

KENYA NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

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National Reading Day 2025: Celebrating Stories, Literacy, and Community

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National Reading Day 2025: Celebrating Stories, Literacy, and Community

On 12th July 2025, Knls celebrated National Reading Day with a vibrant and inspiring event that brought together readers, learners, and community members to honor the power of stories and the importance of literacy. The celebration highlighted the critical role of reading in shaping minds, nurturing creativity, and fostering lifelong learning across the nation.

The event was graced by the Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture, and Children Services, Hon. Hanna Cheptumo, whose presence underscored the government's commitment to promoting a culture of reading and supporting initiatives that enhance literacy at all levels. Her participation reinforced the message that reading is a shared responsibility, essential for personal growth, education, and national development.

A special highlight of the day was a read-aloud session led by Fiona Nyong'o, sister to the renowned actress and author Lupita Nyong'o. Fiona captivated the audience with her reading of *Sulwe*, Lupita's inspiring children's book that encourages self-love and celebrates the beauty of diversity. The session engaged children and adults alike, sparking meaningful conversations about self-esteem, identity, and the transformative power of books.

Throughout the day, participants also enjoyed interactive storytelling, literacy activities, and opportunities to explore a wide range of books, fostering curiosity and a love for reading. Partners, guests, and volunteers contributed to creating a lively and engaging environment that celebrated knowledge, imagination, and community. National Reading Day 2025 was a memorable tribute to the impact of books in shaping lives and communities. Knls continues to champion initiatives that inspire reading, nurture learning, and provide inclusive spaces where everyone can access knowledge, explore ideas, and grow through the joy of reading.



Honouring Democracy and Unity: TİKA Commemorates Türkiye's National Day at Knls

On 17th July 2025, Knls had the honour of hosting the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) as they commemorated Türkiye's Democracy and National Unity Day. This solemn day marks the failed coup attempt of 15th July 2016, when the people of Türkiye stood together to defend their democracy. Hundreds tragically lost their lives and many others were injured during this critical moment in the nation's history. Since then, Türkiye has observed this day annually to honour the bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering spirit of its citizens, reflecting on the resilience and unity that sustained the country during a time of national crisis.

The event was graced by H.E. Subutay Yüksel, the Ambassador of Türkiye to Kenya, alongside TİKA officials, partners, and guests from various sectors. The gathering provided a platform for reflection on the enduring values of democratic governance, civic responsibility, and the power of solidarity in overcoming adversity. Speakers emphasized the importance of remembering historical events that shape nations and the lessons they offer for current and future generations.

During the commemoration, participants also explored the role of international partnerships in promoting cultural understanding, global solidarity, and shared learning. The event highlighted how collaborations between institutions such as Knls and TİKA contribute to fostering dialogue, strengthening community ties, and supporting initiatives that celebrate democracy and human rights.



Inspiring Readers and Shaping Futures at the Nairobi International Book Fair

The 26th Nairobi International Book Fair was held at the Sarit Centre in Westlands from 24th to 28th September 2025 under the theme “Inspiring Readers, Shaping Futures.” Organized by the Kenya Publishers Association, the fair brought together authors, publishers, libraries and book lovers from across the region to celebrate literature and promote a culture of reading.

Knls participated in the event as an exhibitor throughout the five days. On 25th September 2025, the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Charles Nzivo, was honoured to serve as the Chief Guest during the opening ceremony.

During the exhibition, Knls showcased a range of services and innovations including library and information services, digitization solutions, the Knls Virtual Library and data centre services. Visitors engaged with the team at the stand, learned more about these initiatives and explored opportunities for collaboration.

The fair provided an important platform for knowledge exchange, partnerships and the continued promotion of reading and publishing in Kenya and the wider region.



Promoting Literacy in the Digital Era at Garissa County Library

On 18th September 2025, Garissa County Library hosted a vibrant celebration of International Literacy Day under the theme “Promoting Literacy in the Digital Era.” The event brought together over 250 pupils, parents, and community members, all united in the mission to champion reading, digital access, and lifelong learning. It was a day filled with interactive activities, learning opportunities, and inspiring discussions on the role of literacy in personal growth and community development.

The celebration was organized in partnership with Book Aid International and the County Government of Garissa, demonstrating the power of collaboration in enhancing literacy initiatives. Through these partnerships, Knls continues to strengthen its reach and impact, ensuring that knowledge and educational resources are accessible to learners in both urban and remote communities.

A highlight of the day was the generous donation of study books by Book Aid International to local schools. These resources are expected to provide learners with valuable tools for academic success while fostering a strong reading culture that extends beyond the classroom. Pupils engaged enthusiastically in reading sessions, storytelling activities, and interactive learning games, reflecting a growing interest in books and digital learning platforms.

The event also emphasized the importance of embracing digital literacy alongside traditional reading. Participants were introduced to Knls’s Virtual Library, providing access to a wealth of online resources and learning materials via vtabu.knls.ac.ke. This digital initiative ensures that learners can continue exploring knowledge and developing skills both at home and in the library, reinforcing the message that literacy in the digital era opens doors to endless opportunities.



Building a Strong Reading Foundation for the Digital Era



On International Literacy Day 2025, Knls emphasized the vital role of literacy in preparing learners for the opportunities of a connected world. While digital tools are transforming access to knowledge, millions of young people and adults still lack basic reading skills, leaving them at risk of being left behind in both traditional and digital learning.

As part of its commitment to promoting literacy, Knls, in partnership with Book Aid International, delivered over 3,000 books through the Books to Go Project at Thirime Comprehensive Primary School in Kikuyu. The initiative provided pupils with essential resources to develop strong reading habits, expand their knowledge, and embrace lifelong learning.

The celebration underscored Knls's dedication to fostering a reading culture, supporting communities in both physical and digital learning spaces, and ensuring that literacy remains the first step toward digital empowerment.

Through celebrations like this, Knls reaffirms its commitment to promoting reading, learning, and personal growth across Kenya. By combining physical library services with digital platforms, the organization continues to inspire communities, empower learners, and shape a future where knowledge knows no boundaries.

Kenya Leads Globally in AI Consumption: Harnessing Technology for Innovation and Growth

On 1st September 2025, Knls participated in the AI Summit held at AC Mtaani, where it was highlighted that Kenya is ranked number one globally in AI consumption, marking a remarkable milestone in the country's technological advancement. This achievement reflects the growing adoption of artificial intelligence across industries, communities, and educational institutions, signaling Kenya's readiness to embrace a digital future.

While this ranking is a significant accomplishment, the summit also emphasized a key question: Are organizations and institutions effectively leveraging AI to drive strategy, innovation, and productivity? Knls underscored that adopting technology alone is not sufficient. To create real impact, organizations must rethink how they work, learn, and grow by integrating AI-powered tools and insights into decision-making processes, learning environments, and service delivery.

The discussions at the summit highlighted the potential of AI to transform education, research, library services, and public engagement. From automating routine tasks to providing advanced analytics for better decision-making, AI offers opportunities for organizations to operate more efficiently while creating new ways to serve communities and foster innovation.

This conversation was particularly timely as Knls deepened its partnership with the U.S. Embassy through the establishment of the American Corner Mtaani. The hub serves as a centre for innovation, learning, and collaboration, providing students, innovators, and community members with access to knowledge, training, and AI-powered resources. By combining access to cutting-edge technology with learning initiatives, the American Corner encourages experimentation, creativity, and the practical application of AI tools in solving real-world problems.

Through participation in events like the AI Summit, Knls continues to highlight the importance of harnessing technology not just for adoption but for transformation. By embracing AI strategically, organizations can unlock new opportunities for growth, innovation, and community impact, ensuring that Kenya's leadership in AI consumption translates into meaningful and lasting value for its people.



Empowering Survivors Through Art: Healing, Resilience, and Transformation

Madam Betty Kalugho, Director of Preservation, Conservation and Publication, delivered a powerful keynote address at a two-day immersive art exhibition and workshop held at the Buruburu Facility. The event, organized in partnership with Wanjiku Creative Spaces, brought together women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence to explore healing, resilience, and self-expression through art.

The exhibition and workshop offered participants a safe and supportive environment to engage in creative activities, share personal experiences, and express themselves through various art forms. By combining art with dialogue and mentorship, the event emphasized the transformative potential of creativity as a tool for emotional recovery, empowerment, and personal growth.

Over the two days, participants were guided through interactive sessions that encouraged reflection, storytelling, and experimentation with different artistic mediums. These sessions allowed survivors to channel their emotions into tangible works of art, fostering a sense of accomplishment, confidence, and community. The event also highlighted the importance of psychosocial support and peer learning in helping survivors reclaim their voices and build resilience.

In her keynote, Madam Kalugho underscored the role of creative spaces in promoting healing, social inclusion, and empowerment. She emphasized that initiatives like this not only nurture individual growth but also contribute to community transformation by providing survivors with opportunities to reconnect, inspire one another, and develop skills that extend beyond the workshop.

Through partnerships such as this with Wanjiku Creative Spaces, Knls continues to champion innovative approaches to social inclusion and community development. By integrating art, mentorship, and storytelling, the organization reinforces its commitment to empowering women and girls, promoting emotional well-being, and demonstrating the profound impact that creative expression can have on lives affected by gender-based violence.

This initiative serves as a reminder that art is not only a form of expression but also a powerful medium for healing, resilience, and transformation, offering survivors a pathway to reclaim their strength, voice, and hope for the future.



Celebrating Creativity and Inclusivity: Art Showcase with the Kenya Institute for the Blind

On 25th August 2025, Knls celebrated its long-standing partnership with the Kenya Institute for the Blind through a vibrant Art Showcase held at the Hadithi Auditorium. The event was a beautiful display of talent, creativity, and inclusivity, bringing together artists, learners, and community members to celebrate the power of art as a tool for expression and empowerment.

The showcase highlighted the incredible abilities of visually impaired artists, demonstrating that creativity transcends barriers and that art can serve as a platform for inclusion and community engagement. Participants and attendees were treated to an inspiring array of artwork that reflected personal stories, cultural heritage, and innovative techniques, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

This event also emphasized the importance of collaborative initiatives in nurturing talent and creating opportunities for marginalized communities to thrive. Knls and the Kenya Institute for the Blind have consistently worked together to promote learning, access to resources, and inclusive cultural experiences, ensuring that everyone has the chance to explore their potential and share their creativity with the wider community.

Through celebrations like this, Knls reaffirms its commitment to fostering inclusive spaces, promoting artistic expression, and empowering individuals to develop confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. The Art Showcase at Hadithi Auditorium was not only a celebration of art but also a testament to what can be achieved when partnerships focus on talent, inclusion, and the transformative power of creativity.



Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee Visits Knls for Benchmarking and Collaboration

Knls had the honor of hosting the Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee for a benchmarking visit, providing an opportunity to showcase the organization's role in promoting information access, literacy, and digital innovation in library services. The visit highlighted the wide range of services and initiatives Knls offers, from traditional library resources to advanced digital platforms and innovative knowledge solutions.

During the engagement, committee members explored how Knls leverages technology to enhance access to information, support learning, and foster a culture of reading across communities. The discussions also focused on strategies for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strengthening institutional partnerships to advance education and literacy nationwide.

This benchmarking visit reinforced Knls's commitment to supporting policymakers, educational institutions, and the public by providing inclusive, accessible, and innovative library services. Through engagements like this, Knls continues to lead in promoting knowledge, empowering communities, and driving sustainable development through information access and literacy initiatives.



Grant Writing Workshop Inspires Innovation at Knls American Corner Mtaani

Knls was honoured to host Mark Burrell, Regional Public Engagement Specialist (REPS) for East Africa, for a Grant Writing Workshop at the American Corner Mtaani. The visit marked the inspiring start of a two-day training led by Fulbright scholar and grant strategist Vashalice Kaaba, aimed at equipping participants with the skills to craft persuasive and purpose-driven grant proposals.

During the workshop, Mark Burrell engaged with the Knls team at Maktaba Kuu, connected with volunteers, and interacted with participants, providing insights on effective storytelling, strategic planning, and leveraging grants for community impact. The sessions encouraged participants to think critically about project design, communication, and creating proposals that resonate with funders.

The training reflected Knls's commitment to building stronger communities through knowledge, collaboration, and capacity development. By empowering participants with practical skills in grant writing, Knls continues to foster innovation, support community-driven initiatives, and promote opportunities for learning and growth across diverse sectors.



Strengthening Global Library Partnerships: Knls Hosts Cultural Counsellor from Iran



Knls had the honour of hosting Dr. Ali Pourmarjan, the Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for a productive engagement on potential collaborations between the National Library of Iran and Knls. The discussions focused on key areas including preservation, cultural exchanges, and knowledge sharing, setting the stage for a strengthened partnership and mutual learning.

The meeting provided an opportunity to explore joint initiatives that will enhance library services, preserve cultural heritage, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the two institutions. Both parties emphasized the importance of collaboration in promoting literacy, cultural understanding, and access to information in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Through engagements like this, Knls continues to build international relationships that support innovation, capacity building, and the sharing of best practices in library and information services, ensuring that communities in Kenya and beyond benefit from enriched learning and cultural experiences. nsuring its independence.

Knls Signs International Partnership to Boost Library Innovation and Knowledge Exchange

Knls officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with San José University and Key Library, marking the start of a transformative collaboration in library innovation, research, and knowledge exchange. The agreement paves the way for joint initiatives that will enhance capacity building, digital access, and global learning opportunities.

This international partnership is set to create platforms for knowledge sharing, collaborative research, and the adoption of innovative library practices that benefit both institutions.





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