SILL cohort gathers on stage for their official group portrait.

Top left: Christelle Lubbe, Sonia Peker; Amanda Mgodeli; Candice Booysen; Miche Julius; Phindile Nquta; Caroline Moody; Nkosi Thusi; Sihle Nkosi; Aviwe Mafela; Yanga Lolwana; Zanele Tshabalala, Valencia Hendricks; Ashleigh Wessels. Bottom left: Jacqueline Rossouw; Rethabile Nkhahle; Amy Barnes; Joseph Everts; Nolubabalo Ntshangase; Babalwa Waxa; Wilma May; Fikile Mabuza; Lauren Apollis with Kayla Monique Johnson (Not pictured)

(continued from page 6)

graduation demonstrated that when knowledge guardians learn to play together, they strengthen the entire civic game. As the

hall emptied and the hopscotch stickers were rolled away, one truth remained - the board resets every morning, and the City of

Cape Town's librarians stand ready, piece in hand, to make the next brilliant move.

LONWABO JOSEPH MABELE  
REFERENCE LIBRARIAN, BRACKENFELL  
LIBRARY

## Rediscovering my spark: my SILL journey as a new librarian

**F**or the past two years, I have served as the Adult Librarian at Lansdowne Library, a space that holds so much potential for growth, learning, and community connection.

My library journey started long before that, first as an EPWP graduate intern at Parow and Elsie's River Libraries, followed by a stint at the Cape Provincial Library Services (CPLS). I've also gained valuable experience in academic environments like MANCOSA and CPUT. These experiences shaped my passion for upskilling communities and bringing our library's vision to life: connecting people, information, and spaces.

Serving the public comes naturally to me. It's a privilege to be part of a space that directly empowers others, whether it's helping someone fill out a CV, teaching digital skills, or simply offering a safe, welcoming environment to learn.

I first heard about the SILL academy programme back in 2020, when a former manager encouraged me to take part in the programme. At the time, I hesitated. As someone shy and introverted, the idea of public speaking or leading people felt far out of reach. But fast forward a few years, and today, I can proudly say I've completed the



Amy hopscotches across the floor to collect her graduation certificate SILL programme.

It was a colleague and mentor who completed SILL before me, that encouraged me to apply. I had seen how the programme transformed her confidence and leadership style. As someone still early in my career, I knew I wanted to learn more about how to lead, communicate, and show up with confidence for my team and community.

From the start, the SILL programme exceeded my expectations. The modules covered key areas like leadership styles, innovation, communication, planning, and networking. Each week brought a new lens through which to see myself and others. I discovered that my dominant leadership style is coaching and mentoring, which felt affirming;

it's a natural extension of how I engage with people, especially within my community. But I also learned that leadership isn't static. Different situations call for different styles, and the more flexible and self-aware I become, the more effective I can be.

One of the most powerful takeaways was learning to listen more, speak with empathy, and lead by example. I am more conscious of how I respond to challenges and how I support my team. Instead of reacting or placing blame, I've started focusing on solutions. I'm learning to embrace feedback, be assertive when needed, and most importantly, to trust my voice.

The confidence I've built over this journey is something I'm deeply proud of. I'll never forget

the nerves that came with those timed two-minute presentations, or the satisfaction of pushing through them. SILL reminded me that even introverts can lead powerfully, not by being loud, but by being present, thoughtful, and genuine.

Beyond the personal growth, the programme reignited my professional passion. I feel more inspired than ever to innovate, to create meaningful programmes, and to mentor others, just as others have mentored me. One of our guest speakers said something that stayed with me: "You can't know what you don't know." That resonated deeply. SILL opened my eyes to the gaps I still need to fill, and gave me the tools and confidence to start bridging them.

To any librarian, especially those newly appointed or feeling stuck in their role, I wholeheartedly recommend SILL. Whether you're just starting out or have been in the field for years, this programme has the power to reignite your spark, build your confidence, and reconnect you with your purpose.

This is only the beginning for me, and I can't wait to see what's next.

AMY BARNES  
ADULT LIBRARIAN  
LANSDOWNE LIBRARY - CITY OF CAPE TOWN



## Northern Cape commemorates South African Librarians' Day with insightful celebration

The Northern Cape Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture (DSAC), in collaboration with the Sol Plaatje University (SPU) Library, on 10 July 2025 hosted an inspiring celebration of South African Librarians' Day under the national theme: "Twelve Languages. One Nation. One Wikipedia."

The event, held at SPU's Central Campus, brought together librarians from across the province to honour their vital role in fostering an informed, inclusive, and progressive society. The programme celebrated the tireless work of librarians while highlighting the evolving role of libraries in promoting digital inclusion, knowledge accessibility, and social development.

### A day of reflection and inspiration

The event was seamlessly directed by David Lesetedi, Manager at DSAC's Frances Baard District. Guests were treated to a guided tour of the SPU library, led by the Faculty Information Librarians Mashia Shokane and Sinah Molokisi. In his welcome address, Magodongo Mahlangu, Director of SPU Library, emphasised that the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence presents both challenges and opportunities for the profession. "Librarians are uniquely positioned to lead this shift as trusted navigators in the information landscape, as digital stewards, and as champions of open, inclusive knowledge systems," Mahlangu said.

### Powerful messages delivered

Michael Alfred, representing public libraries in the Sol Plaatje Municipality, delivered a dynamic and heartfelt message, drawing inspiration from the eloquence of Martin Luther King Jr. He encouraged librarians to



embrace the power of effective communication by using vivid language, emotional resonance, and storytelling to inspire their communities.

From the Kimberley Africana Library, Simon Tshabile paid tribute to pioneering librarians Bertram Laslett Dyer (1900–1908) and John Gow Ross (1909–1942), whose foresight allowed the acquisition of invaluable historical works when they were still accessible. Among these treasures is the Setswana Bible, printed by Reverend Robert Moffat between 1853 and 1857 at the Kuruman Mission Station, the first Bible printed in an African language.

Representing the academic library, Gadibolae Moshotloa of SPU Library reminded librarians

### Library tour

that academic libraries are far more than physical spaces. "They are intellectual ecosystems enabling discovery, preserving national heritage, and bridging the gap between past knowledge and future innovation," she said.

Delivering the keynote address, Vincent Midzi from the Provincial Library Services highlighted the importance of South Africa's multilingualism, reflected in the event's theme. He underscored the need for a single, unified Wikipedia to showcase the country's diverse linguistic and cultural heritage. Midzi also encouraged librarians to join LIASA and to strengthen professional networks through partnerships and shared programmes.

### A celebration of knowledge and community

The day provided a platform for librarians to share experiences, celebrate achievements, and envision the future of libraries. More than a commemoration, the event reinforced the crucial role libraries play in building informed, interconnected, and unified communities. The celebration concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Monica Douths, Frances Baard District Librarian, who expressed gratitude to all speakers, guests, and organisers for making the day a resounding success.

MASHIA SHOKANE  
INFORMATION LIBRARIAN  
SOL PLAAATJE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



Magodongo Mahlangu, Monica Douths, Michael Alfred, Gadibolae Moshotloa, David Lesetedi, Simon Tshabile, Vincent Midzi and Zamintombi Liwani

## “Leadership is a Game – and I Came to Play”

**T**he SILL (Strengthening Innovative Library Leadership) programme is more than a leadership course. It is a mirror, a compass, and for many of us—a catalyst.

When I joined Cohort 4, I knew it would be challenging. What I didn't expect was how deeply it would invite me to interrogate my own leadership style, reimagine what influence in a public library context looks like, and ultimately, remind me that leadership does not begin with a title—it begins with self-awareness.

This year's theme, “Learn to Play the Game,” was powerful in its simplicity. In the LIS sector, we are often called upon to “make it work” in dynamic and difficult circumstances. Yet within these systems, there is always room to ask: What game are we in? Who wrote the rules? Who is playing with us—and who is watching us play?

These questions became the foundation of my closing talk at the SILL graduation, which I was honoured to deliver on South



African Librarians' Day, in the presence of dignitaries including the Director and Councillor.

Using games like UNO, Chess, Monopoly, and even popular digital platforms such as Fortnite, I unpacked metaphors for leadership—drawing links between gameplay and real-world resilience, strategic thinking, and adaptability.

For instance:

- UNO reminded me of the

importance of timing, power, and strategy under pressure.

- Chess encouraged me to think three moves ahead, to know the value of every team member.
- Monopoly highlighted issues of equity, access, and system design.
- Fortnite reflected the chaos of the modern world and the leadership skill of emotional regulation.

Through this metaphorical lens, I invited my cohort and the wider LIS audience to consider themselves not only as players—but as architects of the game. As public librarians, we are constantly responding to community needs, technological shifts, and policy constraints. But in the midst of it all, we also design new pathways, especially for those who have been historically left out of the game altogether.

I was deeply moved to be voted “Personality of the Group” by my peers—an affirmation that soft skills, emotional intelligence, and relational leadership matter

just as much as operational strategy.

To all public librarians reading this:

You are leaders. Every programme you run, every barrier you dismantle, every voice you make space for—you are shaping the playing field.

SILL reminded me that leadership can be strategic and heartfelt; bold and compassionate.

And that the most powerful leaders aren't waiting for the rules to change.

They are rewriting them!

I lead with empathy, creativity, and community-centred thinking. My goal is simple: To shift mindsets, build bridges, and reimagine libraries as spaces where people feel powerful. If we can change the narrative of just one patron, we've already begun changing the world.

Leadership isn't loud—it's intentional. And I intend to lead!

ASHLEIGH WESSELLS PL(SA)  
CITY OF CAPE TOWN

## Redirile Community Library celebrates South African Librarians' Day

**S**outh African Librarians' Day (SALD) offers a moment to recognise the quiet heroes of education and information access, our Librarians.

In today's increasing digital world, the role of a librarian goes beyond shelving books. This year's celebration was especially meaningful for Redirile Community Library of the Kgetleng Local Municipality, Bojanala District, North West Province, highlighting the transformative impact of a computer skills training programme in partnership with Cisco Networking Academy.

Redirile Community Library recently participated in the programme offered by Cisco Network academy during Youth Month that was aimed at empowering youth across the country with computer skills. The initiative provided free entry level online digital skills to unemployed youth in collaboration with community libraries to bridge the digital divide in communities.

The Cisco Network Academy is a globally recognised platform that offers high quality IT and cybersecurity education. Their goal was to train at least 30,000 learners. The participants enrolled in the programme were offered an opportunity to choose from Cisco-certified online courses including cyber security, networking, technical support and artificial



intelligence (AI)

The Library played a crucial role in supporting the students' success. The participants gathered in the library's computer lab where Librarian Rose Pakgadi facilitated the programme, answered questions and helped with the technical challenges. In addition, the library offered extended computer access hours for the course participants as each course required at least six hours to complete. This support was beneficial for the participants because all of them were without home internet access, so they relied solely on the library's free Wi-Fi.

Upon completion of the courses, participants received a digital badge and certificates that could be added to their resumes. These credentials are accredited and recognised by employers worldwide.

Initially there were 16 youth from the local community who



attended the launch of the programme but only 6 managed to complete the courses. They were:

- Ofentse Diseko who completed five courses: Introduction to Cyber Security, Introduction to Modern AI, Computer Hardware Basics, Using Computers and Mobile Devices, and Introduction to IoT and Digital Transformation.
- Kamogelo Molelekeng with four courses: Introduction to Cybersecurity, Introduction to Modern AI, Using Computer and Mobile Devices, and Introduction to IoT and Digital Transformation.
- Amogelang Molefe completed four courses: Introduction to Cybersecurity, Introduction to Modern AI, Using computer and Mobile Devices, and Introduction to IoT and Digital Transformation.
- Zodwa Mabaso completed three courses: Introduction to

Cybersecurity, Introduction to Modern AI, and Introduction to IoT & Digital Divide.

- Siphon Maubane completed four courses: Introduction to Cybersecurity, Introduction to Modern AI, Using Computer and Mobile Devices, and Introduction to IoT and Digital Transformation.

As part of the SALD celebration, Redirile Community Library hosted a small ceremony to present certificates for those who completed the courses. They were handed out by IT technician Gabriel Sehloho of the Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation, Bojanala District. The participants were also given 32 GB branded flash drives as a token of appreciation and to promote the library and the Department.

ROSINA PAKGADI  
LIBRARIAN  
REDIRILE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

# To the legendary librarians among us...

## A PERSONAL TRIBUTE FOR SA LIBRARIANS' DAY



Koekie Meyer 2022

**W**henver somebody enquires about my profession, I am proud to say I am a librarian.

I am not proud because of who I am or what I do or what I have achieved, not in the least.

I am a proud librarian because of the librarians around me - the librarians next to me (peers), the librarians in front of me (library leadership, managers, lecturers), and the librarians behind me (those who came before us). Behind every passionate librarian, there is another librarian - a mentor, a fellow librarian or a library leader who inspires us to be proud librarians. This year, on South African Librarians' Day (SALD), I want to lift my hat to all those librarians who make me proud to be a librarian. I thank you and I honour you!

However, my thoughts specifically go to the valuable contributions of the many librarians who shaped our profession but are sadly no longer with us. One such person who

shaped me, professionally and personally, is the late Mrs. Koekie Meyer, the previous Director of Gauteng Library Services and Archives. Many disadvantaged communities received functional library services under her leadership and through the Conditional Grant. Despite the loss of her daughter and husband, she continued to work tirelessly to improve ordinary people's lives by managing the provision of library functions and services. I salute her for her vision, her endurance, her leadership, her resilience, her passion, and her unique legacy. Because of her legacy and influence in my life, I feel passionate and proud about my profession.

Just like Koekie Meyer, there are many more legends whose

legacies should be honoured. If you are reading this and thinking of someone who made a lasting impression on your career, please join me in celebrating them! If that person is still alive, please convey your appreciation to them now.

In today's busy world, I think SA Librarians' Day lends an ideal opportunity for us to pay tribute to one another. On future such days, I will make it a habit to look around me, behind me and in front of me and acknowledge all the many individuals who make it possible for me to boldly say: I am proud to be a librarian!

CHRISTEL OOSTHUIZEN  
FACULTY LIBRARIAN  
CPUT LIBRARIES

## Sip and paint with a twist: a Librarians' Day to remember

**I**n celebration of South African Librarians' Day, the North-West University Library and Information Service (NWU LIS) embarked on a truly memorable and meaningful team-building activity, a Sip and Paint session that stirred both creativity and deep emotional connection among staff.

At first, many of us imagined painting vibrant scenes on canvas with brushes in hand. But in a beautiful surprise twist, the NWU Art Curator, Sheryl Msomi, the session facilitator, introduced something even more personal and introspective. Instead of paint, we were handed soft pastels, a gentle, expressive medium that encouraged us to draw, reflect, and connect.

The session opened with a playful yet thoughtful exercise. Each staff member reflected on their favourite colour, book, item of clothing, music, or artwork; symbols of who they are. But the most powerful part? A colleague used that information to draw a visual representation of your identity. This unexpected act of creative interpretation became a meaningful exercise in empathy, deep listening, and human connection.

The second half of the session invited us to express our journeys, past, present, and future, through art. Using only pastels and paper, many staff members found themselves diving into memories, emotions, and aspirations. Some drawings evoked sad emotions; others brought laughter or quiet reflection. It was a gentle yet profound reminder that behind



Sipping and painting

every library desk is a story worth honouring. This session highlighted how art can be a powerful tool for team building. By stepping away from routine tasks and embracing vulnerability through creativity, we saw each

other in a new light. Roles and titles faded into the background as relationships deepened, and new bonds formed.

The day concluded with a shared lunch, marked by conversation, appreciation, and



Facilitator Sheryl Msomi

a renewed sense of energy. What began as a celebration of SA Librarians' Day became something far more lasting: a moment of genuine connection, healing, and togetherness.

MAROPENE RAMABINA  
(MANAGER: INFORMATION SERVICES)

KGASANE SEEMELA  
(MANAGER: INFORMATION SERVICES)  
NWU LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE



# My LIASA, my responsibility

## A JOURNEY OF RECOGNITION, IMPACT AND MENTORSHIP



### Each year, the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) calls for nominations to honour excellence in the profession.

In 2024, I was humbled and honoured to be one of the recipients of the prestigious LIASA/Sabinet Influential Library Leader Award, an accolade that celebrates exceptional leadership, visionary thinking, and unwavering commitment to the profession.

### A nomination rooted in support and collaboration

It all began with a suggestion from a colleague serving on the LIASA Board who saw potential in my work. While Board members are not permitted to nominate, the encouragement did not stop there. My colleague, Dudu Nkosi, graciously stepped forward to submit the nomination, and Nikki Crowster seconded it. Their belief in my contributions to the profession laid the foundation for this incredible journey.

At the 2024 LIASA Annual Conference in Durban, shortlisted nominees were interviewed as part of the selection process. Then, on the evening of 4 October 2024, during the Gala Dinner, the announcement was made. Sabinet proudly presented the 2024 Influential Library Leader Award, recognising two exceptional professionals in South Africa's library landscape of which I was one.

### Celebrating the honour with the broader community

Recognition was extended beyond the awards night. As

part of the South African Library Week (SALW) celebrations in March 2025, I was invited by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to deliver a keynote address which focused on how LIASA promotes and supports special libraries, especially those serving the needs of government and working professionals.

On 18 March 2025, the City of Tshwane Library and Information Services invited me to speak to over 250 learners and 50 stakeholders on the SALW theme, "Libraries for Sustainable Communities," and reflect on how libraries empower communities and promote access to human rights through information.



### Honoured by my institution

My institution, the Unisa Library and Information Services, under the leadership of Executive Director Prof Mpho Ngoepe and the Library Management Team, celebrated this milestone with staff. During the event, I addressed colleagues, especially the emerging professionals, with a message of encouragement: that passion, commitment, and love for librarianship can open doors and make a lasting impact. In December 2024, the Unisa Library hosted a formal event to present certificates of recognition to commemorate the achievement and to thank those who contributed to our continued excellence.



### Continuing the work: mentorship and outreach

Receiving the award served not only as recognition but as a call to action. In 2025, I initiated a mentorship programme within Unisa Library aimed at developing and supporting professionals at different stages of their careers. Two mid-career librarians were selected as mentees, and through guided exposure to diverse library environments and practices, they are growing into future leaders of the profession. As part of the programme, we have already embarked on visits to various library settings, starting with visits to public libraries in Johannesburg, followed by a trip to the Limpopo Province to engage with both academic and community libraries. These visits are designed to broaden the mentees' perspectives, inspire innovation, and encourage cross-sector collaboration.

The journey continued with a live interview on Unisa Radio

during South African Librarians' Day to promote the open call for the 2025 LIASA awards, and to inspire others to nominate or be nominated.

### Influencing membership, building the future

As a proud LIASA ambassador, I remain committed to advocating for the profession, encouraging membership renewals, and inspiring potential members to join. Our collective strength lies in our unity, and it is through active participation that we continue to grow, evolve, and shape the future of libraries in South Africa.

### Acknowledgement

This achievement would not have been possible without the invaluable support of key institutions and organisations. I extend my sincere gratitude to:

- **LIASA** for championing professional development and fostering a thriving library community.
- **Sabinet** for providing access to critical resources that empower knowledge and research.
- **Unisa LIS** whose unwavering professional guidance and dedication to academic development have been instrumental throughout this journey.

Your collective contributions have been the backbone of my growth, and I deeply appreciate the role each of you has played.

MOKGADI REBECCA SENYOLO PL(SA)  
MANAGER: LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION  
AND SUPPORT SERVICES  
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES  
UNISA

## EBSCO Information Services Announces 2025 EBSCO Solar Grant Recipients

~ \$300,000 Provided to Libraries for Solar Installation in 10<sup>th</sup> Straight Year ~

**IPSWICH, Mass. — June 27, 2025** — [EBSCO Information Services](#) (EBSCO) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 [EBSCO Solar](#) Grant. Now in its tenth year, the program continues to support libraries in adopting solar energy and creating more sustainable spaces for their communities. This year's four grantees, [Accra Technical University](#) in Accra, Ghana; [Brooklyn Public Library](#) in Brooklyn, New York; [Patten Free Library](#) in Bath, Maine; and [Wolfe County Public Library](#) in Campton, Kentucky, will share a total amount of \$300,000 to help offset the costs of solar panel installations, advancing their commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship within their communities.

### 2025 EBSCO Solar Grant Recipients:

#### Accra Technical University

Accra Technical University (ATU) is a leading institution in Ghana, specializing in technical and vocational education and established in 1949, later becoming the first Technical University in Ghana. Installing solar panels will not only help them reduce energy costs but also enable them to support the surrounding community during power grid disruptions.

#### Brooklyn Public Library

Established in 1896, the Brooklyn Public Library is one of the largest public library systems in the United States, serving more than two million residents. Spearheading renewable energy projects across its 60+ locations, the EBSCO Solar Grant will aid the Brooklyn Public Library in offsetting their energy footprint and establishing themselves as an influencer in sustainability efforts across New York City.

#### Patten Free Library

Patten Free Library was founded in 1847 by George and John Patten as a subscription library. Originally only serving Bath residents, today the Patten Free Library welcomes more than 100,000 visitors annually. Committed to sustainability, they plan to reduce their carbon footprint by automating their building system and installing solar panels, allowing them to reinvest their energy savings into services and maintenance.

#### Wolfe County Public Library

Serving the Appalachian community of Wolfe County in Campton, Kentucky, Wolfe County Public Library is a vital educational and cultural hub. Currently, their goals include improving accessibility, enhancing outdoor spaces and increasing energy efficiency, and receiving the EBSCO Solar grant will help them achieve these goals.

Visit [EBSCO Solar](#) to learn about the EBSCO Solar grant, this year's recipients and past recipients.

#### About EBSCO Information Services

EBSCO Information Services (EBSCO) is a leading provider of online research content and cutting-edge search technologies serving libraries, healthcare and medical institutions, corporations, and government agencies worldwide. As an AI-enabled services leader, EBSCO offers comprehensive solutions from research, acquisition management, subscription services and discovery services to clinical decision support and patient care, learning, and research and development, EBSCO provides institutions with access to content and resources to serve the information and workflow needs of their users and organizations. Our commitment to AI-driven innovation positions EBSCO at the forefront of the industry, enabling us to meet the evolving needs of the information services landscape. For more information, visit the EBSCO website at: [www.ebsco.com](http://www.ebsco.com). Visit our blog at [EBSCOpost](#) or follow us on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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# A note of appreciation from the LIASA/Nevada Emerging Librarian of 2024

**W**hen I stepped into the world of librarianship, I never would have imagined the journey that would unfold in the past couple of months.

I entered the profession like many youth - seeking employment. I knew I had a deep love for literacy, community development, and access to information, but I had never thought that would be my career. As a LIASA/Nevada Emerging Librarian working in an increasingly digital world, I wear many hats: I am a copyright officer, a webinar and podcast host, and an advocate for equitable access.

My current role as a Copyright Specialist has added a legal aspect to my understanding of digital librarianship. Navigating copyright in a world of open access, online teaching, and digital publishing requires constant learning but also reinforces the importance of librarians as stewards of ethical information sharing. My work at the University of the Free State (UFS) Library has been both a privilege and a challenge.

Being a webinar and podcast host has been a significant and full-circle moment in my



journey. I started my early career in a community radio station in Bloemfontein. This helped me believe that my voice has power. I now co-host the Nevada Emerging Librarian webinar series which requires careful planning, coordination with speakers, and running live programmes. It has been a learning curve for me, challenging but rewarding.

I recently joined the newly launched LISpod, a podcast at the UFS LIS. In it, we engage in conversations that highlight innovative library practices, celebrate professional journeys, and explore emerging trends shaping the future of librarianship.

Each of my roles has not only stretched my skills but also brought me closer to a profession I've come to deeply love. They have allowed me to serve, connect, and innovate in ways I never imagined possible.

Having poured love and passion into my work, being honoured as the emerging librarian for 2024 has affirmed my journey and that this career chose me. I had spent years in the profession, unsure and doubting if my work was enough or even worth it. Preparing for the Award interview became a powerful reflection on the resilience, hard work, learning, and growth I have

carried throughout the years.

I am grateful to be awarded the LIASA/Nevada Emerging Librarian for 2024. This, by far, is the biggest highlight of my career as a librarian. Being chosen from many strong entries is both humbling and inspiring, and it motivates me to continue growing, learning, and making a positive impact in the field of librarianship.

I am genuinely grateful to have had people who have guided and supported me throughout my journey. From my Grade 5 teacher, who entrusted me with our class book library box and unknowingly planted the seed of literacy, to my colleagues who believed in my contributions and nominated me for this award, each played a vital role in shaping my path.

I thank my colleagues who nominated me for this recognition—for believing in my work and seeing the potential in my contributions to the library profession. This journey has been more than a career; it has been a calling, and I walk it now with purpose, gratitude, and renewed vision.

XOLELWA XORILE PL (SA)

CHIEF OFFICER: COPYRIGHT MANAGER,  
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

## My year as Research Librarian of the Year 2024

**I** was honoured to be the first recipient of the LIASA/WWIS Research Librarian of the Year Award which was bestowed on me during the LIASA conference in October 2024.

When the University of the Free State's (UFS) Library and Information Services (LIS) told me they wanted to nominate me for this award, and asked for my CV, I went into a flat spin—my poor CV hadn't been touched in twelve years! Then came the next surprise: I'd actually been shortlisted. Panic set in! What on earth would I present on? One Saturday afternoon, while attempting a nap, I had a lightbulb moment: bibliometrics and altmetrics. Librarians, me included, often feel a wave of dread when these requests come in—whether it's for an individual researcher or, heaven forbid, on an institutional level. What had always seemed like the "elephant in the room" suddenly became, in my mind, the "elephant in the library."

To bring the idea to life, my son teamed up with AI and conjured up an image of exactly that: an elephant sitting right there in the middle of a library.

But of course, there was



The elephant in the library!

yet another challenge waiting for me: what on earth to wear. For women, the question of attire is never a small detail—especially if there's a gala dinner involved, and the terrifying possibility of winning, which means photographs. Thankfully, I managed to track down a classic black number that didn't break the bank. Add a few accessories, and—well—Bob's your uncle.

### LIASA Conference 2024

Although I've been a librarian for

thirty years, this was my very first LIASA conference. My interview took place the day before the conference began, and by then my nerves were frayed to shreds. Fortunately, the panel turned out to be warm, welcoming, and genuinely enthusiastic about my presentation.

The gala dinner that evening felt like something out of a dream. Standing on stage alongside the other two finalists was, in itself, an award worth cherishing. When my name was announced as the winner, my brain flat-out refused to process it. Really? Me? The rest of the night became a whirlwind of handshakes, hugs, well-wishes, and a dizzying number of photos—each one proof that it wasn't, in fact, just my imagination.

### Honoured by the UFS

Back in Bloemfontein, the LIS team knew how to celebrate in style. We had every reason to— one of us won Emerging Librarian of the Year, another walked away with Research Librarian of the Year, and we even had a finalist in the Librarian of the Year category. Cue another round of photos, of course. To top it all, UFS honoured us with an "Exceptional Academic Achievers' Award,"

making the whole celebration feel like a victory parade for librarians.

### Organising workshops

As the very first recipient of this award, there was no rulebook, and no one really knew what to expect from me—including me. I decided to dive straight in and organise training in the field of bibliometrics and altmetrics. Rather than presenting this interesting topic myself, I called on fellow research librarians who are true experts in these areas. Even better, I invited colleagues from different institutions so that the workshops could become genuine opportunities for us to learn from one another. We ended up hosting six sessions, and each time the turnout astonished me. It was proof of what I had suspected all along: bibliometrics and altmetrics really are the "elephant in the library"—and everyone is eager to finally talk about them. The sessions didn't just attract research librarians; colleagues from every type of library showed up, eager to expand their knowledge.

Receiving this award has been a profound honour. More than anything, it reflects the collaborative spirit and support of my colleagues and the wider

# Empowering the next generation

## LIASA'S MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

In a transformative effort to build capacity, confidence, and research excellence among emerging leaders in the Library and Information Services (LIS) sector, LIASA proudly showcases the ongoing Mentorship and Leadership Programme, spearheaded by the 2022 Influential Library Leader, Keitumetse Betsy Eister.

Launched in response to the growing need for leadership development in the LIS profession, the programme supports early-to mid-career professionals from across the public, academic, and school library sectors. Its central goal is to nurture leadership talent by equipping mentees with practical research skills, professional confidence, and the encouragement needed to present and publish in accredited journals. The initiative is rooted in peer learning, experienced guidance, and exposure to seasoned leaders in the LIS field.

### Meet the mentees

The cohort consists of 15 promising professionals representing a broad spectrum of LIS environments: Chareen Mathope-Dasilva (Central University of Technology), Maropene Ramabina (North West University), Princess Zangqa



Some of the members of the mentorship programme

(IIE Vega School), Tshephiso Tshikudu (Cory Library for Humanities Research), Yolanda Yakhe (City of Cape Town), Pelisa Vanda (Central University of Technology), Regina Skhosana (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), Romeo Matumba (Durban University of Technology), Thamsanqa Mrubata (Msukaligwa Local Municipality), Roberto Sass (University of Cape Town), Sibongile Doncabe (eThekweni Municipality), Uyanda Majavu (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality), Norah Ngobeni (Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture), Thandeka Legae (Rand West City Local Municipality), and Raphael Snyders (City of Cape Town).

These professionals are being guided through the mentorship journey by an experienced and dedicated leadership team: Keitumetse Betsy Eister (Central University of Technology),

Segametsi Molawa (University of South Africa), and Anushie Moonasar (Durban University of Technology). Together, they provide structure, support, and strategic insight.

### Learning from the best

An exciting feature of the programme is the invitation of esteemed library directors, leaders and specialists in the LIS profession who share their journeys, offer mentorship, and inspire participants through stories of perseverance, innovation, and advocacy. This platform fosters meaningful connections and nurtures a strong sense of professional identity among mentees.

### Building research capacity

The focus is directed on building research capacity. Participants are immersed in a series of interactive sessions, including how to write

academic articles, wellness and self-care for librarians, conducting a literature review, and understanding theoretical frameworks and research methodologies.

These sessions aim to demystify the research process and provide practical tools that mentees can apply immediately to their work and studies. Mentees are encouraged to apply their learning to their academic pursuits and professional roles within their respective library environments and the broader LIS sector. They are also guided to engage critically with scholarly literature and develop manuscripts for future publication and conference presentations.

### Future endeavours

This mentorship and leadership programme is not only a pipeline for future LIS leaders, but also a catalyst for lifelong learning, scholarly contribution, and professional excellence. As the current cohort continues to grow under the guidance of their mentors and peers, LIASA remains committed to fostering inclusive, innovative, and empowered leadership in the LIS profession.

DR ANUSHIE MOONASAR PL(SA)  
DUT LIBRARY SERVICES

## Journalism workshop @ Wynberg Library

A random chat with an ECD teacher at one of our storytelling visits to an ECD resulted in an amazing partnership, now in its second year.

Wynberg Library now hosts an annual journalism workshop for the learners of Voortrekker High School. Nabeelah Mohedeen, a journalist from the Athlone community newspaper facilitated the workshop.

(continued from page 14)

academic community at UFS. This recognition motivates me to keep pushing the boundaries of research librarianship, not just for my own growth but for the growth of others as well. I am deeply grateful to LIASA and WWIS—not only for giving me this opportunity, but for helping to create spaces where librarians everywhere can thrive together.

HESMA VAN TONDER PL(SA)  
RESEARCH LIBRARIAN, UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE



Journalism workshop at Wynberg Library  
Nabeelah conducting the workshop with Voortrekker High School Media Club

The media club learners at Voortrekker High school were invited to attend the workshop and the teacher in charge of the club immediately expressed an interest. A total of 14 learners ranging from Grades 8 to 11 along with the teacher from the media club attended.

The workshop focused on

how to start a school newsletter or magazine, how to write an article, quoting sources and the importance of editing. Ideas and tips on how to raise funds for the necessary equipment were brainstormed. The session was engaging and there were many interesting questions coming from the group.

The teacher expressed her appreciation for the workshop, stating that they will be using this information to enhance the school newspaper which started after the first journalism workshop held in 2024 at Wynberg Library.

SURAYA DAVIDS KASU- ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN  
WYNBERG LIBRARY

# Lethabong Community Library commemorates Youth Day with students from Lot Mashiane High School

**O**n 20 June 2025, the Lethabong Community Library, situated in the Madibeng Local Municipality, proudly organised a lively event to celebrate Youth Day in partnership with students from Lot Mashiane High School.

The purpose of this gathering was to engage young individuals, boost literacy, and cultivate a sense of community among the youth of Maboloka village.

The main goal of the day was to acknowledge the significant contributions of youth throughout history, pay tribute to their sacrifices, and highlight the critical role that education and libraries play in personal development and societal advancement. Education equips individuals with essential knowledge, skills, and analytical thinking capabilities, while libraries offer access to valuable resources and encourage lifelong learning. Together, these factors contribute to individual growth and enhance the overall well-being of the community.

By reflecting on historical lessons, young people can draw insights that empower them to take advantage of the free educational opportunities and services provided by libraries. Following the Youth Day festivities, a notable influx



of students from Lot Mashiane High School and the surrounding community visited the Lethabong Library. We observed

a remarkable rise in library attendance post-event, with learners eager to delve into more literature, use library resources,

sign up for memberships, and participate in activities such as introductory computer literacy sessions, spelling competitions, and read-aloud events. This increase in patronage underscores the programme's effectiveness in igniting interest in the library among the youth of the village.

The event garnered enthusiastic feedback from both students and library staff. Participants expressed gratitude for the chance to connect with their peers and explore their interests in a nurturing environment. The library is committed to maintaining this positive momentum by encouraging continuous engagement with local youth.

The celebration of Youth Day at Lethabong Library, in collaboration with Lot Mashiane High School students, proved to be a great success, emphasising the crucial role libraries play in fostering community involvement and promoting literacy among young people. Such events highlight the significance of libraries as dynamic centres of community activity.

MOKGADI MODIBA  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN, LETHABONG COMMUNITY LIBRARY, MABOLOKA

## @ Kanonierspark Library, JB Marks Municipality



**K**anonierspark Community Library, a branch of the JB Marks Local Municipality Libraries, is located within the Military Base in Potchefstroom.

It serves the military village community and the surrounding areas, providing essential library services and promoting literacy.

On 13 June 2025, the library had the honour of hosting a vibrant and impactful National Youth Day Celebration. The event was a tremendous success and fulfilled its core purpose: to celebrate youth, raise awareness about the importance of reading,

promote the use of the library, and encourage lifelong reading habits. It also aimed to foster sustainable partnerships with the military village and enhance social cohesion among the youth.

The event specifically targeted military youth, providing a platform for creativity, expression, and civic education. The day's activities included:

- A powerful Youth Day message delivered by Dr. Skhosane, a representative from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF),
- Civic and democracy education presented by an official from

the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), highlighting the importance of active citizenship.

- Reading promotion, including a book reading session and a special display featuring works by African authors, aimed at inspiring a culture of reading.
- An interactive workshop, where participants engaged in open discussions on youth empowerment and personal development.
- Games and creative activities, which brought energy and enthusiasm to the event.
- Performing arts, including

a lively Sarafina dance performance, celebrating youth resilience and artistic talent.

As the Librarian of Kanonierspark Community Library, I am proud to share that the event received overwhelmingly positive feedback from all participants and stakeholders. It was a day filled with learning, inspiration, and celebration — a testament to the power of community, culture, and youth empowerment.

SISANDA MKHIZE  
LIBRARIAN, KANONIERSPARK LIBRARY  
POTCHEFSTROOM

# NLSA empowers young voices at a Youth Day commemoration event

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA) proudly hosted a Youth Day commemoration event on 25 June 2025 at its Pretoria Campus which brought together young writers, thought leaders, and beneficiaries of the NLSA Community Publishing Project to celebrate the power of language and literature.

Celebrated under the theme, "The value of languages in advancing skills for the changing world, to empower youth for meaningful participation", the event highlighted the critical role of languages, particularly African languages, in equipping young people with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.



Abraham Sibango, NLSA publishing grant beneficiary, with his book

The Community Publishing Project's grant beneficiaries showcased their materials and offered attendees an insight into the process of capturing their stories. These stories emphasise the importance of investing in young talent and the transformative power of storytelling.

"We are here to encourage you to use your unique voices to contribute positively to our literary heritage; your stories matter and need to be shared with the rest of the world," commented Mandla Mona, Manager: Centre for the Book at the NLSA.

The day's programme featured captivating poetry and book reading segments, keeping the audience entertained. The event

also featured two insightful panel discussions, these being "The Role of Recording Our Tales in Our African Languages" which emphasised the urgent need to document indigenous knowledge and cultural narratives in our indigenous languages, and "Required Skills to Accelerate Youth Participation" which revolved around equipping young people with tools to navigate and lead in a rapidly changing world.

The commemoration reaffirmed the NLSA's dedication to fostering a reading and writing nation, nurturing young talent in the field of literature, and promoting multilingualism in South Africa.

NSUKU MACHEBELE  
CONTENT AND MEDIA SPECIALIST, NLSA

## HONOURING JUNE 16 BY EMPOWERING THE FUTURE, CELEBRATING YOUTH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Each year, June 16 stands as a powerful reminder of the courage and resilience of the youth who stood up for justice during the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

While we remain deeply respectful of this important history, this year our commemoration at CPUT took a forward-looking approach, one that not only honoured the past but also ignited a vision for the future.

Guided by the theme of entrepreneurship, our displays shifted focus to empowering the next generation of business leaders and innovators. Recognising that economic empowerment is a modern-day form of liberation, we curated experiences that inspired students and community members to see

entrepreneurship as a viable and impactful path.

This spirit of enterprise ties directly into CPUT's ongoing mission to grow from greatness and empower the leaders of tomorrow. In line with celebrating 20 years of CPUT, we placed special emphasis on stories of growth and transformation, spotlighting alumni who have gone on to build businesses that impact their communities.

While entrepreneurship offers young people a powerful path to financial independence and community upliftment, the journey is not without its challenges. The pressure to succeed, the fear of failure, and the isolation that can come with building something from the ground up often take a toll on mental

well-being. That's why, as we encouraged students to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams, we also placed a strong emphasis on mental health, particularly Men's Mental Health, which is frequently under-discussed. True empowerment means supporting both the economic and emotional resilience of our youth.

In a symbolic and impactful gesture, 20 books focused on mental wellness, emotional resilience, and men's mental health were put on display across campus libraries.

This initiative not only aligns with CPUT's 20th anniversary but also encourages our male students and staff to engage openly with mental health topics. It's a step toward destigmatising mental health issues and

fostering a culture of support and understanding.

This year's June 16 commemoration reminded us that honouring the past means investing in the future. By focusing on entrepreneurship and mental health, we are helping shape a generation that is not only economically empowered but also emotionally resilient.

As CPUT celebrates 20 years of impact and excellence, we reaffirm our commitment to nurturing greatness, past, present, and future.

To view the Videos, click here: [Honouring June 16](#) and [Men's Mental Health Awareness](#)

NHLANHLA MABUNDA  
STUDENT ASSISTANT  
CPUT

### @ BAKGOMA LIBRARY

Bakgoma Library commemorated Youth Day by hosting a 'BOKGOBA PUKU A BOYE BATHONG' (loosely translated as "the library must go to the people") campaign from 9 to 13 June 2025.

The campaign took the form of a highly successful CV and application letter drive in five traditional offices in the deep rural areas of Mogalakwena Municipality, which attracted many enthusiastic participants from our villages. The event aimed to equip job seekers with essential skills to craft compelling CVs and application letters, increasing their chances of securing employment.

The workshop was conducted by the people's favourite librarian, SD Seanego, accompanied by



Librarian Sandra D Seanego

colleagues from the Mogalakwena Municipality, and offered valuable insights and practical tips on CV writing and drafting application letters. Participants learned how to tailor their own CVs to specific job openings, highlight their relevant skills and experiences and create effective cover letters that showcased their passion and

enthusiasm for the desired role.

The workshop received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, traditional councils and communities at large who praised the informative and engaging presentation.

Our library's campaign was a resounding success, providing valuable skills and knowledge to

job seekers in our communities. As librarians we continue supporting the employment and career development needs of our patrons.

SANDRA DIKELEDI SEANEGO  
LIBRARIAN  
BAKGOMA LIBRARY



Vundu Poetry programme at Mendi art centre in New Brighton, catering to previously disadvantaged schools



Deputy Director: Libraries, Mrs Bongwiwe Chigumbu, honoring local authors from left: Madoda Dlakuse, Elubadine and Sakhumzi Socwe AKA DONGA DALA

## June 16 and the role of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) Libraries in Youth Development

**J**une 16, also known as Youth Day in South Africa, marks the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, when thousands of students protested apartheid-era education policies.

The courage of these young people continues to inspire efforts toward equal education and youth empowerment. In Nelson Mandela Bay, this historic day serves not only as a commemoration but also as a catalyst for action. NMBM libraries play a meaningful role in honouring this legacy through targeted youth development initiatives during Youth Month and beyond to foster education, leadership, and well-being among the youth.

### 1. Bridging the Gap in Access to Educational Resources

One of the key ways NMBM libraries support youth development is by ensuring access to quality learning materials, especially for young people from previously disadvantaged communities. Throughout June, libraries across the Metro host themed displays, book exhibitions, and interactive educational talks that centre on youth rights, history, and empowerment. These activities not only promote access to knowledge but also serve to reflect on the core message of June 16 — the fight for equitable education. By providing free access to books, digital resources, study space, and internet services, NMBM libraries continue to uphold the principles for which the youth of 1976 fought.

### 2. Promoting Literacy and Academic Success

Recognising that literacy is the foundation of lifelong learning, NMBM libraries offer tailored

literacy programmes throughout the year including book readings, storytelling sessions, and writing competitions aligned to the June 16 theme. Many libraries also run homework support and exam preparation programmes, which are especially vital for learners who lack academic support at home. These initiatives create a nurturing academic environment for youth, enabling them to reach their full potential.

### 3. Encouraging Critical Thinking and Innovation

June 16 commemorations often include activities that stimulate creativity and critical thinking. Workshops on coding, robotics, poetry, and art are frequently held, empowering young people to develop problem-solving skills while exploring new areas of interest. These programmes are not only educational but also serve to unlock talent and ambition among the Metro's youth. Libraries are increasingly seen as innovation hubs where learners can explore ideas, collaborate, and express themselves in constructive ways.

This contributes to personal confidence and a sense of agency, both essential in today's world.

### 4. Supporting Social Inclusion and Community Engagement

NMBM libraries foster social inclusion by creating platforms where youth from different backgrounds can come together, such as youth dialogues, film screenings, and debate sessions that encourage expression, tolerance, and community awareness. These programmes aim to equip young people with interpersonal and leadership skills, while also instilling a sense of civic duty. In doing so, libraries are helping to build active, socially conscious citizens who can carry forward the legacy of June 16.

### 5. Prioritising Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

Understanding the pressures faced by today's youth, several libraries incorporated wellness-focused activities into their Youth Month programming, including mindfulness sessions, motivational talks, and safe spaces for open discussion around mental

health. Libraries serve not only as learning centres but also as places of refuge and support, especially for young people dealing with anxiety, stress, or social challenges thus promoting mental well-being, resilience and self-worth.

### Conclusion

As South Africa reflects on the significance of June 16, the contribution of institutions like NMBM libraries in nurturing and empowering the youth cannot be overstated. By providing inclusive, safe, and resource-rich spaces, NMBM libraries are not only preserving the memory of past struggles but actively shaping a better, more equitable future for the young people of the Metro. Through their ongoing commitment to education, innovation, and emotional support, NMBM libraries continue to honour the spirit of the 1976 youth — ensuring that their dreams live on in every empowered child who walks through a library door.

SESONA BOKOLO



A session at North End Library on mental health and emotional well-being

# A demonstration of the power of Archives

Unisa LIS launches Digital Archive honouring Dr Motsoko Pheko

**U**nisa Library and Information Services (LIS) marked a historic moment on 23 May 2025, with the digital launch of the Dr Motsoko Pheko Collection which celebrates the global footprint of one of the influential liberation figures in South Africa.

The theme of the launch was “Proudly African Libraries Celebrating Indigenous Knowledge for a Connected World”.

## A living archive for inspiration and learning in a library space

The event, filled with vibrancy and reflection, was steered by Dr Thulile Shandu-Phetla and featured addresses from esteemed academics. Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Vice Principal of Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation, praised the digitisation process and outcomes of the Pheko Archive as a milestone for African digital scholarship and the preservation of collective memory in library spaces. “The library is not just a building with books; it is a living, digitised space of African voices,” she said. Expanding on the theme, Professor Mpho Ngoepe, Executive Director of LIS, highlighted the critical role of archives in preserving liberation histories often absent from mainstream narratives. He described Dr Pheko as “an archivist of memory of revolution,” emphasising how archives serve as vessels for stories that shape national identity and consciousness.

## The value of archival manuscripts

The launch of the Pheko Collection highlights the irreplaceable value of archival manuscripts within libraries which are dynamic spaces that safeguard the voices, struggles,



Dr Motsoko Pheko: a graphic version of the photo from the Parliament website

and triumphs of a people. As Anri Van Der Westhuizen stated during the event, archives are “cultural strongholds and ethical stewards of memory,” warning against the non-preservation of these in global knowledge systems. Through the process of digitising archives, libraries can ensure that these narratives remain accessible, relevant, and influential for local and international information seekers. Dr Lebohang Pheko,

daughter of Dr Motsoko Pheko, delivered an inspiring keynote address, describing the archive as a “counter-narrative to historical amnesia.” She challenged the library community to digitise not only the respected and elites, but also those who were inconvenienced by power struggles. In this case, the role of archives in promoting a more inclusive and truthful historical record is reinforced.



Dr Lebohang Pheko



Dr Thulile Shandu Phetla



Prof Thenjiwe Meyiwa



Prof Mpho Ngoepe



Dr Lesiba Ledwaba



Mr Lindani Nkosi

## Empowering future generations

The Pheko Collection serves as a vital resource for youth, aspiring authors, and students. It showcases Dr Pheko’s journey, contributions, and the depth of his thought, inspiring young people to pursue knowledge and use their voices to shape society. The digital record was complemented by a book exhibition that showcased scores of published books authored by Dr Motsoko Pheko and donated in person to the Unisa library by the icon. In addition, a portrait in oils of Dr Pheko by internationally acclaimed artist, Dr Daniel Rankadi Mosako, was also unveiled on site, symbolising the icon’s enduring connection to issues of land rights and resilience. This artwork, like the archive, stands as a timeless artefact and an embodiment of memory, resistance, as well as African culture. During the event, the audience which included Professor Puleng Segalo, TV icon Mr Lindani Nkosi, and the former National Librarian Mr Kepi Madumo, were entertained with a poetry performance by Nthabiseng JahRose Jafta.

## Libraries: architects of the future

The event concluded with closing remarks from Dr Lesiba Ledwaba, the Acting Director of LIS Corporate Services, who reminded the audience that archives in libraries are not relics of the past but are architects of the future. By preserving, digitising, and sharing archives, libraries light the way for empowerment, cultural pride, and intellectual growth.

MPHO MASINGI  
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

DANIEL MOSAKO  
CHAIR OF DEPT (A/G) ART AND MUSIC  
UNISA

# It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity!

67 Minutes for Mandela at Matlala Library

**I**n supporting the theme, Matlala Library collaborated with the Department of Treasury, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Agriculture, SASSA and Capricorn TVET College to organise an information sharing session for Mandela Day 2025.

The critical role that libraries play in fighting poverty and closing the inequality gap was emphasised. In her presentation, librarian Abigail Chuene informed community members about free access to information at the library, free access to actively connected computers and copies made at cheaper rates. Her presentation emphasised the idea that libraries are more than just buildings with books but centres of empowerment, learning and recreation.

Standard Bank provided financial literacy information; the



Abigail Chuene (centre left) and Kgabo Elias Mahoi – MEC for the Department of Treasury (centre right)

Department of Agriculture shared information about their grants and financial support to local farmers; Capricorn TVET College shared information on how to apply, register and distributed their prospectus; Home Affairs came with their mobile truck and issued

identity documents and passports while SASSA provided information on how to apply for grants and who qualifies. They further warned community members of the implications of the misuse of SASSA money.

The library indeed has great

potential to close the gap between the rich and the poor, and further break the back bone of poverty with information.

ABIGAIL CHUENE  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN, SESHEGO LIBRARY  
POLOKWANE MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES

## 67 MINUTES OF KINDNESS: MAQUASSI HILLS LIBRARIES

**K**gakala Community library hosted and honoured Mandela's legacy with a yard clean up initiative for people with special needs.

This initiative was sparked by Mandela's values of compassion, community service and dedication to the well-being of others. The library worked tirelessly with other Maquassi Hills libraries and with Kgakala Drop-In Centre, Kgakala Disability Centre, Leeudoringstad Community Policing forum and SAPS (different stakeholders) for 67 minutes to beautify the outdoor space by mowing the lawn and removing debris.

This left the owner so speechless, he expressed gratitude for the kindness and support with just a hand gesture. The event highlighted the importance of community involvement and the positive impact it can have on an individual with a disability, reflecting the spirit of Ubuntu.

In continuation of the Legacy celebrations, the library held a clothes drive to bring warmth to those in need. The response was overwhelming and a vast number of items were distributed to children and adults in need.

Finally, the library hosted a cultural event at Kgakala Community Hall with performance arts - music, poetry, drama and ballroom dance, on the programme. A Catalyst of Hope by Kgakala born Dr Kenneth Kaunda District's Single Whip, Cllr Jeffrey Lesie, sparked by



Mandela's story and legacy, concluded the event.

On the other wing of Maquassi Hills, Lebaleng Community Library celebrated Mandela's legacy at Lesedi Pre-School. The initiative included a day of giving back through a variety of activities. Library staff thoroughly cleaned

the crèche and sanitised toys.

To nourish the little ones, they cooked soft porridge, providing a warm and nutritious meal, and finally spot-watered the vegetable garden.

Makwassie Community Library celebrated by cleaning Phogole Primary School's Grade

R section. This involved mopping, sweeping, cleaning chairs to make this section a hygienic area for children. Mandela loved children as is borne out by his saying, "The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children".

While still celebrating legacy, Leeudoringstad Community Library went further by hosting computer classes. Participants praised the classes for boosting their confidence in the 4IR space, a super cool industrial tsunami that is changing how we live. The initiative empowered locals with ICT skills.

BASANI ESTER HLONGWANE  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN  
MAQUASSI HILLS LIBRARIES  
KGAKALA LIBRARY  
NORTH WEST ARTS, CULTURE,  
SPORT & RECREATION



## PROMOTING GARDENING @ MATLWANG LIBRARY

The Matlwang Dual Purpose Library supports both the Matlwang community and J. Letsapa School to instil a culture of reading, education, and sustainable living.

The library staff started a significant initiative of community gardening which enhances local households and promotes food security. This gardening initiative commenced in February 2025, in partnership with local community members. The donation of seeds by community members demonstrated a collective commitment to growth and self-sufficiency.

The need for this project was identified through continuous engagement with library users, underscoring the library function as a responsive and community-oriented space.

In honour of Mandela Day, Matlwang Library in JB Marks Municipality organised a programme on 15 July 2025 to unite community members of various ages and backgrounds to share narratives, exchange knowledge, and learn from each other.

The programme also promoted reading and literacy development by encouraging participants to implement what they read in books through physical activities and community engagement. Ward Councillor K. R. Manja attended the event, along with enthusiastic involvement from both the youth and adults of the local community.

In line with the Mandela Day tradition, participants devoted 67 minutes to cleaning and maintaining the Matlwang Library Garden and

the adjacent school grounds. This act of service underscored the spirit of giving back and taking pride in shared community spaces. To advocate for sustainable living and raise awareness about food security, the library highlighted the significance of gardening by enhancing its book collection on gardening subjects.

With the assistance of J.B Marks Municipality, the library distributed fresh vegetables to identified families. Furthermore, attendees received soup and bread, generously donated by Blue Ribbon, fostering a sense of unity and care.

The event was a resounding success and illustrated the profound impact libraries can have in cultivating resilient, informed, and connected communities.



Soup and bread for participants

ANNA MONTSONYANA  
LIBRARY ASSISTANT  
MATLWANG DUAL PURPOSE LIBRARY  
JB MARKS MUNICIPALITY

## EMPOWERING THE FUTURE: SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY HOSTS DIGITAL SKILLS DRIVE

On 18 July 2025, the Sol Plaatje University (SPU) Library hosted a dynamic Mandela Day digital event at its Computer Lab, aligning with the national call to dedicate 67 minutes in service of others.

Under the theme “**Future-ready with digital skills**,” the initiative aimed to equip students with essential digital literacy, critical thinking, and information evaluation skills.

The event opened with a warm welcome from the library team, followed by a message highlighting the purpose of the day: to honour Nelson Mandela’s legacy by investing in youth through education and technology. The programme featured two key interactive activities. First, in the “**Search Like a Pro Challenge**”, students were tasked with finding, verifying, and presenting information in just ten minutes, developing their research agility and online discernment. This was followed by



The prize winners, first and second left, and the SPU Library team

“**Digital Storytelling: Mandela’s Legacy Today**” where students reflected on Mandela’s values in the context of 2025. Adding a creative twist, students also took turns imitating Nelson Mandela in a fun segment that drew laughter and heartfelt tributes. The morning concluded with the

distribution of small giveaways to top-performing participants and closing remarks that reaffirmed the role of libraries in bridging digital gaps.

This impactful initiative not only celebrated Mandela’s enduring message of empowerment and social justice

but also gave students a platform to engage meaningfully with technology and envision their place in a digitally inclusive future.

MASHIA SHOKANE  
INFORMATION LIBRARIAN,  
SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY



# Global Gleanings #25: South African contributions to the international literature

A COLUMN OF NEWS, VIEWS AND SNIPPETS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE OF BOOKS, LIBRARIES, AND INFORMATION, COMPILED BY PETER LOR

## Introduction

South and southern African researchers continue to publish excellent and relevant research findings in overseas journals, to which not all of us have access. In this instalment of "Global Gleanings" I draw attention to fifteen articles published overseas in 2024 by South African authors and other authors (such as postgraduate students from other African countries) connected to South African universities.

The articles cover a wide range of topics. It's pleasing to see greater diversity in the post-graduate research efforts. Gone are the days when a thesis involved a largely atheoretical (theory-free) questionnaire or interview survey of a group of library or information users in an obscure institution or region. The value of any empirical research is greatly enhanced when it is conducted within an internationally recognised theoretical framework, as we are now seeing regularly.

## Information user behaviour

A study of the use of e-library resources by Ugandan engineering students showed that such use was affected by factors such as ease of use, convenience, and the students' level of awareness and information search skills. Access restrictions and high internet costs were inhibiting factors (Acanit, Ngulube, and Mojapelo 2024).

In the context of health sciences, a researcher in Cape Town assessed the potential of mobile apps to help low-income urban diabetic patients follow their prescribed daily regimens of glucose testing, healthy eating, and physical activity. This well-designed quantitative study applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Petersen 2025).

A study of the effects of information poverty on a small-scale farming community in KwaZulu-Natal used focus group discussions to explore unmet information needs and identified causal factors such as lack of financial resources, lack of government support, and outdated beliefs (Zondi, Nkomo, and Moyane 2024).

## Libraries supporting SDGs and addressing developmental issues

Researchers continue to study the role of libraries in achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs). A South African study investigated the extent to which library directors and librarians in public university libraries were engaging with communities and other heritage institutions to promote SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all) and SDG 11 (inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements). There was some evidence of collaboration with communities, but collaboration with heritage institutions was limited (Bangani 2024). To promote SDG 11, the respondents reported serving as custodians of local collections and heritage materials. A qualitative study in Zimbabwe investigated the role of librarians in the preservation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge (IK), with an emphasis on ethical issues of documenting IK using digital technology. It was noteworthy that some school libraries were engaged in imaginative activities to promote appreciation of IK (Chigwada and Ngulube 2023). An article based on a comprehensive international literature search proposed a South African strategy for knowledge management for climate change, which affects most of the UN's SDGs (Fombad 2024).

## Scholarly communication, intellectual property, and open access

The international system of scholarly communication is very relevant to LIS professionals; it is the ecosystem within which we work. Publishing models for the dissemination of scholarly work are of critical importance. A study from Zimbabwe points out that that country has a low publishing output, which prompted the authors to examine alternative publishing models. They identified open access, self-publishing and collaborative publishing as marketing models for university presses (Chirisa and Ngoepe 2024). Library publishing is also recommended as a solution

for overcoming constraints imposed by publishers in the Global North. Claassen (2024) reports on a new open access publishing platform, the [African Platform for Open Scholarship](#), developed by the University of Cape Town Libraries for the use of all African universities and research institutes, with the aim of contributing to social justice and inclusion of African scholars. A case study of one of its first open access publications, a student textbook on constitutional law, revealed that it had over 150,000 downloads in the first three years after being launched in 2020. The authors attribute a significant improvement in student pass rates recorded from that year to the availability of this open access text (Raju and Lillie 2024).

Approaching open access from the perspective of knowledge management, a systematic review of open access in South Africa led to the identification of the major obstacles and to suggestions for mitigating them, including a proposal for the establishment of an African Open Science Platform (Kodua-Ntim and Fombad 2024).

The global copyright system remains a barrier preventing access to information needed by African researchers. Desmond Oriakhogba (2024), a legal scholar at the University of the Western Cape, proposes adopting a human rights perspective to develop a human right to research.

Under the heading of scholarly communication, I should also mention a bibliometric study of the influence of research collaboration on research productivity in Kenya. The author found a significant link between research collaboration and research excellence (Onyancha 2024).

## ICT initiatives

Various initiatives involving the use of new information communication and technology concepts are a regular feature of the LIS literature. This year is no exception. A study on the use of project management tools and techniques in successful ICT projects in the South African Department of Social

Development (Mamatlepa and Mazenda 2024), published in *Information development*, is somewhat outside our usual scope. Not so a mixed methods study of the attitudes of staff towards the adoption of artificial intelligence in South African academic libraries. Attitudes were mostly positive, but some reported anxiety about possible job losses (Molaudzi and Marutha 2024). A bibliometric study of the global research literature on data literacy from 2005 to 2022 emphasised the role of libraries in nurturing data literacy skills, serving as "information hubs", and providing "educational frameworks" (Nwagwu 2024).

My brief notes cannot do justice to the interesting work being published in our field. I encourage readers to follow up the references below.

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Many articles were published using the SAGE "OnlineFirst" or similar procedure, according to which articles are published online before they appear in print, quite often in the following year. Their volume, issue and page numbers were not yet available when this list was compiled. However, the DOI should lead you to them.

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(continued on page 23 ▶)

**T**he Durban University of Technology (DUT) Library honoured Mandela Day in July 2025 by extending a helping hand to less fortunate communities around Durban.

In line with the Mandela Day spirit of giving back, the library team distributed food packages to needy families in the Durban Beach areas, the city centre, and Overport.

The initiative was a collaborative effort between DUT Library staff, Work Integrated Learning (WILL), and library intern students. Together, they packed and distributed parcels containing essential food items to support local communities facing food insecurity.

The project, led by Sarah Khan under the DUT Library



DUT Library staff distributing food items at South Beach

Community Outreach Programme, reflected the library's commitment to giving back and supporting communities, honouring Nelson Mandela's legacy of care and

service. Through this act of kindness, the DUT Library reaffirmed its role not only as an academic support hub but also as an institution dedicated to

uplifting communities in need.

ROMEO MUVHULAWA MATUMBA PL (SA)  
LIBRARIAN: MARKETING AND  
COMMUNICATION, DUT

(continued from page 22)

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# Bring Your Library Online



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# Constitutional Court hearing of the Copyright Amendment Bill

In terms of Section 79(4) of the Constitution, President Ramaphosa referred the Copyright Amendment Bill to the Constitutional Court on 15 October 2024, citing that two of his 2020 constitutional reservations had not been 'fully accommodated' by Parliament during the review process. The Referral proceedings were heard by the Court on 21 and 22 May 2025.

On 21 and 22 May 2025, the South African Constitutional Court heard the matter of *Ex Parte President of the Republic of South Africa: In re Constitutionality of the Copyright Amendment Bill and the Performers' Protection Amendment Bill*. The hearing in these 'Referral proceedings' was significant as it was only the second time in South Africa's history that the President triggered an exceptional constitutional mechanism to refer a Bill to the Constitutional Court for a decision on the constitutionality of certain aspects instead of signing it into law. The Court's decision in this case will determine the fate of a long, drawn-out legislative reform process aiming to transform and

modernise South Africa's apartheid-era copyright law and bring it into the constitutional era.

The President, Parliament, and various parties provided both written and oral submissions. Two parties, the Democratic Alliance and FF Plus submitted written and oral presentations, as did Blind SA, as an interested party in the matter. In addition, eight amici curiae ('friends of the court') sought permission to present oral submissions and submitted written documents. Although only one amicus, the Centre for Child Law and UNESCO Chair: Education Law in Africa, was initially granted permission to present orally, the Court invited all amici to present orally on the second day.

These included:

- the National Association of Broadcasters
- Copyright Coalition South Africa
- Recreate Action (on behalf of its affiliates the South African Democratic Teachers Union, South African Guild of Actors, Independent Directors Association Africa, Library and Information Association of South Africa, Authors Alliance, Committee for Higher Education Libraries

of South Africa, Creative Commons South Africa, National Professional Teachers Organisation South Africa, Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association, Music Makers United, South African Finishing Artists and Imaging Technicians Society, Southern African Regional Universities Association, Data Science for Social Impact, Wikimedia South Africa, Wits Centre for Deaf Studies, Association for Progressive Communications and the South African National Deaf Association)

- Jonathan Shapiro aka Zapiro
- Recording Industry South Africa
- Composers, Authors and Publishers Association, Commercial Producers Association of South Africa NPC, Music Publishers Association of South Africa, National Association of Model Agencies, PEN Afrikaans, Publishers Association South Africa, South African Association of Stills Producers ('CAPA amici').
- the South African National Editors Forum and Campaign for Free Expression.<sup>2</sup>

The Bill has been a highly

contested piece of legislation since it was first published for comment in 2015. Its complexities were again highlighted during the hearings. The Constitution is silent on what should occur if the Court agrees with the President's reservations about a Bill. In previous cases, the Court has ruled certain provisions or entire Bills unconstitutional, providing details on which aspects are problematic. While the Court can establish its own procedures for handling such cases, it cannot sever unconstitutional provisions from the rest of the Bill. Its severance powers are limited to laws already in force. If the Court disagrees with the President's reservations, it must instruct the President to sign the Bill forthwith.

The Court's awaited decision will be a pivotal moment in South Africa's copyright reform, potentially setting a major precedent for future cases involving pre-constitutional laws aimed at transforming the nation's social and economic landscape.

DENISE R. NICHOLSON  
SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS AND  
COPYRIGHT CONSULTANT  
SCHOLARLY HORIZONS

1. [https://infojustice.org/archives/46418#\\_ftn1](https://infojustice.org/archives/46418#_ftn1)
2. [https://infojustice.org/archives/46418#\\_ftn1](https://infojustice.org/archives/46418#_ftn1)
3. <https://infojustice.org/archives/46420>

## Book Whizz and Mobireadathon Competition 2025 @ Westonaria Library

The Rand West City Libraries hosted its first combined Book Whizz and MobiReadathon Competition on 25 June 2025 at Westonaria Library. In the past, the two competitions were hosted separately.

The aim of both competitions is to promote the culture of reading, research and to introduce the use of technology to learners as part of digital literacy.

The competition gave participants an opportunity to showcase their digital literacy skills while learning to navigate digital platforms by filling in online forms, download stories and doing all this by reading online.

MobiReadathon is a digital literacy and reading development programme initiated by the City of Johannesburg Libraries and the Rand West City Libraries adopted the programme in 2024. Learners read stories on mobile devices like laptops, mobile phones, tablets, etc and they were introduced to the use of digital tools for reading and finding information.

Two high schools with 10 learners per group participated in the Readathon, with Randfontein



Randfontein High School (MobiReadathon winning school)

High School winning first place and Hoërskool Westonaria coming second. the results.

The event was hosted at the same time as the City of Johannesburg Libraries (CoJLIS). CoJLIS hosted their event from the University of Johannesburg, and we joined via ZOOM. This was another exciting element to the competition, and the learners were thrilled to also be part of this incredible innovation. The CoJLIS team assisted with the technical setup of the MobiReadathon.

With the Book Whizz competition, participants had an opportunity to demonstrate their talent, confidence and their ability to comprehend and communicate. They were set the same stories as in the MobiReadathon competition.

The learners were assessed in the following categories - book reviews, impromptu reading, spelling and debate.

Six high schools participated in the competition with the results being:



Edzai Mpukuzela  
Book Whizz winner

1. Randfontein High School:
2. Hoërskool Westonaria
3. Ithuteng Secondary School
4. A.B. Phokompe Secondary School
5. Phahama Secondary School
6. Kgotalang Secondary School

The combination of the two programmes was exciting, and learners learnt much from one another.

Technology is taking over our lives. We must equip our learners with the necessary skills to adapt to a fast-changing world.

THANDEKA LEGAE PL(SA)  
PROGRAMMES LIBRARIAN, RAND WEST CITY  
LIBRARIES

## Ctrl+Alt+Educate: UWC students talk AI

“AI helps us understand better than our lecturers.”

“Using AI is like stepping into the deepest trenches of your comfort zone.”

These are just two of the comments students shared during South African Library Week 2024 at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), when we posed a simple but provocative question: “Is it ethical to use AI in your studies?”

As part of our SALW 2024 whiteboard campaign, we invited students to respond to this question by writing directly onto large paper sheets displayed in the library foyer. Over a week, 121 comments were collected – insightful, funny, critical, and reflective. The informal setup encouraged spontaneous participation and created a sense of shared dialogue among students.

### Balanced but divided

The results reveal a relatively even distribution of opinion:

- 37% said yes, using AI is ethical
- 26% said no, it is not
- 36% said it depends on how AI is used.

Students in favour of AI praised its ability to enhance understanding, save time, and keep them in step with technological trends. Many saw it as a tool that, when used responsibly, could enrich their learning.

“It helps me understand things better and work faster.”

Others, however, were deeply concerned. Comments highlighted fears about over-dependence on AI, erosion of critical thinking, academic dishonesty, and the potential for laziness.

“We’re outsourcing our brains.”

Those in the middle often reflected both hope and caution. They acknowledged

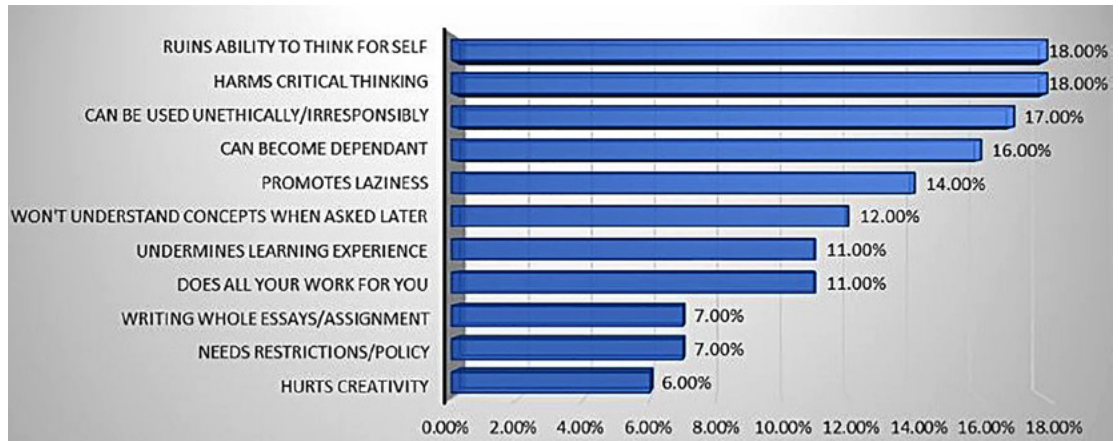


Figure 1: Top Negative Themes



Figure 2: Top Positive Themes

AI’s usefulness but warned that it should not replace effort, reasoning, or ethical responsibility.

### Why this matters

As AI tools become part of students’ academic routines, librarians are uniquely positioned to guide their ethical and informed use.

We must treat AI literacy as part of information literacy. Students need to learn not just how to use AI, but how to question it – how to identify bias,

assess credibility, and understand its limitations.

We also need to create spaces for open discussion. The whiteboard campaign worked because it was public, low-stakes, and peer-driven. Students engaged freely and seriously with one another’s thoughts. Replicating this kind of activity in other contexts could help surface valuable insights.

Lastly, librarians should be active voices in institutional policymaking around AI. Student feedback suggests that ethical guidelines

are urgently needed but must be nuanced and flexible – designed with, not just for, students.

### A generation of thought

What stood out most in this small study was the level of thought students gave to the question. Many had clearly reflected on the implications of AI use, not only for their own learning but for broader academic integrity.

They don’t want to be told simply what’s allowed – they want to talk about it, understand it, and find their place in a changing educational landscape.

As librarians, we must be part of those conversations – facilitators of critical engagement and champions of ethical tech use.

“It can be useful—but don’t let it replace your brain.”

Wise words. Let’s take them seriously.

ANDREW E. ENNIS PL(SA)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

- This unpublished research was presented at the University of Johannesburg Library International Conference (June 11-12, 2024) and the 5th IFLA symposium on artificial intelligence (June 16-20, 2025). It is slated to become a chapter in the book of the IJ conference proceedings.

## Mandela Day @ Potchefstroom Community Library

In celebration of Mandela Day, the Potchefstroom Community Library hosted a vibrant and heartfelt event that brought together young learners, volunteers, and local leaders.

The highlight of the day was welcoming New Life Day Care Centre from Extension 11, under the caring leadership of Mrs. Mothebe. Thanks to the JB Marks Local Municipality, transportation was provided to ensure the children and staff could attend and participate fully.

The 67-minute programme was packed with joyful and

educational activities. Children were treated to puppet shows, storytelling sessions, and reading circles, while the uplifting sounds of Na’iBali songs filled the air. In return, the children demonstrated their dancing talents in a lively performance that captured the spirit of celebration.

Showing their commitment to community service, the children also volunteered to help clean the area surrounding the library, an inspiring act of civic pride. The event concluded with a warm meal of soup and bread, generously sponsored by Blue Ribbon, creating a shared

moment of nourishment and connection.

To commemorate the occasion, the JB Marks Local Municipality Communication Department captured the day in photos and streamed highlights on their official page, allowing the broader community to witness the joy and unity that defined the celebration.

Mandela Day reminds us that even small acts of kindness can ripple outward to create lasting change. This gathering at the Potchefstroom Community Library was a shining example of how collaboration, compassion, and creativity can uplift a community.

Photos link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19Xe8btsrg/>

LALA MOLOI,  
LIBRARIAN/CATALOGUER  
POTCHEFSTROOM COMMUNITY LIBRARY

## IGBIS Community of Practice

The IGBIS Community of Practice hosted a well-attended and engaging webinar titled “Overview of the BIBFRAME 2.0 Model” on Tuesday, 27 May 2025.

The session was presented by Tholakele Xulu, Metadata Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council and Chair-Elect of the Interim IGBIS Community of Practice (CoP). The event drew participation from over 90 attendees—testament to the growing interest and commitment of the bibliographic and metadata community.

The session was professionally coordinated, with Chantel Clack providing the welcome and introduction, Kholofelo Makola managing the Q&A session, and Mercia Moreana, current Chair of the Interim IGBIS CoP, delivering the vote of thanks and formal closing.

### Introducing BIBFRAME


Tholakele Xulu opened her presentation by providing valuable context on the Bibliographic Framework Initiative (BIBFRAME). Originally launched in 2011 by the Library of Congress, BIBFRAME was conceived as a modern data model for bibliographic description. Its purpose: to replace the aging MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloguing) standards with a more versatile

### Overview of the BIBFRAME, 2.0 Model

Library of Congress Initiative : bibliographic description in the networked environment

**Tholakele Xulu**  
txulu@hsrc.ac.za

**IGBIS Webinar: 27 May 2025**  
LIASA - IGBIS Community of Practice



model built on Linked Data principles. The current iteration, BIBFRAME 2.0, was released in 2016, offering improved structure and flexibility for bibliographic data on the Web.

### Why BIBFRAME Matters

Tholakele emphasised the significance of BIBFRAME in the evolving landscape of metadata management. Unlike MARC, which relies on rigid, record-based structures, BIBFRAME facilitates machine-actionable relationships between entities. Built on RDF/XML (Resource Description Framework in XML), BIBFRAME aligns with Semantic Web standards, enhancing the discoverability and interoperability of library data across digital

platforms.

Crucially, BIBFRAME is not merely a technical replacement for MARC—it represents a paradigm shift in bibliographic thinking. It redefines the structure of a bibliographic resource by separating the intellectual content, physical carrier, and the agents responsible for its creation. This granular modelling allows each element to function independently within computer applications, enabling greater flexibility, precision, and Web integration.

### Preparing for Transition

The latter portion of the webinar focused on preparing MARC-based systems and workflows for the transition to BIBFRAME.

One of the key advancements lies in the use of URIs (Uniform Resource Identifiers) to uniquely define bibliographic entities and their attributes. This feature enables bibliographic data to seamlessly integrate with other Web resources, supporting linked data initiatives and fostering wider data reuse beyond the traditional library ecosystem.

### What's Next?

In closing, Tholakele announced that a follow-up series is in development. The upcoming sessions will explore RDA (Resource Description and Access) updates in the context of MARC-to-BIBFRAME conversion, with live examples and in-depth explorations of BIBFRAME's core classes and concepts. These sessions promise to provide practical, hands-on learning opportunities for those navigating this crucial transition.

On behalf of the IGBIS Community, Mercia Moreana expressed heartfelt thanks to Tholakele for her insightful, timely, and thought-provoking contribution to this vital area of bibliographic advancement.

CHANTEL CLACK  
LIBRARIAN: METADATA AND CATALOGUING  
RHODES UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
INTERIM IGBIS CoP SECRETARY

## NLSA meets the ASEAN Pretoria Committee

On 5 June 2024, the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) hosted the ASEAN Pretoria Committee (APC) at its Pretoria Campus. The APC is a diplomatic grouping representing Southeast Asian nations based in South Africa's capital.

The engagement marked a significant moment in the exploration of areas of mutual interest between South Africa and the Southeast Asian nations, particularly in relation to knowledge sharing, cultural exchange and possible collaboration in events aimed at promoting literacy and lifelong learning.

This engagement marked a significant step towards cultural and educational collaboration between South Africa and the



Members of the ASEAN Pretoria Committee meeting with the NLSA Management

National Libraries of Southeast Asian countries. The positive atmosphere during the engagement will ensure stronger

connections sustained by shared history, books and cultural exchanges.

The Interim CEO of the NLSA,

Mandisa Tshikwatamba expressed enthusiasm for the engagement. “The discussions we had today have uncovered exciting opportunities for collaboration in areas such as the promotion of literacy and cultural exchange. We are deeply honoured to have hosted the ASEAN Pretoria Committee. We remain committed to cultivating partnerships that support our mission of advancing access to information.”

The ASEAN nations kindly presented books to the NLSA which will add to its International Foreign Publications collections.

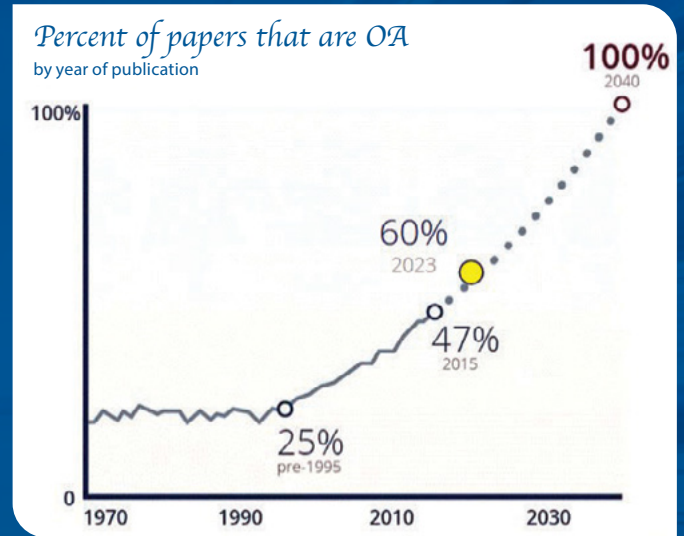
NSUKU MACHEBELE  
CONTENT AND MEDIA SPECIALIST  
NLSA

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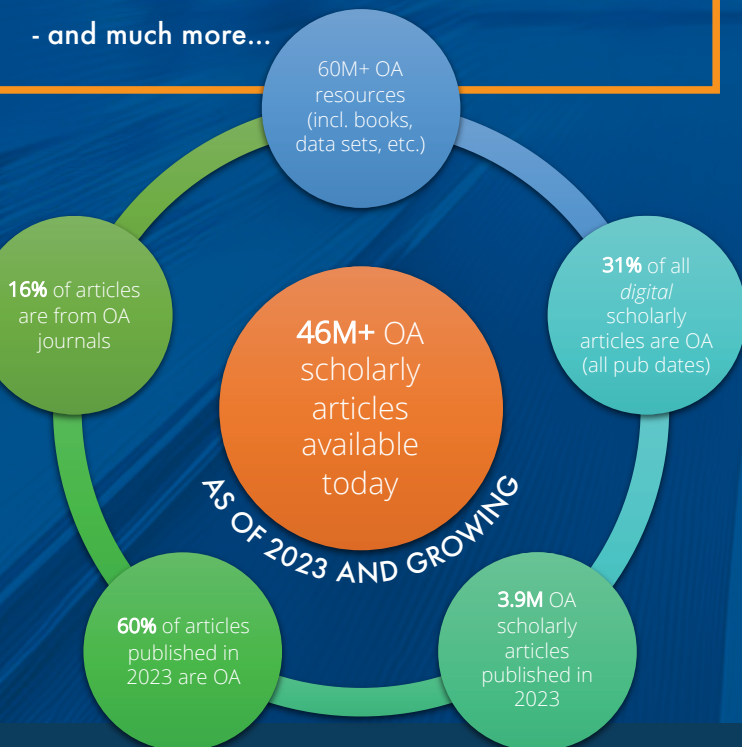
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# A collaborative drive towards a reading nation

The NLSA hosts the 3rd Biennial National Reading Summit

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA), in partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) and the University of Zululand, successfully hosted the 3rd Biennial National Reading Summit from 21 to 23 May 2025 at the Umfolozi Hotel Casino Convention Resort in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal.

The three-day hybrid summit was a critical platform for stakeholders from the literary and education sectors to participate in a strategic dialogue and collaborative commitments towards improving the culture of reading and writing in South Africa.

The theme for the summit was "Cultivating a Thriving Literary Landscape: 30 Years of Democracy and Beyond". Authors, publishers, librarians, professors, teachers, and language experts were among the delegates who contributed to the exploration of practical solutions for resolving our country's literary challenges.



NLSA staff together with NLSA Board Members

Speaking at the summit, Nokuthula Musa, Executive Director: Core Programmes at the NLSA emphasised the importance of literacy and confirmed NLSA's commitment to supporting reading and writing initiatives through collaborations. "Through collaborations with other institutions that seek to promote the culture of reading, we reaffirm our continued commitment to supporting reading development

programmes and expanding access to books and library services across the country."

Apart from the formal sessions, the Summit hosted exhibitions showcasing local publishing opportunities, reading initiatives, and educational resources. These exhibitions provided attendees with opportunities to network, share ideas, and establish future partnerships aimed at promoting lifelong reading habits among

South Africans of all ages.

The 3rd Biennial National Reading Summit highlighted the lasting impact of reading in transforming lives, building knowledge-based communities, and bridging social divides. The Summit concluded with a collective call to action for all sectors to amplify initiatives aimed at fostering a reading nation.

NSUKU MACHEBELE

## Reading competition in Ladismith

On 2 July 2025, the Ladismith Library proudly hosted a reading competition at the Ladismith Town Hall — an event poised to grow in both stature and impact in the years to come.

The competition brought together a vibrant mix of Grade 6 and 7 learners from local schools, alongside public and regional library staff, educators, parents, and devoted book lovers who came together with a shared purpose: to celebrate the power of reading and the joy of storytelling.

The competition aimed to reinforce the vital role reading plays in improving literacy levels and shaping confident articulate young minds. Learners participated in unprepared reading sessions in both English and Afrikaans, and were assessed on their fluency, comprehension, interpretation, spelling, and overall confidence in oral delivery.

Grade 6 learners read from *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, while Grade 7 participants tackled a passage from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J.K. Rowling. Dividing the competition by grade allowed each learner an equal platform to demonstrate their reading abilities.

Winners in each category were awarded a trophy, a reading



Public and regional library staff with participants

lamp, and headphones — but the greater reward was evident in the excitement, growth in self-esteem, and inspiration seen in all participants. Every learner received a certificate of participation and a thoughtful goody bag filled with essential stationery.

The atmosphere throughout the event was inclusive and engaging, with lively spot prizes awarded to audience members who eagerly participated in icebreakers and quizzes. These interactive moments were facilitated with great energy by Murusda Van Heerden, Senior Librarian for Kannaland Library Services.

Attendees were treated to

a delicious breakfast and lunch which further enriched the sense of community and shared purpose that defined the day.

In his closing remarks, Chad May, Regional Librarian for Oudtshoorn Regional Library Services, applauded the learners, educators, and library staff for their dedication and enthusiasm. "This competition highlighted the vital role that libraries play as safe, inclusive spaces within communities — nurturing literacy, supporting education, and fostering a love for lifelong learning," he said. "Libraries are the heartbeat of learning in our communities."

He also extended heartfelt gratitude to Murusda Van

Heerden for her exceptional leadership in organising the event, noting the significant effort behind the scenes. He expressed hope that the Reading Competition will become an annual highlight within the Kannaland Library Services calendar.

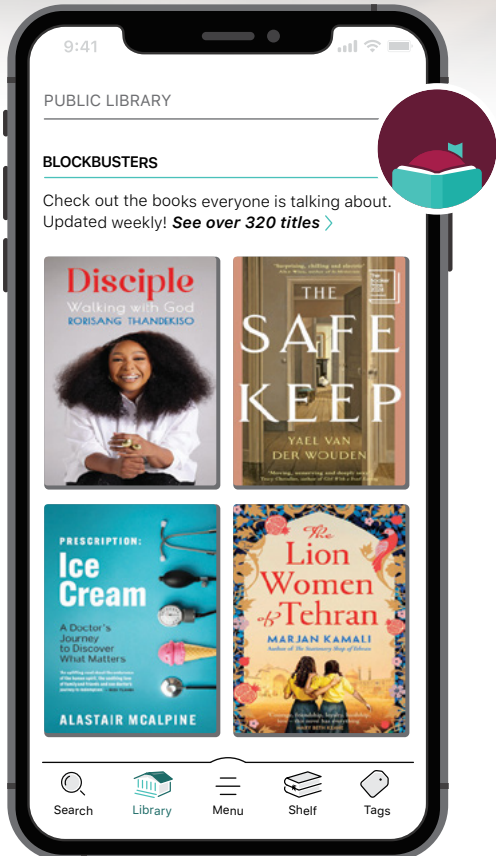
As the day drew to a close with music, laughter, and newfound relationships, it was clear that the 2025 Ladismith Reading Competition had accomplished something remarkable — inspiring a love for books and reminding all present of the transformative power of reading.

CHAD MAY

OUTDUSHOORN REGIONAL LIBRARIAN  
WESTERN CAPE LIBRARY SERVICE

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# Books to belonging

A journey of public service and personal growth

**T**wo weeks of fieldwork for UCT's Library and Information Services diploma. Two weeks of full-time public service at Wynberg Public Library. Two weeks behind the desk. Two weeks that changed my life.

I arrived nervous and uncertain, but from the very first day, I was treated as a member of the team. They encouraged me when I struggled, validated me when I cried, and challenged me to improve. Through this inspiring and exhausting experience, I learned just as much about myself as I did about library work and uncovered a passion for public service I hadn't known I possessed.

My first day was a wet winter morning in Wynberg. I arrived before opening, full of nerves, and walked around the building before finding the correct entrance. The Librarian in Charge (LIC) Nadia Ismail, welcomed me warmly and gave me a tour, introducing me to the people and space that would become my second home. I was immediately given structure and the task to shelve – the perfect balm for my nerves.

I was stationed at the adult desk and quickly became immersed in daily operations: processing lost cards, checking books in and out, registering patrons, extending loans, and even emailing about overdue fines (which I signed, mortifyingly, "Regards, Sophie"). Each small act brought me genuine satisfaction. I began to crave those moments of usefulness. By the end of each day, I felt accomplished. I had survived, learned, took joy in doing work that mattered and was determined to improve.

I made mistakes. I forgot to deactivate a security tag, I didn't give a patron my full attention, I let the teens get too noisy. As embarrassing as mistakes were, they were invaluable learning opportunities. Every correction came immediately after the mistake was made. There was no time for my failings to fester into insecurities. The procedure was clarified for me, and I could move on. It meant that mistakes didn't get repeated out of ignorance – but more importantly for me, it meant that I never feared a confrontation.

I fell completely in love – with the work, the patrons, the team, and the library itself. I had to stop myself from doing a happy dance



Sitting among the patrons' part of the Wynberg knitting programme



Senior manager at Wynberg Clinic, receiving a donation of 100 knitted beanies that were donated by Friends of Wynberg Library, with Sophie, Suraya and Tamsyn. (The photo was taken by Zikhona from the library)



Reading programme at Happy Hearts

after helping someone. There's a unique satisfaction in being of service without a monetary exchange – just the quiet reward of knowing someone felt helped or seen. I hadn't realised how much care, presence, and emotional labour that required.

The emotional toll soon became apparent; in my eagerness to help, I tended to rush tasks and skipped tea breaks, taking every opportunity to be useful. I had to learn how to offer my time without rushing, to be approachable without hovering. I started to repeat a quiet litany: "Slow down, Soph." But by the first Friday, I hit a wall. After a draining interaction with a patron, I couldn't think clearly or disengage. I slipped into the bathroom, crying. I was overwhelmed and overstimulated. Later, after a children's programme, I saw my colleague needed a break. I wanted to step in – but had nothing left to give. If only I'd taken those tea breaks. I realised that managing my energy wasn't just a preference - it was part of my duty.

These two weeks gave me insight into who I am and the kind of professional I want to become. I expected to learn technical skills and observe operations. I didn't expect how emotional, interpersonal, and reflective the work would be. Ultimately, a librarian is a public servant – a person in service to their community. Anyone can learn the procedures, but it takes a particular kind of passion, and resilience, to work in public service with care and integrity. And one day, I hope to proudly say: that person is me.

SOPHIE HUNTER  
STUDENT - UCT DKIS

## UNEARTHING SOUTH AFRICA'S LOST CHAPTERS with Africa Commons: South African Magazines

**LIASA Members!** Delve into a rich tapestry of South Africa's past with Africa Commons: South African Magazines, a groundbreaking digital archive which tells the inspiring story of collaboration that led to the birth of yet another rich digital collection.

These iconic magazines, from Drum to The Township Housewife, were vibrant expressions of creativity, social commentary, and everyday life for Africans during the 20th century.

### Why is this important?

The digital age has threatened the legacy of these publications. Africa Commons: South African Magazines steps in, preserving this invaluable resource for future generations.

### What's inside?

- **Up to 50,000 pages** of magazines from the 1930s to 1970s.
- **Captivating content:** Investigative journalism, photography, fiction, fashion, and lifestyle features.
- **A unique perspective:** A window into the cultural and social landscape of a South Africa in flux, offering insights from a new generation of African journalists and artists.

## Benefits for LIASA Members:

### Unearth a goldmine of information

Researchers, students, and history buffs can explore forgotten aspects of South Africa's past.

### Celebrate a generation's voices

Investigative journalism, photography, fiction, fashion, and lifestyle features.

### Inspire the future

Learn from the past to shape a better tomorrow.

### Bringing digital life to archive riches

Africa Commons: South African Magazines is the product of a successful partnership in which Sabinet and Coherent Digital share a common goal of preserving African content and facilitating its accessibility to researchers in South Africa and Africa.



**Join the Movement!**

**Preserving Our Past, Inspiring Our Future**

Contact us for more information

+27 12 643 9500 [info@sabinet.co.za](mailto:info@sabinet.co.za) [www.sabinet.co.za](http://www.sabinet.co.za)

**Sabinet**

Facilitating *access* to information

## World Play Day celebration at Lucas Modise (dual purpose) Library!



**O**n 30 May 2025, Moretele Libraries were excited to celebrate World Play Day at the Lucas Modise Library, located in Lebotlwane Village in Moretele Local Municipality in the North West Province.

This fun and meaningful event was made even more special thanks to the support and partnership of the amazing Nal'ibali organisation.

The day was full of joy, learning, and laughter. Children took part in fun ice-breaker games that helped everyone relax and feel comfortable. There were also wonderful storytelling sessions where children listened



to interesting and exciting stories that sparked their imagination. In addition, a variety of playful activities kept everyone smiling and engaged throughout the day.

The goal of World Play Day is to remind everyone how important play is in a child's life. It helps children learn, grow, and connect with others. On

this special day, the spirit of play and the magic of stories came together perfectly to create lasting memories for both children and adults.

A big and heartfelt thank you goes to Nal'ibali for leading the activities and helping to make the event a success. We also want to thank our amazing schools for joining us and making the day so enjoyable.

Together, we showed just how powerful play and storytelling can be!

SANDILE KHANYEZI  
SENIOR LIBRARIAN  
PAPI NTJANA PUBLIC LIBRARY



**I**n the spirit of Nelson Mandela's enduring legacy of compassion and ubuntu, the North-West University's Library and Information Service (NWU LIS) has launched an innovative initiative that exemplifies how academic libraries can transcend their traditional roles to become true community empowerment hubs.

The "Dignity in Every Drop" Mandela Month Drive represents a powerful intersection of social innovation, inclusive support, and the transformative potential of library services in addressing unspoken student needs. This campaign showcases how an academic library is evolving beyond traditional information repositories to become a dynamic hub that empowers its community through innovative

## DIGNITY IN EVERY DROP: NWU LIS AS A HUB FOR EMPOWERMENT

problem-solving mechanisms. By positioning all NWU libraries as drop-off points until 30 July 2025, the initiative leverages the library's extensive campus presence and trusted community status to maximise reach and accessibility. The strategic use of library spaces for this humanitarian effort reflects contemporary thinking about library services as platforms for social innovation. Libraries naturally serve as neutral, welcoming spaces where all community members feel comfortable, making them ideal venues for initiatives that address sensitive issues, such as poverty. This approach aligns perfectly with the LIASA conference theme of "Libraries and innovation hubs: empowering communities," demonstrating how libraries can pioneer solutions in bridging disparities.

The campaign's alignment with multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals illustrates how innovative library programmes can contribute to global development objectives at the local level. By addressing SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) through hygiene promotion, SDG 4 (Quality Education) by supporting holistic student well-being, SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by serving under-recognised populations, and SDG 1 (No Poverty) by providing

essential items to students in need, the initiative demonstrates libraries' potential to create multi-faceted community impact.

This integration of global frameworks with local action exemplifies how libraries can serve as innovation hubs that connect international development priorities with grassroots community empowerment. It transforms a simple donation drive into an intervention that addresses systemic inequalities while enhancing solidarity within the university.

The "Dignity in Every Drop" campaign embodies Mandela's philosophy that caring for others represents the highest expression of human dignity. By creating a systematic approach to addressing the hygiene needs of male students, NWU LIS models how libraries can innovate solutions that restore confidence and affirm that no student should feel unseen or unsupported.

The initiative's emphasis on dignity reflects a deeper understanding of how basic needs intersect with academic success. When students have access to hygiene products, they can focus on their studies without the distraction and shame of unmet personal care needs. This holistic approach to student support recognises that academic

achievement depends not only on access to information resources but also on fundamental human dignity and well-being.

As academic libraries worldwide grapple with questions about their evolving role in the digital age, the NWU LIS Mandela Month Drive offers a compelling example of how libraries can remain relevant and vital by embracing their potential as community innovation hubs. The campaign demonstrates that libraries' greatest strength lies not merely in their collections or technologies, but also in their ability to identify community needs and create collaborative solutions that empower vulnerable populations.

This initiative challenges other academic libraries to consider how they might leverage their unique position as trusted, accessible community spaces to address unmet needs within their contexts. By thinking innovatively about their role as empowerment hubs, libraries can continue to demonstrate their indispensable value to the communities they serve, one act of dignity at a time.

DINA MASHIYANE PL(SA)  
SENIOR MANAGER: OUTREACH, PROJECTS  
AND QUALITY  
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION SERVICE



The students in navy blue shorts and white t-shirts are 2nd year Physiotherapy students

## Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University outreach in North West Province

**S**efako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) has taken a significant step in uplifting communities through its comprehensive outreach programme at Diphetogo Secondary School in Klipgat, North West.

The team, led by Physiotherapy Lecturer Ntombenkosi Sobantu, reflects SMU's broader mission to improve literacy, academic performance, wellness, and community health through interprofessional collaboration.

The outreach was based on a needs assessment conducted in 2023 by the Department of Physiotherapy, which revealed critical challenges at the school, particularly in literacy, academic support, and physical education. Recognising these gaps, the programme brought together departments including Library and Information Services (LIS), Nursing Science, Academic Literacy and Science Communication, and the School of Science and Technology.

Senior Librarian and Diphetogo Secondary School Communications' officer, Mmakgoshi Reetseng, outlined the objectives of the event: to cultivate a reading culture, support academic subjects, and introduce wellness and physical activities. The programme coincided with World Read Aloud Day, Library Lovers' Month, and Library Lovers' Day, aligning perfectly with SMU's focus on literacy promotion. SMU's LIS team facilitated interactive reading sessions, which were met



SMU Library Staff: Bulelwa Ntja, Mmakgoshi Reetseng, Koena Moloto and Pheleluca Mogashoa with Diphetogo Secondary learners

with enthusiasm from learners. These sessions aimed to improve comprehension skills and build a passion for reading.

Bulelwa Ntja and Pheleluca Mogashoa from the LIS department emphasised how libraries could transform a learner's educational journey. The team also began discussions about creating a dedicated reading corner and eventually establishing a school library, with an emphasis on promoting digital resources and access.

Dr. Edwin Seleka, Head of Academic Literacy and Science Communication and an expert in bibliotherapy, underscored the emotional and psychological benefits of reading. He advocated for bibliotherapy as a valuable mental wellness tool that helps learners cope with emotional challenges and build resilience.

Physical wellness formed another pillar of the outreach. SMU physiotherapy students,

supervised by lecturer Evah Molapisi, led engaging physical activities including aerobic exercises, skipping rope, traditional Pedi dance, and the culturally nostalgic "Game of Tins." These exercises were designed to reduce stress, boost learners' moods, and improve cognitive function factors essential to academic performance. Talks on the benefits of physical activity were delivered by second-year students like Charlize Degenaar, who explained how regular movement supports learning and emotional health.

Academic support in Science and Mathematics was another highlight. SMU students and staff provided tutoring and educational resources to address learners' difficulties in understanding complex topics, especially due to a lack of practical exposure and study materials. Interprofessional Education and Collaboration Practice (IPECP) Coordinator

Thokozile Kgongwana reiterated SMU's commitment to sustained support through workshops and tutoring. BSc Physical Science student Lesego Malanga praised the interdepartmental teamwork that made the outreach successful, highlighting its holistic impact on learners' academic development and future aspirations.

Environmental health was addressed by a team led by Mpho Mako, along with students Tshupo Ntlemesa and Atlegang Leo. They identified sanitation and waste management as key challenges affecting learners' health and proposed hygiene workshops and collaboration with local authorities for sustainable improvement.

Learners expressed deep appreciation for the initiative. Grade 8 learner Gontse Rankapole advocated for the establishment of a permanent library, regular tutoring sessions, and better access to science laboratory facilities. Teachers and learners alike viewed the visit as transformative and called for a long-term partnership with SMU to continue the momentum.

Deputy Principal Tshupo Maleho summarised the programme's impact: SMU's involvement inspired hope and reinforced the message that the school community is not alone. Through continued support, the learners of Diphetogo Secondary can dream bigger, read more, and achieve greater academic success.

MMAKGOSHI PRECILLA REETSENG

# AI's role in the world of Writing, Books and Libraries

## DIGITAL LITERACY SERIES

**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) has become a topic of discussion in various spaces, with opportunities available to learn about AI through online courses or workshops by academics specialising in AI research.

Collaborations with experts in the technology industry are crucial for libraries in finding ways of incorporating AI and other emerging technologies into libraries' services. In this condensed interview, E-learning Manager and LIASA Board Member, Jeff Nyoka, speaks to Scott Hanselman, a Microsoft AI Development Community President based in Portland, Oregon

**JN:** What do you think the role of librarians should be in supporting or improving AI capabilities or AI-generated content?

**SH:** Librarians play a crucial role even in a world of AI. They serve as navigators of information, helping people find accurate and reliable resources. They also teach critical thinking and information literacy skills, ensuring that people can discern credible information from misinformation.

**JN:** How does Copilot support Afrocentric content generation? For example, I recently used InVideo to produce a video, and it crawled and found photos that



Scott Hanselman

were exclusively European, but I wanted photos of a diverse group to represent Joburg communities in the video.

**SH:** Tools like InVideo often rely on stock image libraries that historically skew Western or Eurocentric. If Copilot or a similar tool taps into such libraries without filters or inclusive tagging, the results will reflect that bias.

- Prompt specificity matters: Asking for "people in Johannesburg" might return generic or global imagery but specifying "diverse South African community in Soweto" increases the likelihood of representative results.
- Integration with diverse image libraries: When used with Bing Image Search or licensed stock providers, Copilot can help surface Afrocentric visuals

— but it depends on what's indexed and how it's tagged.

**JN:** What are the dangers in the creative writing space when AI is used, especially considering local languages?

**SH:** AI holds significant promise for transforming book publishing, especially in contexts where traditional processes are slow, expensive, or inaccessible. For libraries, particularly those looking to expand digital collections in local languages, AI can help bridge the gap. It can assist with everything from editing and formatting manuscripts to translating them into indigenous or underrepresented languages. One major concern is the potential erosion of cultural authenticity. AI models are trained on vast datasets that often reflect dominant or Western narratives, and ...without careful human oversight, there's a danger that these tools could generate content that misrepresents communities or undermines the value of original, human storytelling.

For libraries, the key is to use AI as a tool to amplify human creativity and access—not to replace it. That means supporting local writers with AI tools for drafting or translating, while ensuring the final content is reviewed, curated, and contextually appropriate.

**JN:** As Microsoft, how do you think Libraries should support Digital literacy and the introduction of new technologies?

**SH:** From Microsoft's perspective, libraries are vital partners in closing the digital divide. They're trusted community spaces that can help people not only access technology but understand and shape it. To support digital literacy, libraries should go beyond basic computer skills and focus on critical thinking—teaching topics like online safety, privacy, media literacy, and how AI works. Microsoft offers tools like Copilot and LinkedIn Learning that libraries can use to support this mission.

Portions of this interview will be on the Journal of Library Outreach and Engagement Idea, and the Full interview is available on the blog:

[www.cojelearning.org.za](http://www.cojelearning.org.za)

JEFF NYOKA  
CITY OF JOHANNESBURG E-LEARNING  
MANAGER

## SALB celebrates unsung heroes behind the Narration Studios

**I**n a heartwarming celebration of dedication and community spirit, the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) hosted its Narrators Appreciation Event on 11 July 2025 at its Head Office in Makhanda.

The event honoured the library's volunteer narrators - the powerful voices behind the talking books that bring literature to life for blind and visually impaired members.

These remarkable individuals, who give their time to narrate books in a multitude of South African languages, were recognised for their vital role in promoting access to information. Twenty-one (21) narrators were each awarded certificates of appreciation symbolising SALB's gratitude for their tireless efforts.

The event was attended by SALB staff, executive and senior management, and notably, the

Legal Deposit Committee (LDC) led by Chairperson Nompumelelo Damane, whose official visit coincided with this special occasion. The Committee's presence amplified the significance of the day, affirming national commitment to the preservation and accessibility of knowledge.

Appointed by the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, the LDC comprises the heads of all legal deposit libraries, Government Printing Works, and publishing sector representatives. With roots tracing back to 1842, the Committee ensures that South Africa's publishing output is systematically collected, preserved, and made accessible for current and future generations.

During the programme, Pumla Mahanjana, SALB's Senior Manager for Productions and Standards, addressed the audience with heartfelt words:

"You are an extension of our team, of our mission and of our values. As we take this moment to enjoy each other's company, to reflect on the journey, and to acknowledge milestones, I hope you feel seen, valued, and appreciated - because you truly are. On behalf of the Board, Management, Staff and Members of the South African Library for the Blind - thank you. Thank you for your commitment, your patience, your precision, and your passion. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, growing the impact of our work together, and ensuring that no one is left behind due to a lack of access to information."

In response to these heartfelt words, a few of our longest-serving volunteers, including Jennifer Haswell who has narrated 386 books to date, gave a brief overview of how they started and the passion they've developed

for rendering this service which resulted in them being part of the SALB family for so long.

As the applause echoed through the halls, certificates were handed out, and conversations flowed, one thing was clear: these narrators are more than volunteers - they are the living voices of inclusion and empowerment.

#SALBVoicesMatter  
#NarratorAppreciation  
#TalkingBooks  
#InclusiveReading  
#SALB  
#VolunteerHeroes  
#ReadingForAll  
#AccessToInformation  
#LibraryForTheBlind  
#SouthAfricaReads

VUSUMZI MKHETSHANE  
PR AND COMMUNICATIONS  
SALB

# Empowering Librarians in the Digital Age

UNISA–AASTU Collaborative Training Workshop on Customer Service and AI-Driven Reference Services

**I**n an era where the digital revolution is reshaping every aspect of how knowledge is shared and accessed, libraries and the professionals working within them face a crucial junction.

Librarians are expected not only to manage collections but also to transform into tech-savvy educators, digital guides, and advocates for user experience. Addressing this need, on 27 June 2025, the University of South Africa (Unisa) Ethiopian Regional Learning Centre, along with Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) Libraries, conducted a significant training session designed to equip librarians with the necessary tools, skills, and mindset to excel in a swiftly changing digital landscape.

Taking place at AASTU's modern Training Centre, the event gathered 43 librarians from various colleges, all of whom were seen as change agents committed to bringing innovation to their communities. Titled "Customer Service Excellence and AI-Driven Reference Services in the 21st Century Library," the theme of the training was both timely and forward-looking.

The key message was simple yet profound: technology should enhance human interaction. Through dynamic presentations, live demonstrations, and hands-on exercises, participants delved



into how artificial intelligence (AI)—often feared as a threat to traditional careers—could become a formidable ally in offering personalised, responsive, and ethically grounded reference services. Topics of discussion included using AI for more intelligent reference interactions, enabling librarians to meet user needs with precision; contemporary customer service strategies tailored for the digital-first library user; and mastering Unisa's comprehensive electronic resources to open new avenues for research support and academic success. Librarians were active participants, engaging deeply through case studies, scenario-based problem-solving, and interactive discussions,

contemplating the evolving nature of their work. Facilitators highlighted the importance of user-centred design, reminding participants that every data point represents a human story, each inquiry a quest for knowledge. Importantly, ethical challenges posed by AI in information services, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and digital equity, were critically examined, ensuring participants left with greater skills and awareness of their responsibilities in the automation era. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many commending the training's practical approach, real-world applicability, and its successful integration of cutting-edge technology with the core of

librarianship: service to people.

Having observed the library and information field for over five years, I found it inspiring to witness such proactive capacity-building. This initiative by Unisa and AASTU is a testament to what meaningful collaboration can achieve: librarians who are empowered, future-ready, and rooted in the enduring values of access, empathy, and lifelong learning. In the digital age, rather than becoming obsolete, librarians are becoming increasingly essential. Thanks to initiatives like this, they are not just adapting to change—they are leading it.

FIRESENET ADELA GEDA  
MANAGER: UNISA LIS  
ETHIOPIAN REGIONAL LEARNING CENTRE

## Africa Day @ Southfield Library

### AFRICA

Africa, my Africa, mine forever  
Africa, my heritage, my heart, my soul  
Your rising sun kisses my skin  
Your beats of your drum raise awareness  
The sound of your trumpet touching my soul  
cultures dancing to the rhythm of the beat  
clapping hands, stamping feet  
twisting and turning  
Soul to soul  
celebrating each mother tongue, art, and music  
So much love, hearts singing and dancing  
Celebrate yah! Celebrate Africa  
Africa, my Africa, mine forever  
Africa, my heritage, my heart, my soul

CATHLEEN DIXON  
LIBRARIAN, SOUTHFIELD LIBRARY  
©12/5/2025



# Central University of Technology Library launches book by Dr Choice Makhetha

The Central University of Technology (CUT) Library and Information Services (LIS) proudly hosted the official book launch of *Owning the Scars and the Stars of My Journey* by Dr Choice Makhetha on 24 July 2025 at the university's Library Art Gallery.

This significant literary event created a platform for academic dialogue, transformation, and healing, aligning perfectly with the library's vision of transforming its spaces into vibrant centres of intellectual and cultural engagement. The launch drew a diverse audience of CUT staff, students, and members of the broader academic community. Dr Makhetha, Executive Director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor at CUT, shared the personal and transformative journey that led to the writing of her book. Her work explores lived experiences in higher education leadership, student advocacy, and transformation within previously Afrikaans institutions.

During the event, the CUT Library Director Keitumetse Eister emphasised the vision of transforming the library into a vibrant intellectual space, both digitally and physically, where critical engagements can take place. She stressed the importance of promoting a culture of reading to support academic excellence, critical thinking, and the holistic development of students.

She highlighted three main goals of such initiatives:

Promoting books of national importance, including topics such as racism, mental health, gender, sexuality, and violence that encourage meaningful dialogue and civic engagement beyond traditional academic curricula.

Improving literacy levels - acknowledging South Africa's low functional literacy rates, she reinforced the library's commitment to fostering a love for reading through engaging programmes for students and staff alike.

Developing a nation of thinkers and creators - the Director urged the community to move from being passive consumers of knowledge to active contributors, writers, thinkers, and innovators who are capable of shaping society.

Quoting Professor Jonathan Jansen, she warned against settling for mediocrity and encouraged aiming for greatness, particularly in education and public service. She concluded with a call to action; to build a



The book by Dr Choice Makhetha



Library Director Keitumetse Eister



Sompodo Qondakele (CUT); Monde Madiba (UFS); Keitumetse Eister (CUT); Dr Choice Makhetha; Larshan Naicker (UFS); Zuki Maya (CUT); Lee Goliath (UFS)



The launch of the student book club

nation of informed, critical, and creative citizens through the power of reading.

CUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube, praised Dr Makhetha's courage and authenticity, describing her book as a powerful contribution to transformation in higher education. She affirmed CUT's commitment to being a space for inclusive academic growth, healing, and storytelling.

### Launch of the CUT Book Club

The event also marked the launch of an exciting new initiative, the CUT Book Club, which aims to promote a culture of reading, literacy, and critical thinking

among students and staff. The Book Club will serve as a platform for ongoing conversations inspired by powerful stories like Dr Makhetha's, encouraging deeper intellectual engagement and appreciation for literature across the university community.

The official staff launch took place on 25 July, where participants were given time to engage with the selected book, *Inspiring Personal Greatness: practical leadership tips on overcoming challenges to live a life of purpose*, authored by CUT's own Dr Joe Moleté. As a respected member of the university community, Dr Moleté brought unique insight and

personal reflections to the session, enriching the discussion and inspiring staff through the themes of personal growth, leadership, and resilience explored in his book. With an atmosphere of reflection, inspiration, and shared learning, the launch reaffirmed the power of storytelling and reading in building resilience, promoting growth, and strengthening community within higher education.

CHAREEN MATHOPE-DASILVA PL(SA)  
FACULTY LIBRARIAN MANAGEMENT SCIENCES  
CUT, FREE STATE

## Study, chill, succeed: CUT Library's mid-year outreach

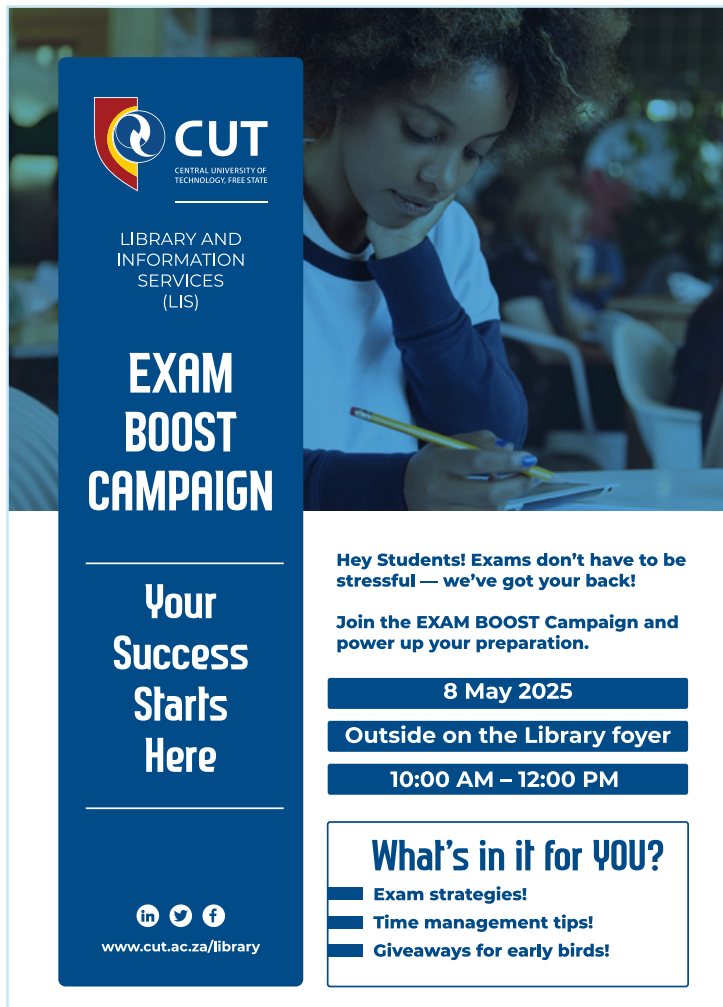
The Central University of Technology (CUT) Library and Information Services (LIS) hosted a successful Mid-Year Exam Outreach Programme on 5 May 2025.

This initiative was held just outside the library building and aimed to promote awareness of its academic support services during the exam period. The programme aligned with the library's strategic goal of increasing the visibility and usage of its resources, while also fostering a supportive and inclusive academic environment.

The primary objective of the outreach was to ensure that students were well-informed, motivated, and equipped with the necessary tools to succeed academically. By highlighting the library's services and collaborating with other university departments, the event aimed to create a holistic support system for students during a stressful period. The initiative also sought to strengthen the sense of community and encourage students to take full advantage of the resources available to them.

The programme was a collaborative effort involving several key stakeholders within the university. These included:

- **Protection Services**, which provided students with essential safety tips, especially relevant during the extended library hours in the exam season.
- **Wellness Centre and the Department of Somatology**, which offered free advice to students on managing stress and maintaining their well-being during exams.
- **Disability Unit**, which highlighted the support available for students with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.



**CUT**  
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES (LIS)

**EXAM BOOST CAMPAIGN**

**Your Success Starts Here**

**Hey Students! Exams don't have to be stressful — we've got your back!**

**Join the EXAM BOOST Campaign and power up your preparation.**

**8 May 2025**

**Outside on the Library foyer**

**10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**What's in it for YOU?**

- Exam strategies!
- Time management tips!
- Giveaways for early birds!

www.cut.ac.za/library

- **Student Representative Council (SRC)**, which also encouraged students and reminded them about the code of conduct and examination rules.

Each unit presented its services and engaged directly with students, reinforcing the message that a network of care and resources supports academic success.

Beyond the informative presentations, the event featured a vibrant cultural programme

that celebrated student diversity. Traditional performances by Tsonga and Zulu cultural groups brought energy and inclusivity to the event, drawing enthusiastic responses from the audience. These performances not only entertained but also fostered a sense of pride and belonging among students from diverse backgrounds.

To further engage students, the programme included an interactive quiz segment. Participants answered questions

related to library services and campus resources, and winners received small prizes such as pens and booklets. This element added a fun and educational twist to the event, encouraging active participation and reinforcing key messages.

The high student turnout and positive feedback reflected the event's success in raising awareness about the library's offerings and other support services. Students left the event better informed about the resources available to them and more connected to the university community.

The collaboration between departments demonstrated the value of a unified approach to student support. By bringing together academic, wellness, safety, and advocacy services, the programme highlighted the comprehensive support system available at CUT. It also reinforced the library's significant role in facilitating not just academic success, but also student well-being and engagement.

In conclusion, the Exam Outreach Programme was a well-executed initiative that met its objectives of promoting library services, supporting student wellness, and fostering community engagement. It highlighted the CUT Library's commitment to student success and its initiative-taking approach to outreach and collaboration. The event served as a model for how academic libraries can extend their impact beyond traditional services by creating inclusive, informative, and engaging experiences for students.

AMOS MKAM  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES LIBRARIAN

ZUKISWA MAYA  
DEPUTY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN  
CUT, FREE STATE

## Youth and men in dialogue

On 17 June 2025, the Rand West City Libraries hosted its first Youth and Men in Dialogue event at the Krugersdorp Correctional Centre, in commemoration of Youth Month.

The dialogue was between youth and men from the Rand West City Libraries, students from Westcol TVET college and inmates from the Krugersdorp Correctional Centre.

The topics of the day were derived from the national theme for Youth Day 2025: "Skills for the Changing World – Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation"

Inmates and visitors engaged on matters affecting youth and men. They all touched on issues like the current socio-economic issues, access to information, substance abuse, Gender Based Violence (GBV), culture and religion.

The dialogue was facilitated by Rosinah Ramaleba, Librarian from Rand West City and Mahlubandile Madlongwana, an official from the Krugersdorp Correctional Centre.

June is also known as Men's Health Awareness month; we used the opportunity to encourage men to take care of their health. Library Assistant Benny Sithole of Rand West City Libraries

encouraged all men to keep up with their health checks and to also support one another despite the curveballs life throws at them.

Mr Daniels, Library Manager and Mrs Kruger, senior official at the Correctional Centre were also in attendance and conveyed their messages of support, both highlighting the importance of support, self-development and empowerment.

Participants used the opportunity to showcase their talent, confidence, and their ability to communicate and discuss current affairs.

The dialogue was a great display of the importance

of collaboration within intergovernmental relations and stakeholders.

This was a first-time visit for many except for the library's programmes team that visits the centre at least once a month as part of the library outreach programme and the centre's rehabilitation programme.

Visitors and inmates were very excited with the outcomes and "take homes" of the dialogue.

THANDEKA LEGAE PL(SA)  
PROGRAMMES LIBRARIAN  
RAND WEST CITY LIBRARIES

# CPUT Libraries receives a Special Mention at the IFLA PressReader International Marketing Awards 2025

**C**ape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Libraries is proud to be recognised on the global stage, having received a Special Mention at the 2025 IFLA PressReader International Marketing Awards.

The awards, presented by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in partnership with PressReader, honour library marketing campaigns that demonstrate creativity, meaningful impact, and community engagement.

This year's awards attracted close to 100 entries from around the world, showcasing the breadth of innovation happening in libraries today. Among this global pool, CPUT Libraries stood out for its bold and relatable approach to digital engagement through TikTok, earning praise for effectively connecting with its student community in a fun, transformative way.

The recognition was given for CPUT's standout campaign titled "Building Connection: CPUT Libraries TikTok Growth Campaign"

## Meeting users where they are

As academic libraries adapt to shifting student behaviours, CPUT Libraries has embraced a forward-thinking approach: meeting users where they are – online, and especially on social



media. Platforms like TikTok have become more than entertainment channels; they are now vibrant spaces for information sharing, community building and education.

Through this campaign, CPUT Libraries aimed to:

- Reduce library anxiety and foster approachability
- Raise awareness of resources, spaces, and services
- Strengthen user-library relationships through relatable content
- Expand our digital presence in alignment with CPUT's digital transformation goals
- Embrace innovation as a core part of our student engagement strategy.

"We didn't just join the trend – we turned it into a tool for transformation."

## What made the campaign stand out?

At the heart of the campaign was a smart partnership with a student influencer, paired with a catchy trending song and dynamic content. The strategy paid off, making the library feel more present, accessible, and aligned with student life.

### Campaign Impact:

- 18.2K views on the featured TikTok post
- 3,508 likes, 36 shares
- 55 new followers gained during the campaign
- Growth from 495 followers (Dec 2023) to 1,650 (July 2025)
- 22.8K total likes to date

Jury Comment: "We commend this creative and strategic approach to student engagement... This initiative not only increased social media presence but also reinforced

the library as a welcoming and essential space for academic success."

## A Win for CPUT – and SA

This Special Mention isn't just a win for CPUT Libraries – it's a proud moment for South African academic libraries as a whole. LIASA congratulated CPUT Libraries for its innovation and professionalism, calling it "a shining example of excellence in library marketing on the global stage."

The recognition reinforces CPUT Libraries' commitment to evolving with the times, while staying true to its core mission: to support students, promote access to knowledge, and foster connection in every form – even 15-second videos.

## Looking ahead

This honour marks just the beginning. CPUT Libraries remains energised to keep exploring new ways to communicate, educate, and inspire. Whether through a scroll in a book or a scroll on a screen, the library continues to evolve, connect, and lead.

"This award reminds us that libraries can be both timeless and timely, rooted in knowledge, yet ready to meet the future head-on."

To view the Video, click here – [TikTok Video](#).

NTOMBEKHAYA GWAQA  
MARKETING LIBRARIAN, CPUT

## Mandela Day @ Bakgoma Library

**O**n 18 July 2025, the staff of Bakgoma Library celebrated Mandela Day by embarking on a community service project that demonstrated their commitment to giving back to the community.

The library staff decided to celebrate the day by cleaning their yard and surroundings in order to promote a clean and healthy environment while also fostering teamwork among staff members.

The library staff gathered at the library at 9:00am to do the following: pick up litter from the yard and surrounding areas; trim shrubs and tree; mow the lawn; sweep and clean the walkways and parking areas; clean the flower beds

The project had a significant impact on the library's surroundings, making it a cleaner and more welcoming space for patrons. The project also promoted teamwork and



collaboration among staff members who worked together to achieve a common goal.

The library staff's celebration of Mandela day was a

resounding success. The project demonstrated the staff's commitment to giving back to the community and promoting a clean and healthy environment. We

look forward to continuing this tradition in the future.

SANDRA DIKELEDI SEANEGO  
LIBRARIAN

## ON THE MOVE...

## News from UWC Library



**NOMZEKELO MDLOYIYA** has recently joined the University of the Western Cape Library as the Marketing Coordinator. She brings a strong background in marketing and communication, holding a Diploma in Marketing Management and a BTech Diploma in Marketing Management, specialising in Advertising and Applied Promotions. She also holds a Certificate in Ecological Tourism for Developing Countries and is a registered member of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA). Nomzekelo is passionate about creative storytelling, stakeholder engagement, and promoting the value of academic libraries. Known as a social butterfly and the life of the party, she brings energy, warmth, and a vibrant spirit to her work—qualities she looks forward to sharing as part of the UWC Library team.



**ZAMA THISANI** is a Faculty Librarian, a Professional Librarian (SA) and member of LIASA, with a strong academic foundation that includes a Bachelor of Library and Information Science, a Postgraduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management, an Honours degree and Information Literacy for the Digital Age Certificate. Zama brings extensive expertise in reference services, information literacy, collection development and maintenance, research support, and user-centred library services. Since 2021, Zama has played a key role in supporting learning and teaching through the delivery of digital and in-person training, research support, and the promotion of digital literacy across the faculties that he has served. Notable achievements include successfully embedding the Information Literacy for the Digital Age training in some of the departments at his previous organisation, enhancing access to academic resources through strategic marketing in different forms, collection development and faculty engagement. A passionate advocate for library visibility, Zama actively partners with academic departments to promote library services through library guides, exhibitions, social media, and faculty board participation and other committees.



**REUBEN SIEVERS** is a Library Assistant working across Special Collections, Circulation Services, and supports research and innovation initiatives within the campus community. He holds a degree in Library and Information Studies and an Honours in English, and is currently pursuing his Master's in Library and Information Studies at UWC. His research explores evolving trends in information access and its nuanced intersection with digital piracy. Reuben's interests span information technology—including networks, cybersecurity, and systems—as well as graphic design and digital literacy. He enjoys breaking down complex systems to understand how they work, often rebuilding them for deeper insight.



**JANE VALENTINE** is a library assistant for Client Services at the Main Library. She holds honours in Library and Information Sciences. She was previously an After-Hours Supervisor, Library Assistant at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and a trainee librarian at the National Library of South Africa. She enjoys working with people and helping them enrich their minds.



**VUYOKAZI MTSHAKAZI** is the Faculty Librarian for Economic and Management Sciences. With a background in academic librarianship, enthusiastic about advancing digital literacy, information access, promoting ethical use of information, and supporting both student engagement in higher education and the development of skills that enable students to become lifelong learners. Her expertise lies in information discovery tools, research support, and digital preservation, with a growing interest in the application of AI in academic libraries. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree, focusing on the use of AI tools in digitising and preserving special collections, an area she believes is essential for the future of academic libraries in SA.



**NONZAME PRINCESS NCAPAI** is a Library Assistant for client services. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Information Science and has three years of experience working as a library assistant in an academic library environment. Her areas of interest include user support, knowledge management, and circulation services.



**MEGAN ESTERHUIZEN** has been appointed Systems Administrator. She is originally from Makhanda, Eastern Cape.

## ACHIEVEMENTS



Congratulations to **NOZUKO PEARL RAMAJOE** (Library Assistant at Rand West City Local Municipality) who has achieved a Bachelor's degree in Information Science in 2025 from Unisa. She comments that during her academic journey, she learned that resilience, teamwork and hard work truly pays off.



## Mercia Sias

01.06.1970 – 13.05.2025

**I**t is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Mercia Sias, a beloved mother, wife, sister, colleague, and highly respected figure in the Library and Information Services (LIS) community. Mercia passed away on 13 May 2025, leaving behind a profound legacy of service, leadership, and compassion.

Born to Attie and Magdeline Matthee, Mercia was the youngest of five siblings. She began her primary education in Paarl at Magnolia Primary, continued her secondary education at New Orleans High School, and her tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape, later obtaining a master's degree in library and information studies from the same university in 2010. Her professional journey began at the Paarl Museum as a curator before she joined the library service in 1996, marking the start of a remarkable and impactful career.

A proud and active member of LIASA, Mercia was Western Cape Branch Chair (2018–2020) and voice of the province on the LIASA Representative Council. She was highly regarded for her integrity, leadership, and partnership in working. She brought strategic thinking and a warmth of charisma into every room she entered—empowering colleagues, mentoring young professionals, and inspiring everyone who had the privilege of working with her.

Mercia's true passion was the Groenheuwel Library, which she nurtured as far back as 2010. As Senior Librarian, she laid the foundation—both literally and figuratively—of a building that would become a bustling hub of literacy, community nurturing, and education. Her tireless efforts came to fruition when she received First Runner-Up in the SA Librarian of the Year Awards (2016).

In 2017, she extended her research internationally to libraries in Denmark and Sweden, where she explored cutting-edge practices in digital innovation and user-

centred services. She returned home with renewed vision, sharing her insights through conferences and forums, and applying global best practices to local contexts.

Mercia was instrumental in expanding library services across the Drakenstein Municipality, establishing satellite branches and initiating school libraries. Her work seamlessly blended cultural activities with essential civic services. Under her guidance, Groenheuwel Library launched school reading programmes, youth development initiatives, and, in partnership with local organisations, even installed chess tables for learners—an embodiment of her belief in creative, engaging education.

Beyond her professional contributions, Mercia will be remembered for her radiant personality, her kindness, her laughter, and her unshakeable belief in the power of information to transform lives. She made people feel seen and valued, and her legacy lives on in every reader, learner, and librarian she empowered.

She is survived by her loving husband Murdock Sias, her devoted daughter Moesha Sias, her siblings Arthur, Thomas, and John Matthee, and her sister Sylvia Matthee—all of whom celebrate the extraordinary life she lived and the light she brought into their lives.

Mercia's spirit continues to live through the libraries she helped build, the communities she uplifted, and the profession she helped shape.

May her soul rest in peace, and may her memory forever inspire the Library and Information Services community.



## Jasmine Khan

21.09.1941 to 03.07.2025

**I** met Jasmine Khan when I went to her home to buy a few copies of her first book, and I never left.

We had so much in common that we quickly became inseparable. Jasmine lived from 21.09.1941 to 3.07.2025, and at almost 85 years she could put most of us 50 and 60 somethings to shame on so many levels. With her zeal for knowledge, zest for life, and passion for sharing her knowledge and wisdom, whether you wanted or needed it or not; she drew like-minded people to her, who would surround her with so much love and compassion as she grew older. She absolutely loved walking and being close to nature to just be still in contemplation.

She was a phenomenal woman who, through the books she authored, articles she wrote, workshops she facilitated counselling she did, empowered so many women, reunited many families, and created a whole circle of friends from people who might never have met and connected on such a spiritual level.

Jasmine Khan was a qualified librarian who

worked at Cape Town City Library Services for many years during the eighties, with Rheina Epstein as her manager. Some of the libraries she worked at were Athlone and Westridge. She was still an active member of the library and borrowed up to ten books on a regular basis, as she was a voracious reader. Jasmine worked for the Boerhanoel Islam Movement for many years and was a columnist for Muslim Views newspaper.

She was also regularly active on the airwaves of both the Cape Muslim Community radio stations, with regular programmes which were connected to the free workshops she ran, with the current one which presented online being the Asma Al Husna. And of course, she was quite tech savvy...she taught me about Jitsi and shared all the links to the Islamic lectures she watched.

So, Jasmine Khan, you will be sorely missed, but Fi Amanillah - we leave you in Allah/God's protection.

With much love...

Fadeela Davids

## Yolanda Tafeni-Booi

(from LIASANews social media)

**I**t is with heavy hearts that we inform you of the passing of our esteemed colleague, Yolanda Tafeni-Booi, Manager: Libraries at Nxuba Yethemba Municipality and dedicated LIASA member (Membership No. 4583).

Yolanda began her career in library and information services as an Assistant Librarian at Lukhanji Local Municipality. She later served as a Librarian at Makana Local Municipality, based in Riebeeck East, before joining Nxuba Yethemba Municipality as the Manager: Libraries. She held LIS qualifications from ML Sultan Technikon (now Durban University of Technology) and Unisa.

She also served as the Chairperson of

Public and Community Libraries Interest Group (PACLIG), Eastern Cape Branch, from 2012 to 2014, demonstrating her commitment to professional development and advocacy within the sector.

Her dedication to equitable access to information, her warmth and collegial spirit touched many lives and will be remembered with deep respect and affection. May her soul rest in eternal peace.