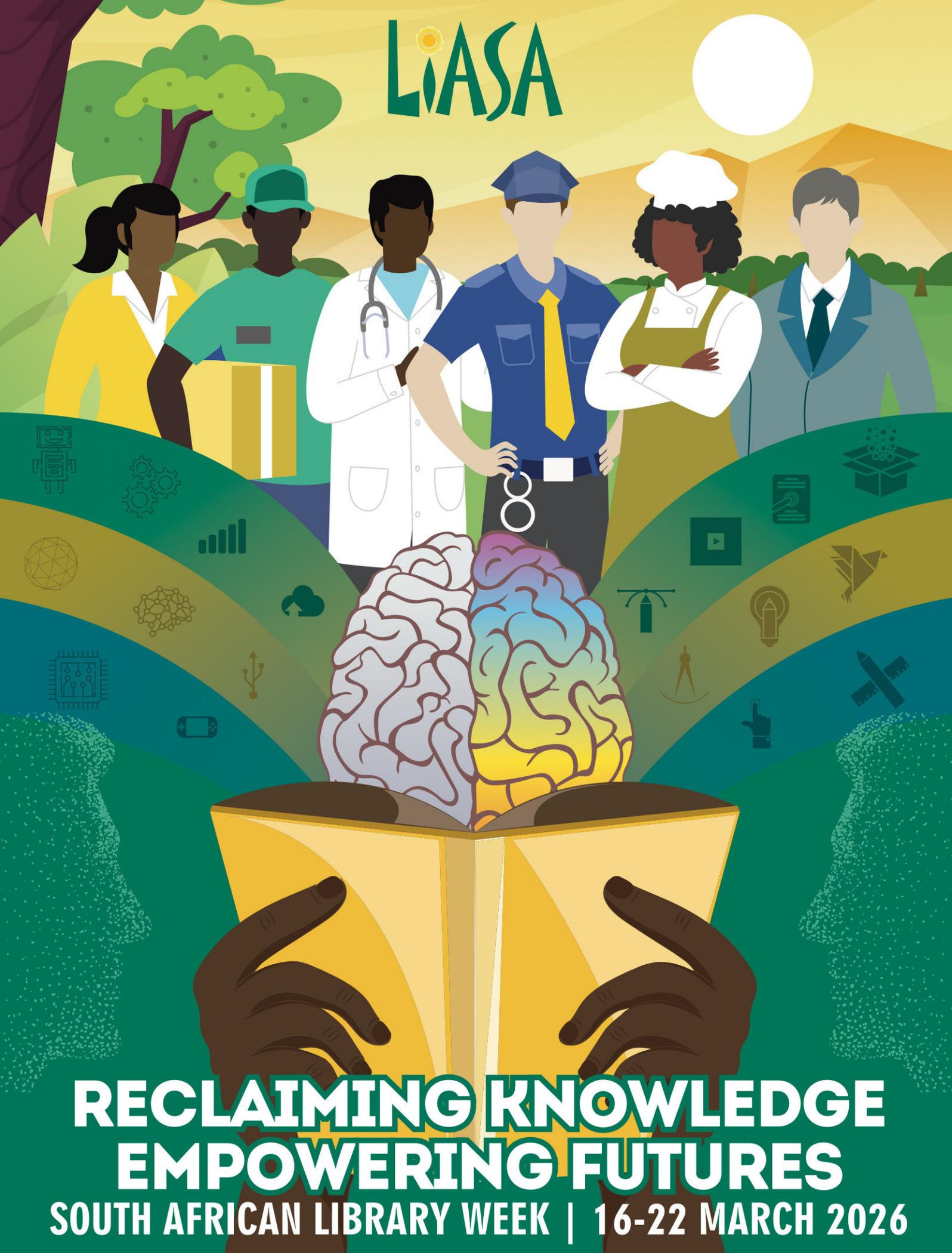


LIASA



**RECLAIMING KNOWLEDGE  
EMPOWERING FUTURES**

**SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK | 16-22 MARCH 2026**



# ☀ PRESIDENT OF THE LIBRARY & INFORMATION ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

## RECLAIMING KNOWLEDGE, EMPOWERING FUTURES - A MESSAGE FROM THE LIASA PRESIDENT

A Presidential Reflection on Southern African Library Week (SALW) 2026 arrives at a moment of profound transformation—social, technological, and cultural. Our theme this year, **"Reclaiming Knowledge, Empowering Futures,"** is more than a slogan. It is a declaration of purpose. It challenges us, as custodians of information and champions of equitable access, to reassert the vital role of libraries in shaping an inclusive and empowered society.



Photo: Mr Charlie Molepo.

As President of LIASA, I offer this reflection not just as a leader but as a fellow professional who deeply believes in the power of libraries to inspire, connect, restore, and uplift. Reclaiming Knowledge, restoring our shared memory. Knowledge is the bedrock upon which communities build identity, continuity, and progress. Yet across Southern Africa, the forces of digital inequity, systemic exclusion, and the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems threaten this collective inheritance. To reclaim knowledge is to reaffirm the principle that information is a public good—not a privilege. It is to digitize local content so that our stories do not vanish into silence.

It is to champion multilingualism so that no citizen is locked out of learning. It is to preserve indigenous wisdom so that modernity does not erase memory. In reclaiming knowledge, libraries claim their rightful role as guardians of truth, defenders of intellectual freedom, and champions of cultural resilience. Empowering Futures, where access meets opportunity. Access alone is not enough. The future belongs to communities that can use knowledge to innovate, solve problems, and participate meaningfully in the global information society.

Empowerment happens when:

- A young person gains digital skills that open doors to new careers.
- A community learns to identify misinformation and engage critically with information.
- An entrepreneur uses library-enabled resources to build a sustainable business.
- A senior citizen learns to navigate technology with confidence and dignity.

Libraries empower futures by nurturing lifelong learning, strengthening digital citizenship, and promoting social and economic participation. In a world defined by rapid technological change and deepening complexity, libraries have become not only relevant but indispensable.



Southern Africa stands at a crossroads. We face widening socioeconomic gaps, an urgent need for digital transformation, and the rising threat of misinformation. Climate change, youth unemployment, and uneven educational outcomes place further pressure on communities. But these challenges also create opportunities—opportunities for libraries to lead.

SALW 2026 reminds us that when libraries reclaim marginalized voices and democratize access to information, they become sites of resilience and innovation. They become community anchors, safe spaces for learning, and engines of empowerment.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

LIASA is committed to driving a bold, future-focused agenda. As we celebrate **SALW 2026**, we anchor our work around four catalytic focus areas:

### 1. Digital Inclusion

We will advocate for universal access to digital tools and digital literacy, ensuring that every individual—regardless of geography or income—can participate meaningfully in the digital world.

### 2. Knowledge Preservation

We will strengthen efforts to safeguard African memory through digitization, indigenous knowledge partnerships, and culturally responsive collections.

### 3. Community Empowerment

Libraries will position themselves as hubs of innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and lifelong learning—meeting the evolving needs of diverse communities.

### 4. Advocacy and Partnerships

LIASA will deepen collaboration with government, academia, civil society, and international partners to influence policy and secure resources that sustain and grow library services.

## A VISION FOR LIASA'S FUTURE

Our vision is clear and resolute:  
To create a library and information sector that is transformative, inclusive, future-oriented, and deeply rooted in African identity and innovation.

### We envision a network of libraries that:

- Operate as digitally empowered community hubs.
- Elevate local knowledge and amplify unheard voices.
- Drive socioeconomic participation and educational success.
- Attract the next generation of LIS professionals.
- Influence policy and shape regional information ecosystems.

This is the future LIASA is committed to building a future where libraries are not only repositories of knowledge, but catalysts of opportunity.



## A CALL TO ACTION

SALW 2026 is an invitation. It invites every librarian, policymaker, educator, and citizen to join us in reclaiming the knowledge that anchors our past, and in empowering the futures that await our communities.

Let us move forward with conviction, creativity, and collective purpose.

Let us honour our mandate to inform, to preserve, and to empower.

Let us ensure that **NO ONE** is left behind in the information society.

Together, we reclaim.

Together, we empower.

Together, we shape the future.

#Reclaiming Knowledge  
#Empowering Futures

# THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK THEME

The South African Library Week (SALW) 2026 theme, *“Reclaiming Knowledge, Empowering Futures”*, reflects a critical moment for libraries and information services in the region. In an era marked by rapid technological change, misinformation, and widening knowledge gaps, libraries stand as guardians of authentic information and catalysts for inclusive development.

This theme underscores two interconnected imperatives:

## **Reclaiming Knowledge**

Knowledge is a shared heritage that shapes identity, culture, and progress. However, barriers such as digital divides, loss of indigenous knowledge, and inequitable access threaten this heritage. By reclaiming knowledge, libraries commit to preserving cultural memory, promoting open access, and ensuring that communities have reliable, diverse, and contextually relevant information. This involves digitization of local content, fostering multilingual resources, and advocating for intellectual freedom.

## **Empowering Futures**

Access to knowledge is not an end in itself, it is a means to empowerment. Libraries empower individuals and communities by equipping them with skills for lifelong learning, digital literacy, and critical thinking. In a knowledge-driven economy, libraries are strategic partners in education, innovation, and social transformation. Through inclusive programs, technology integration, and partnerships, libraries enable citizens to navigate complexity, seize opportunities, and shape sustainable futures.

## **Why This Theme Matters Now**

Southern Africa faces challenges such as socio-economic inequality, climate change, and the need for digital transformation. Libraries are uniquely positioned to bridge these gaps by reclaiming marginalized voices and democratizing access to information. SALW 2026 calls on stakeholders, libraries, governments, educators, and communities to reaffirm the role of libraries as engines of empowerment and resilience.

## **Strategic Focus Areas for SALW 2026**

- Digital Inclusion: Expand access to digital resources and skills for all.
- Knowledge Preservation: Safeguard indigenous knowledge and local content.
- Community Empowerment: Design programs that foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning.
- Advocacy & Partnerships: Strengthen collaboration to influence policy and resource allocation for libraries.

By embracing this theme, SALW 2026 positions libraries as transformative spaces where knowledge is reclaimed and futures are empowered, ensuring that no one is left behind in the information society.

# CELEBRATING LINDA NTAKA



Photo: Linda Ntaka [South African UKS/LIASA Librarian of the Year 2025].

Linda Ntaka's recognition as South African UKS/LIASA Librarian of the Year 2025 is a powerful tribute to a career defined by service, leadership, and unwavering advocacy for public libraries.

Her journey in public librarianship began in 2007, following five years as a teacher-librarian. Introduced to the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) in 2008, she quickly became an active and influential member. Over the years, she has served in several key leadership roles, including

Chairperson of the Eastern Cape Branch, National Chairperson of the Public Libraries Interest Group, and National Public Relations Officer from 2020 to 2023.

**Linda's leadership extends beyond titles.** She has traveled to deep rural areas to deliver training, strengthened collaboration between provinces, and mentored emerging professionals entering the field. Her commitment to professional development was further shaped by her participation in the 2012 Carnegie Institute Continuous Development Program, which equipped her with advanced ICT and management skills.

Currently serving as Area Head for the City of Cape Town, she leads the high-performing Area East subarea, overseeing nine libraries and championing community-focused programming. From after-school literacy initiatives to mother tongue reading programs, her work reflects a deep belief in equitable access to information and lifelong learning.

**Passionate and forward-thinking,** Linda Ntaka continues to elevate the visibility and credibility of librarianship in South Africa — inspiring colleagues, strengthening communities, and shaping the profession's future.





# DROP EVERYTHING AND READ PROGRAMME EASTWOOD

## LENDING SUPPORT TO THE "DROP EVERYTHING AND READ SCHOOL PROGRAMME"

On the 11th of February 2026, library staff captivated the Grade 3 children with lively storytelling. They then encouraged the children to explore books independently, giving everyone a chance to read, imagine, and discover. The session created excitement around reading, boosted learners' confidence, and reinforced the important partnership between schools and libraries in nurturing literacy, creativity, and a lifelong love for learning.

## FEEDBACK FROM PRINCIPAL, HOD AND EDUCATORS

The Principal, HOD and educators are happy with the initiative and with library staff performance. They are encouraged and excited for the program to continue on an ongoing basis. They will also bring learners to the library to join the membership and for library orientation. Eastwood Library has partnered with Eastwood Primary School to inspire a love of reading among learners. The visits will form part of the school's Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) session, where learners pause their daily activities to enjoy the magic of books. The library has scheduled time at the school every Wednesday morning from 8 am to 10 am. The library will work on a rotation from Grade 1 to Grade 3. Staff will move to each class every 30 minutes. Library staff will read one story, ask questions and then hand out library books for learners to read by themselves for 15 minutes.

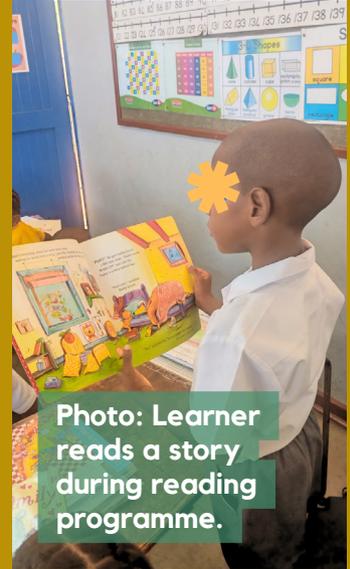


Photo: Learner reads a story during reading programme.



Photo: Sunitha Richard Storytime.



Photo: Human rights debate team.

# HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE EASTWOOD

## EASTWOOD LIBRARY INTERSCHOOL DEBATE – CELEBRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK AND HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Written by\_Sunitha Richard PL(SA)

As part of the South African Library Week celebrations, Msunduzi Library Services: Eastwood Library hosted an Interschool Debate Competition on the 5th of March 2026 for Grade 7 learners from local schools.



The event formed part of the library's efforts to promote reading, critical thinking, and active participation among young people. During the debate, learners engaged in lively and thoughtful discussions on topics related to human rights, including equality, freedom of expression, and the rights of children. Participants demonstrated confidence, well-researched arguments, and respect for differing viewpoints, making the debate both educational and inspiring.

The programme also highlighted the important role libraries play in supporting information literacy, civic awareness, and youth development. Teachers, librarians, and learners commended the initiative, noting that the event showcased how libraries serve as important spaces for learning, dialogue, and community engagement. Eastwood Library remains committed to supporting programmes that empower young people through knowledge and discussion, particularly during South African Library Week.

Participating Schools included: Glenwood Primary, Panorama Primary, Eastwood Primary, Copesville Primary, Msilinga Primary and McCarthy Primary.

# EASTWOOD CELEBRATES WORLD READ ALOUD DAY

**KZN PIETERMARITZBURG**

Eastwood Library proudly celebrated World Read Aloud Day on the 4th of February 2026 and Global Play Day on the 5th of February 2026, creating a lively and engaging space where reading, creativity, and play came together. The event highlighted the importance of reading aloud as a powerful way to build literacy, confidence, imagination, and community connection, while Global Play Day reminded participants that play is essential for learning, social development, and wellbeing.

Librarians, educators and children gathered to enjoy interactive storytelling sessions, shared book readings, fun literacy games, and playful educational activities that encouraged curiosity and participation. Young readers were invited to express themselves through dramatic readings, storytelling circles, and creative play stations that blended books with hands-on experiences.

The celebration reinforced the library's role as a welcoming community hub that promotes lifelong learning, inclusion, and access to knowledge. By combining reading aloud with play, Eastwood Library demonstrated that literacy development can be joyful, engaging, and accessible to all ages. The event not only celebrated books and stories but also strengthened community bonds, inspired a love of reading, and encouraged families to continue reading and playing together beyond the library walls. Stories were read to 647 learners in total. Target schools were McCarthy Primary, Glenwood Primary and Panorama Primary School.



Photo: Sunitha Richard & Kids.



Photo: Musa Mohapi storyteller and Senior Library Assistant Glenda Lundall holds up sign.



# UNISA CAPE TOWN BRANCH LIBRARY

## PROMOTING MULTILINGUALISM, RECLAIMING KNOWLEDGE

Written by Michelle Biederman  
Branch Librarian (Acting): Unisa Cape Town Branch Library

Multilingual Language Policy Implementation workshops inspired the Librarians at the Unisa Cape Town Branch Library to begin actively looking for new ways to promote multilingualism within its services. The library was receiving an abundance of new books that were in indigenous languages.

A separate display was created next to the Circulation Desk, to make students and staff aware of the collection. We currently have books in the following languages: Siswati; Sepedi; Sesotho; Xitsonga; IsiNdebele; IsiZulu; Setswana; Tshivenda; isiXhosa available to borrow by students & staff. For online awareness, a new tab was created on the Unisa Cape Town Branch Library LibGuide, with links to the new books.

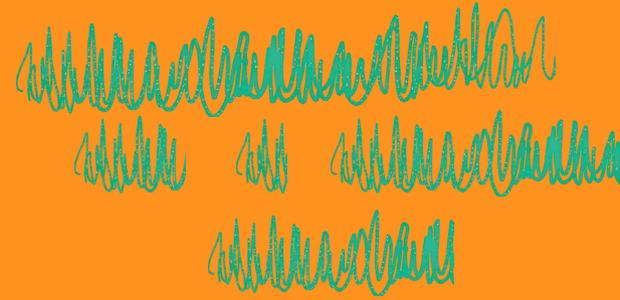


Photo: Ms. Silindile Ngubane [Library intern] at Unisa CapeTown Branch Library, alongside the Indigenous Language Collection.



Photo: Inside the Branch.



# MUSA MVUNDLA UNISA

**"FROM DEEP ROOTS GROW LIVING STORIES — RESTORING THE PAST, PRESERVING WISDOM FOR TOMORROW"**

Written by Musa Mvundla [UNISA Cape Town]

Intellectual heritage is the stories, knowledge, and traditions shared from one generation to the next. Like strong roots that support a tree, this wisdom keeps cultures strong and identities alive. Protecting and valuing this knowledge today helps future generations understand their history, their people, and where they belong.



**Photo: Musa Mvundla - UNISA Cape Town.**

A globe with diverse figures shows a world of shared knowledge, where libraries play a key role. Each group represents unique stories and traditions. Celebrating these perspectives honours the past, promotes equal learning, and builds a future where all cultures contribute. Libraries help pass wisdom across generations and strengthen humanity.

A community (world) with many different voices reminds us that knowledge belongs to everyone. When we respect our cultures, remember the wisdom of the past, and share stories with younger generations, learning becomes stronger. People from different places can learn from one another and understand different ways of thinking.

Every culture and every person have something important to share. When we listen and work together, we build respect and understanding. This helps us protect our knowledge and traditions. Together, we can create a future where our shared wisdom continues to grow and inspire people to learn, think, and make the world better.



# EEK OVER THE LAST 8 YEARS

**LIBRARIES:  
TELLING POWERFUL STORIES**  
South African Library Week | 20 - 26 March 2023

Verle stories  
Balisa amabali  
Telling stories  
Anega kanejelo  
Vulavula timhaka

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**  
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK 2025  
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**RECLAIMING KNOWLEDGE  
EMPOWERING FUTURES**  
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK | 16-22 MARCH 2026

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# MSUNDUZI LIBRARY SERVICES

## EASTWOOD LIBRARY 2026

### CELEBRATING LOCAL VOICES - LIBRARY LOVERS MONTH EVENT

Throughout February 2026, Eastwood Library in Pietermaritzburg has transformed into a vibrant hub for literary connection, hosting a series of engagements that brought together local authors and patrons under the theme of **Library Lovers Month**.

The event served as a community-driven celebration of South African storytelling, designed to bridge the gap between creators and readers while highlighting the library's role as a 'safe and inclusive space' for knowledge. The celebration featured intimate sessions where local talent could showcase their work directly to their neighbours.



Photo: Ratasha Singh.

#### Notable highlights included:

Author Meet-and-Greet: Patrons had the opportunity to engage with local writers, that is Slindesihle Gogo, William M Gonya, Ratasha Singh and Ishmael Khanyile and who shared insights into the creative process behind local narratives, and in line with LIASA (Library and Information Association of South Africa) guidelines, the library featured; Library Love Letter; stations where visitors wrote notes about the impact local books and librarians have had on their lives.



Photo: Slindesihle Gogo.

The event emphasized the importance of supporting South African authors who often face challenges in distribution. By providing a free platform for these writers to sell their books and interact with the public, Eastwood Library helped foster a reading culture, that reflects the diverse heritage and contemporary issues of South African society.

To make the month-long celebration engaging for every visitor, the library curated a themed book display featuring collections of local romance, memoirs, and poetry decorated with hearts.

These February festivities served as a precursor to the upcoming South African Library Week (16–22 March 2026), which will continue the momentum under the national theme...

## RECLAIMING KNOWLEDGE, EMPOWERING FUTURES.



# SASOLBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

**SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY WITH A FREE TWO-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM**  
Written by Estelle Boers

At the **Sasolburg Public Library**, we have an ongoing programme where we support our community with a two-week training programme, free of charge, where members are being trained in basic computer skills.



Photo: Mrs. Mamsy Radebe helping students in the library's computer Centre during their practical session.

Practical training and exercises ensure that knowledge can be captured. Participants need to complete a test at the end of the two-week period where after they are handed a certificate of completion during a ceremony.

This programme will continue throughout the year so that we can reach as many people as possible.



Photo: The first group that finished the training in February. In the photo (sitting) Mrs. Tshidi Mphosi; Mrs. Mamsy Radebe (middle back row), both library assistants at the Sasolburg Public Library and developers of the program and Estelle Boers, more to the right in the last row, Assistant Director Sasolburg library.

We also have success stories where people came back to report that they were appointed in a job because they had the necessary skills, all thanks to the training they received at the library.



# ROWALLAN PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL GQEBERHA

## MEDIA CENTRE LIBRARY

Written by Michelle Coates PL(SA)  
Senior Information Specialist at Emeris

Forming part of a community engagement project, I was asked to share my librarian expertise in the Media Centre (Library) at Rowallan Park Primary School in Gqeberha. The teacher in charge of the library had no training when it came to shelf-reading or arranging books according to the Dewey Decimal Classification system.

Together we spent time packing books back in their correct places. We also designed some colourful posters to make it easier for children who were searching for books on specific topics.

Additionally, I suggested that rulers be given to children for them to use as place-markers on the shelves, so they could put the books back in the correct places after viewing them. In this way, I hope to ease the teacher librarian's workload when it comes to sorting through all the out-of-place books afterwards! The teacher-librarian was so motivated by my support that she created ways to make the library more interesting for young readers.



Photo: Michelle Coates giving back to the community.

She even designed a display called Bookflix, which highlighted headings such as "top picks," "new books," and "read again."

It was an honour to be part of the Rowallan Park Primary School Library rejuvenation project. The collage symbolises the connection between preserving the past, while planning for a better future. Collaborating with teacher-librarians enables valuable skills to be transferred, and the learners are the ones who will benefit overall. Even an academic librarian like me can volunteer their time and share skills with teacher-librarians in their respective communities.



Photo: Empowering Teacher Librarians.



# DON AFRICANA

## LIBRARY UNDER ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

This Library is located at the same premises as the Central Reference Library and is devoted exclusively to Africana. It was named after David Don who was born in Scotland in 1840. He pursued a banking career in Edinburgh and then in Bombay before settling in Natal in 1881.

He and his wife lived in the Maze on South Ridge Road (now Marist Brothers School). Here he set up a library for his collection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps and manuscripts.

One of the many events hosted by the Don Africana Library under eThekweni Municipality includes health and safety workshops, as shown in the pictures. Together with the workshop material being presented, a formal training session was held at the same time.

Branded banners and posters including library and professional association signage reinforces the material being presented the the participants.

The health and safety workshop was aimed at equipping librarians with essential knowledge and skills to ensure the library spaces are safe, healthy and conducive for patrons.

The session emphasizes creating environments free of hazards, promoting well-being, and ensuring the libraries remain welcoming, secure, and compliant with health and safety standards for all users.

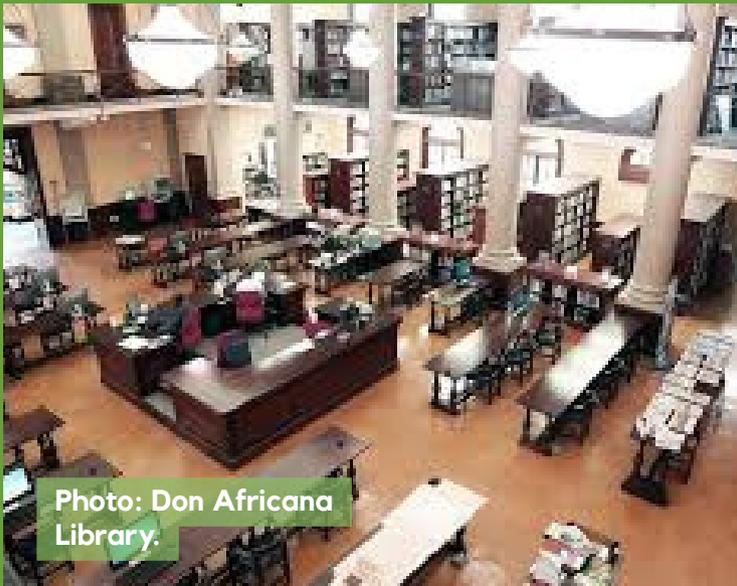


Photo: Don Africana Library.



Photo: Health and safety workshop at Don Africana Library under eThekweni Municipality.



# CAPRICORN HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTRE

## HOSTED POLOKWANE CITY LIBRARY FOR A BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENT

Campaign with Grade 8 learners. Learners enjoyed an interactive quiz on the functions of libraries, services and rules. Presenters highlighted libraries services and operating hours, encouraging learners to make use of these resources.

The School Librarian, Ms Lerato Maluleke PL (SA) invited learners to join the Librarian Volunteer Programme and introduced the national Mobi Readathon competition. She also encouraged learners to visit the Media Centre notice board, for all upcoming literacy activities. The event strengthened knowledge sharing, empowered young readers, and reinforced collaboration in building an informed, inspired future.

### POLOKWANE LIBRARY

The Polokwane Library is located inside the Library Gardens complex on Hans Van Rensburg Street in downtown Polokwane. This site also accommodates the Department of Home Affairs and is situated right next to the Polokwane Art Museum.

#### It provides services such as:

- **Access to Information:** Books, journals, and other materials for research and general knowledge.
- **Study Areas:** Designated spaces for individual and group study.
- **Printing and Photocopying:** Facilities for making copies of documents.
- **Internet Access:** Computers with internet connectivity.
- **Audio Visual Resources:** Access to audio and visual materials.
- **Services for Visually Impaired:** Braille materials and audiobooks are available.



Photo: Capricorn High School Librarian Ms. Lerato Maluleke.



Photo: Presentation by Polokwane City Librarian Ms. Molebogeng Boloko.



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