



IFLA Regional Division  
Committee  
Sub-Saharan Africa

## "Africa opens up: Stories from Open Access Week 2025"



Eswatini and South African law libraries joining in global efforts to celebrate Open Access Week...page 2



Celebrating Open Access at the United States International University - Africa Library...page 6

# Chairperson's Remarks



**Dr. Monica Mensah Danquah**  
**Chairperson SSA RDC 2025-2027**

Esteemed Colleagues,

I am very proud to remark on this special issue of our newsletter, devoted to the recent worldwide commemoration of Open Access (OA) Week. Open Access transcends a mere weekly subject; it is a fundamental value that supports our dedication to social justice, sustainable development, and inclusive education across Sub-Saharan Africa. In our region, where economic inequities impose significant obstacles to educational and research resources, the transition to Open Access is not only advantageous, it is imperative for closing the knowledge gap. The shift to Open Access enables our researchers, students, and institutions by eliminating paywalls that hinder access to internationally generated information. Concurrently, it enables our dynamic, locally produced research to get the global recognition and influence it merits. By adopting OA, we strengthen our position as guardians of equitable information access and participants in global intellectual property. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to those institutions that actively engaged in the worldwide events, showcasing the depth of our regional commitment. This year, we saw targeted initiatives that directly tackled fundamental OA challenges:

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) Library centered its initiatives on the worldwide Open Access Week subject, "Who Owns Our Knowledge?", by organizing a pertinent panel discussion webinar about the future of academic ownership and knowledge equality while the Law Libraries of Eswatini and South Africa, including the Constitutional Court Library, DIRCO Library, and UNISA Libraries, undertook essential strategic benchmarking visits centered on the topic "Community over Commercialization." This effort emphasized how well-organized, user-focused library systems enhance access to justice, government transparency, and open-access legal resources across the area. We also acknowledge the ongoing commitment of institutions such as The United States International University - Africa (USIU-Africa) Library and others that fostered local awareness and policy discourse.

These varied and committed celebrations are essential for enhancing institutional awareness and facilitating internal policy reform. Let us therefore sustain the enthusiasm of Open Access by integrating the free sharing of information into our regular practices. Collectively, we can guarantee that every individual in our area has equitable access to knowledge necessary for innovation, education, and prosperity.

Thank you for your dedication to this essential endeavour.



By: Dr. Ntombikayise Nomsa Mathabela

## Celebrating Open Access Week 2025 through Strategic Legal-Information Engagements

As part of Open Access Week 2025, the Law Library in the office of the AG-Ministry of Justice, led by Senior Assistant Librarian (and current ESWALA president) - Dr N. Nomsa Mathabela, the IT Officer Senzo Mavuso and the Assistant Attorney General Mr Mndeni Vilakazi, embarked on a professional engagement focused on strengthening legal-information ecosystems and access through strategic benchmarking visits. This was to South Africa's Constitutional Court Library, led by Mr Ayanda Mdletshe; the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Library, led by Mr Khulekani Khumalo; and the UNISA Libraries with Ms. Lindi Nhlapho. These visits aligned with the global theme of "Community over Commercialisation" and highlighted how well-structured, people-centred library systems advance access to justice, knowledge equity, and open government information. The activities brought together law librarians, legal researchers, records managers, and information-policy practitioners from Eswatini and South Africa. Discussions centered on digital collections, open-access jurisprudence, and innovations for public-facing legal information portals. The institutions shared their models for user-centred reference services, judgment preservation, and integration of open access tools and government open data platforms. Key outcomes included strengthened professional networks, practical insights for modernizing Eswatini's Ministry of Justice Law Library, and a road-map for enhancing national legal information visibility. The visits reinforced the importance of partnerships in building resilient, inclusive, open-access ecosystems across the region.



**Learning from South Africa's premier judicial library benchmarking open access and legal-information services." Credit: Constitutional Court Library**



**At the Constitutional Court Library**



**Consultation session: "Engaging with librarians on diplomatic knowledge services and open-government access models."**



**Dr N. Nomsa Mathabela (Centre) with the various teams  
Credit: Constitutional Court Library and UNISA Libraries (Host Institutions)**





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**By: Amogelang Kerebotswe**

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) Library joined the global academic community in commemorating International Open Access Week 2025, an annual event dedicated to promoting unrestricted online access to scholarly research and information. Observed worldwide from 20th to 24th October, the week serves as a platform to foster dialogue on knowledge equity, intellectual property, and the democratization of research access. In line with the 2025 theme, “Who Owns Our Knowledge?”, the BIUST Library hosted a panel discussion webinar on 20th October 2025. The event examined critical questions surrounding knowledge ownership, control, and ethical use in an increasingly digital and data-driven world. The panel brought together distinguished experts from Botswana, South Africa, Germany, and the United Kingdom, each offering unique insights into open access, intellectual property, and inclusive knowledge practices. The speakers included Dr. Katrin Seyler from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany), Professor Collence Takaingehamo Chisita from Durban University of Technology (South Africa), Dr. Audrey Masizana from the University of Botswana (Botswana), Dr. Judith Fathallah from Lancaster University (United Kingdom), Dr. Tony Lelliott from the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE, South Africa), and Ms. Zandile Modiba from the University of South Africa (UNISA, South Africa).

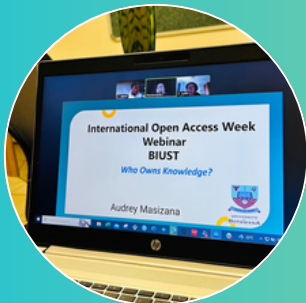
In his opening remarks, Professor Ellias Shemang, BIUST’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, reaffirmed the institution’s commitment to promoting open access through initiatives like the university’s institutional repository. He emphasized that BIUST Library’s continued observance of Open Access Week reflects its dedication to enhancing visibility, accessibility, and impact of the university’s scholarly output. He also noted that this year’s theme encourages critical reflection on the dynamics of intellectual property and equitable knowledge sharing. The discussion, moderated by Dr Ayanda Lebele, Director of Library Services, explored four central themes: Access and Equity, Ownership and Control, Responsibility and Ethics, Inclusion and the Global Knowledge Divide.

Dr Audrey Masizana opened the session by addressing access and equity, focusing on the concept of open science as a collective sharing endeavour. She emphasized that knowledge should be treated as a shared resource rather than a private commodity, advocating for legal frameworks that promote fair use, interoperability, and data reusability through open education resources (OERs) and institutional repositories. Ms. Zandile Modiba highlighted the challenges and opportunities of open access in the era of artificial intelligence. She stressed the importance of protecting indigenous knowledge systems through informed sharing protocols, advisory boards, and suitable technologies that ensure fair attribution and benefit-sharing with knowledge originators.

Dr Judith Fathallah explored the central question of “Who owns knowledge?” She observed that many scholars inadvertently sign away their rights to publishers, limiting their ability to reuse, reproduce, and disseminate their own work—raising concerns about control and fairness in academic publishing. Professor Collence Chisita discussed the intersection of open access and indigenous knowledge from the Global South perspective. He noted that open access is often misunderstood and underfunded in developing regions, resulting in limited representation of southern scholarship. He called for stronger indigenous publishing industries to promote local knowledge and bridge global inequities. Dr Tony Lelliott concluded the panel with reflections on the responsibilities of educators and technologists in creating and sharing knowledge through OER and AI-powered platforms. He emphasized quality assurance, ethical AI use, and the value of co-creation, citing the University of Cape Town’s DOT4D project where students co-author open digital textbooks.

In his closing remarks, the acting dean of Graduate studies, professor Boikanyo Makubate stated that BIUST Library’s commemoration of International Open Access Week 2025 reaffirmed the institution’s role as a champion of equitable knowledge dissemination in the region. The discussions underscored the need for sustainable frameworks that balance openness with ethical responsibility and cultural sensitivity. As the global community continues to navigate questions of ownership, access, and equity, BIUST stands committed to fostering a more inclusive and transparent scholarly ecosystem, one where knowledge truly belongs to all.....





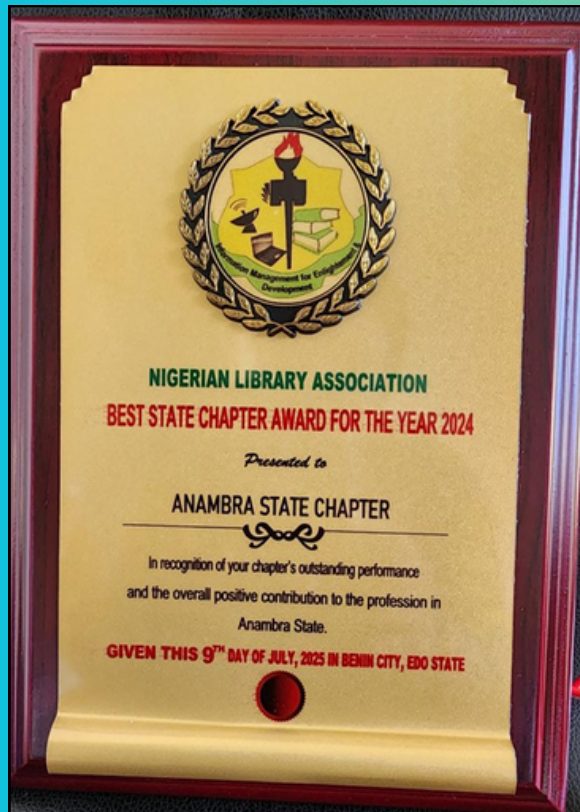


# The Award Winning Best State Chapter of Nigerian Library Association (NLA) :

## Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Anambra State Chapter

By: Dr. Ngozi Perpetua Osuchukwu

The Nigerian Library Association (NLA) has a history of giving awards at its annual conferences. One of the awards is “Best State Chapter.” This award category is the most sought after by all the 36 State Chapters of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), plus Abuja, the Federal Territory. It has stipulated guidelines and scores by the award committee. The activities submitted for the award must have taken place from January - December of every year. The lot fell on NLA, Anambra State Chapter, with a whopping score of over 94% leading on a landslide and standing out as the Best State Chapter in Nigeria. The award was given at a dinner during the National Conference of NLA at Benin, Edo, State Nigeria. It was a moment of joy, dancing and singing.



The NLA Anambra State Chapter has consecutively won this award from 2012 - 2014, making it the State with “the Evergreen Award.” Yes, the rule is that if a state wins for 3 consecutive years, they go home with the Evergreen award. However, the State Chapter can contest again after 10 years. So, Anambra State Chapter came back again to prove that a Champion never dies.



The State Chapter's success is attributed to its broad collaborative efforts with libraries, institutions, agencies, and organizations; deep community and national engagement through active participation in National NLA activities, town hall meetings, and the National Library Week; its focus on professional development and membership growth by organizing training sessions, the Annual Conference/AGM, and recruiting new members; and its commitment to scholarly output through the publication of a Conference Compendium and a peer-reviewed journal.

**Congratulations to Anambra State Chapter!**



**By: Horace Okoth, Regina M. Nyandoro, & Fredrick O. Adika**

On October 21-24, the United States International University - Africa Library led the university community in celebrating the 2025 International Open Access Week under the theme “Who Owns our Knowledge.” This event showcased the university’s commitment to openness, cooperation, and equal access to knowledge. The event began with open access myth busters that were in the form of interactive quiz rounds aimed at helping students assess their open access knowledge. This session was followed by the open access champion’s wall and “I own my knowledge” campaign, which invited participants to share ideas in the form of their own quotes.

On October 23, Dr. Evelyn Anduvare, University Librarian at Karatina University, delivered a guest lecture on open knowledge, access equity, and the evolving scholarly communication landscape. The event also recognized Open Access publishing at the university. During the academic year 2024 / 2025, faculty published a total of 129 publications, 93 of which were Open Access. Fourteen faculty members were recognized for their dedication to open scholarship. The sessions culminated with a visit to Kipepeo Safe Space, a neighborhood library giving free reading areas for students in Ongata Rongai. As part of the Corporate Social Responsibility activities, the library staff committed themselves to providing mentorship and donations



**The event organisers and participants**



**The University Librarian Dr. Evelyn Anduvare-Karatina University delivering guest lecture**

October 2025

**By: Jerry Mathema**

Nestled in the vibrant heart of Maphisa, Kezi, within the serene lands of Matabeleland South, Minda Mission School stands as a beacon of faith, learning, and cultural heritage. Founded in 1971 as a Roman Catholic girls' institution under the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, the school has blossomed into a co-educational centre of excellence, nurturing a thriving population of 480 learners drawn from Maphisa and its neighbouring towns. It bears special historical significance as it lies in the vicinity of St. Joseph's Village, the birthplace of the illustrious son of the soil, Former Vice President of Zimbabwe and the late Father Zimbabwe, Dr. Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo. The 2025 International School Library Month (ISLM) celebrations, held under the captivating theme "Beyond the Bookshelf: AI, Libraries, and the Future of Stories," unfolded with an aura of reverence, intellect, and joyous festivity.

The event commenced with a deeply moving devotion led by Father Fernando Ncube, the resident priest, whose eloquence and humour effortlessly drew his audience into a sacred space of reflection. His words, steeped in wisdom and compassion, set a divine tone for the day's proceedings. The choir then rendered the national anthem in both Tjikalanga and English a harmonious symbol of unity and cultural pride that resonated throughout the assembly.

The proceedings were skillfully directed by Ms. Zanele Bhebhe, a gifted teacher at the school, whose command of both English and isiNdebele captivated the audience. Her poised demeanour and sparkling wit infused the gathering with warmth and laughter, ensuring that not a single moment lost its lustre. Ms. Bhebhe's magnetic presence transformed the formal event into a memorable experience of community and connection.

The event was graced and drew an impressive line-up of several distinguished guests, among them the School Development Committee Chairperson, Mr. Bhekimpilo Ndiweni, and Mr. Titus Mangena, representing the District Schools Inspector's Office. Their presence testified to the importance of the event, not only for Minda High School but for the broader educational landscape of Matabeleland South.

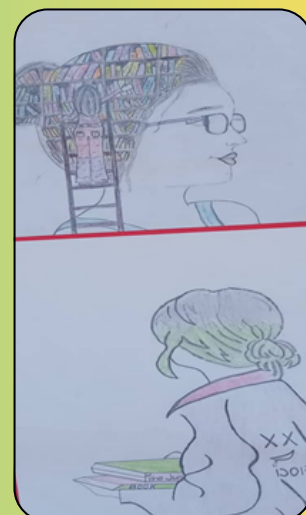
Mrs. Harriet Ncube delivered a thought-provoking presentation that set the stage for the day's intellectual reflections. She was graciously introduced by Mrs. Samukelo Moyo, a senior teacher in the school and teacher librarian, whose dedication to literacy and learning shone through every aspect of the event.



**The Audio-visual section of the School Library**



**Ms. HR Ncube presenting**



**Artworks created by a learner: Blessing Mwale for ISLM 2025**



A highlight of the day was Ms. H.R. Ncube's insightful presentation entitled, "How to Set Up and Efficiently Run a School Library." Her session was designed to impart practical knowledge and skills to schools still in the throes of creating and developing functional and vibrant library spaces. Through her engaging delivery, Ms. Ncube underscored the importance of strategic planning, resource management, and community involvement in establishing libraries that truly serve as hubs of knowledge and creativity. Her contribution was warmly received and sparked enthusiastic discussions among teachers and administrators eager to strengthen their own library initiatives. The guest of honour, Mr. Jerry Mathema, took to the podium with dignified confidence and shared an inspiring speech on the origins and evolution of ISLM. His address illuminated the transformative journey of libraries from traditional print archives to vibrant digital learning spaces, embodying the IASL/ZimLA mantra: "One School, One Librarian, One Library." Mr. Mathema called upon educational authorities and policymakers to prioritise the establishment and development of school libraries, emphasising their vital role in nurturing minds amidst the advent of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. His words echoed with conviction, urging that ISLM celebrations become an annual tradition at Minda High School. The day's proceedings blossomed into a celebration of youthful creativity, with performances from several invited schools, including Mahetshe, Gohole, St. Anna, Tjewondo, Mqabuko, and the host, Minda. Learners from Early Childhood Development centres such as Minda and Falcon captivated the audience with their charming performances. Innocence meeting artistry in delightful harmony.

Learners from all streams presented compelling speeches, poems, songs, and traditional dances that stirred both laughter and emotion. Notable among the speakers were Shantelle Sibanda, Nyaradzo Tsoto, Primrose, Neo Mubovhosi, and Vanessa, whose eloquence and passion reminded all present that the future of Zimbabwe's storytelling is in capable hands. The school choir's enthralling renditions of traditional isiNdebele choral and spiritual music lifted spirits and filled the venue with resounding joy.



**The attendees (learners, teachers and parents)**



**The Guest of Honour Mr. J. Mathema  
delivering his speech**



**The Guest of Honour Mr. J.Mathema handing  
over a books donation to the deputy Head Ms.  
Lungisani Moyo**

A heartwarming exchange of gifts punctuated the event, symbolising mutual respect and gratitude. The school was presented with a donation of books from Aussie Books, precious seeds for intellectual growth while the school reciprocated with tokens of appreciation for its esteemed guests. This moment, rich with emotion, drew tears of joy from several attendees as unity, generosity, and shared purpose illuminated the gathering. As the event drew to a close, Mrs. Samukelo Moyo delivered a stirring and emotional parting message, her words weaving together the themes of education, faith, and community. The venerated Father Ncube then bestowed a solemn closing prayer, blessing all who had taken part in this celebration of learning and togetherness.

The delegation later toured the school's library, guided by Mr. Limukani Moyo, the Librarian. The facility, though equipped with computers and a modest collection of books, stands in need of further support to meet the demands of a modern learning environment. In a heartfelt plea, Deputy Head Ms. Lungisani Moyo called upon well-wishers, partners, and organisations to contribute to the library's growth through donations of books and digital resources to help make Minda High School a model library hub in Matabeleland South.

The ISLM 2025 celebrations at Minda High School were not merely an event but a testament to the enduring power of education, community, and faith. From the resonant prayers of Father Ncube to the eloquent insights of Mr. Mathema, from the laughter of Ms. Bhebhe to the performances of the learners, the day radiated with the promise of a future "Beyond the Bookshelf."

In Minda High School, the story of Zimbabwe's educational renaissance continues to be written. "One book, one library, and one inspired learner at a time."



**Mr. Limukani Ncube the school Librarian with his back on the camera, Mr. Jerry Mathema squatting, Mrs. Harriet Ncube and one of the teachers.**



**Mrs. Samukeliso Moyo the Senior English Teacher and Librarian**



# The International School Library Month Celebrations held at Esiphikeni Secondary School- 10 October 2025

By: **Harriet R. Ncube**

The 2025 International School Library Month Celebrations at Esiphikeni Secondary School in Bubi-Umguza in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe stand as a shining testament to the transformative power of literacy, community engagement, and unwavering dedication to educational excellence. This remarkable event not only celebrated the vital role of school libraries but also showcased the collective commitment of local and international stakeholders to nurturing a reading culture in a peri-urban setting surrounded by farms and artisanal mining activities.

The 2025 theme, "Beyond the Bookshelf: AI, Libraries, and the Future of Stories," underscored the evolving landscape of information and storytelling, highlighting the importance of integrating technology and innovative approaches within school libraries to prepare students for a dynamic future.

Esiphikeni Secondary School, established in 2013 as a satellite of Somvubu High School, has rapidly distinguished itself as an inspiring beacon of learning within its community. Despite its relatively recent inception, the school has demonstrated impressive growth, culminating in its recognition as an examination centre in 2024. The dedicated staff of six teachers, recruited from diverse local backgrounds, exemplifies a passionate and resourceful team committed to elevating educational standards.

The celebrations on October 22, 2025, were a masterful blend of cultural vibrancy, scholarly discourse, and community spirit. The event was gracefully presided over by Ms. Ndlovu, the school's esteemed English teacher and librarian-in-charge, whose leadership ensured a warm and inspiring atmosphere. The melodious voices of the school choir, whose uplifting renditions of the national anthem and choral entertainment added a touch of national pride and youthful exuberance, truly enriched the occasion.

The event was further distinguished by the presence of esteemed guests and dignitaries, whose participation underscored the significance of the occasion. Ms. Harriet R. Ncube, a venerable library consultant and former Zimbabwe Library Association secretary general, delivered an insightful paper on "School Libraries Nurturing a Reading Culture in the Digital Age," highlighting the critical role of libraries in fostering literacy amidst technological advancements. Mr. Lewis Mukucha, a seasoned library professional, shared invaluable guidance on establishing and managing effective school libraries, reinforcing the importance of strategic planning and community involvement.



**Ms. Harriet R. Ncube  
and the Councillor Mrs.  
Cookie Moyo**



**Mr. J. Mathema and the  
learners**



**The audio-visual section of the  
school library**

The speeches delivered by the local council and other stakeholders resonated deeply, emphasizing education as a cornerstone of societal development. The councillor’s heartfelt narration of her educational journey at an advanced age exemplified resilience and lifelong learning, inspiring all present. Her earnest appeal for more donations and the establishment of a purpose-built library underscored the community’s unwavering commitment to literacy and educational infrastructure.

The event also featured a series of scholarly presentations, including a compelling paper by Ms. Ncube on nurturing a reading culture in the digital age, and Mr. Mathema’s insightful discourse on the care, preservation, and management of library materials. These contributions enriched the event, providing practical knowledge and strategic insights for enhancing library services.

In alignment with the 2025 theme and the growing importance of digital literacy, the administration of Esiphikeni Secondary School announced that, starting from 2026, International School Library Month (ISLM) will be celebrated as an annual event. The school’s leadership has expressed their strong commitment to institutionalizing this celebration to ensure continuous promotion of literacy, technological integration, and innovative storytelling in their library programs.

This celebration was further elevated by the active participation of the Zimbabwe Library Association (ZimLA) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), who passionately advocated for making International School Library Month an annual fixture in the school calendar. Their involvement underscored the event’s importance as a catalyst for sustained advocacy and development of school libraries.

The event culminated in a heartfelt prayer by Mr. Ncube, followed by a sumptuous lunch that fostered camaraderie and community bonding. The success of this celebration was a testament to the collaborative efforts of the school, local community, and international partners, all united in their pursuit of educational excellence.

In conclusion, the 2025 International School Library Month celebrations at Esiphikeni Secondary School not only honoured the pivotal role of school libraries but also ignited a renewed passion for reading and learning within the community. We commend the school’s visionary leadership, dedicated staff, and supportive community for their exemplary efforts. We strongly encourage Esiphikeni Secondary School to institutionalize this event annually, beginning in 2026, to ensure that the spirit of literacy, innovation, and learning continues to flourish for generations to come.



**Learners serenading guests with song**



**Learners listening attentively to a presentation**





From left to right is the resident councillor Mrs. Cookie Moyo taking pictures, the School Head Mr. Tawanda Nhidza, Mr. Ncube the Vice-Chair of the and Mr. Edward Ngwenya the Chairperson of the School Development Committee, Mr. Lewis Mukucha ZimLA Matabeleland Branch and Mr. Lesley Hlabambiza school teacher



From Left to right: Mr. Tawanda Nidza the Head, Ms. Sukoluhle Ndlovu the English Teacher, Mrs. Mercyline Gorogodo the Deputy Head, Mr. Jerry Mathema IASL/ZimLA and Mr. Lewis Mukucha ZimLA Matabeleland Branch.



Mrs. Mercyline Gorogodo the deputy Head with the learners

# Information Coordination sub-committee

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Jerry Mathema School Library  
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