

# **KENYA NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**2nd Quarter Newsletter ( October-December 2024)    Issue No: 014**



***Former U.S Ambassador Meg Whitman  
Launches the American Corner Mtaani at  
KNLS, Maktaba Kuu***

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## Celebrating Inclusivity Through Art: World Unseen Photography Exhibition Opens at KNLS

**F**rom December 3rd to 8th, 2024, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), in partnership with Canon Central & North Africa and The Kenya Society for the Blind, proudly hosted the World Unseen Photography Exhibition at Maktaba Kuu, Sanaa Centre.

The exhibition, which coincided with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd, was a groundbreaking showcase of inclusivity, innovation, and the transformative power of technology. Visitors experienced tactile photographs enhanced with braille and audio descriptions, offering a multi-sensory experience that redefined how art can be appreciated by individuals with visual impairments.

The event was celebrated as a significant step toward making art universally accessible. Speaking during the launch, KNLS CEO Dr. Charles Nzivo remarked, "This exhibition demonstrates how creativity and technology can bridge gaps, ensuring that no one is left out of the artistic experience. It's a testament to our commitment to fostering inclusivity in all spaces."

Canon Central & North Africa, known for its innovative imaging solutions, emphasized its dedication to creating meaningful societal impact. Canon Regional Manager highlighted, "This exhibition is a celebration of diversity and the belief that art is a language everyone should experience."

The Kenya Society for the Blind also lauded the initiative, noting how partnerships like this help to amplify awareness about accessibility challenges while showcasing practical solutions.

The World Unseen Photography Exhibition drew diverse audiences, from art enthusiasts and students to individuals with disabilities, all of whom were inspired by the unique approach to showcasing photography. Visitors shared heartfelt feedback, with many describing it as a transformative and thought-provoking experience that deepened their understanding of accessibility and inclusion.

As the exhibition closed on December 8th, it left behind an enduring legacy of the power of collaboration and innovation in building a more inclusive world.



## Former U.S. Ambassador Meg Whitman Launches American Corner Mtaani at KNLS

**O**n 4th November 2024, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) proudly hosted the former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Meg Whitman, for the grand launch of American Corner Mtaani, a dynamic cultural and information hub designed to empower young entrepreneurs and start-ups in Kenya.

The event, also attended by Principal Secretary Ummy Bashir, KNLS CEO Dr. Charles Nzivo, and other distinguished guests, marked a significant milestone in strengthening diplomatic and cultural ties between Kenya and the United States. This partnership underscores a shared commitment to innovation, education, and community development.

American Corner Mtaani is part of the U.S. government's global network of cultural and information centers, providing a collaborative space where Kenya's youth can access valuable resources, training, and mentorship to enhance their entrepreneurial and creative pursuits. Speaking at the event, former Ambassador Whitman emphasized its importance: "American Corner Mtaani represents our shared vision of equipping young people with the tools they need to shape a brighter future. Through this space, we aim to foster innovation, collaboration, and mutual understanding between our nations."

The addition of American Corner Mtaani brings the total number of these centers in Kenya to six, joining others in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, and Lamu. These hubs provide access to educational resources, technology, and events designed to promote creativity and professional growth. Some of the recently hosted activities in the space include;





i)

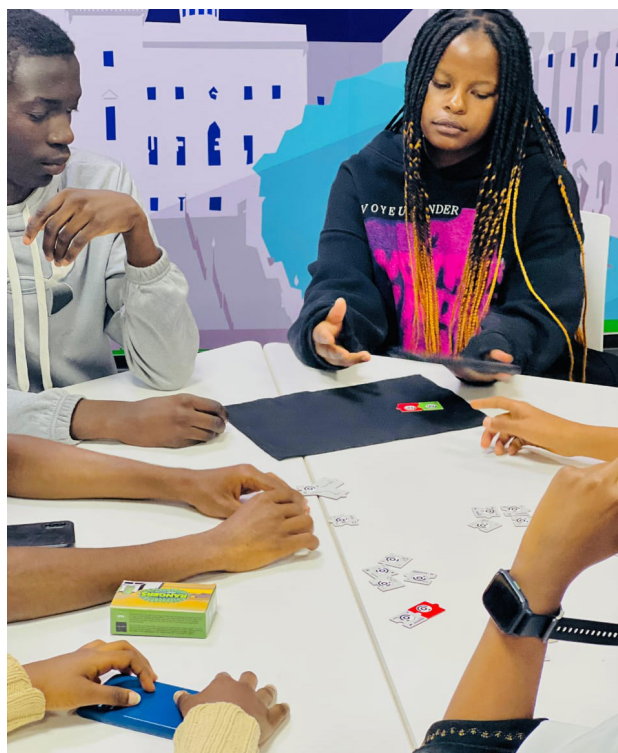
## Young Innovators Shine at AC Mtaani Coding Workshop

On J 28th November 2024, vibrant energy filled AC Mtaani at Maktaba Kuu as young participants aged 9-17 joined an exhilarating coding workshop. This engaging session blended learning with fun, igniting curiosity and creativity in the next generation of innovators.

The workshop provided hands-on opportunities to explore essential coding concepts in a playful yet impactful way. Games and interactive exercises kept the participants actively engaged, fostering their problem-solving and digital literacy skills.

Aligned with our mission and vision to inspire innovation and lifelong learning, the workshop aimed to empower young minds with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world. One of the facilitators shared, "It's incredible to see how quickly these young learners pick up coding concepts when it's presented in a fun and relatable way."

The participants left excited and eager for more, eagerly awaiting the next session. The coding workshops at AC Mtaani are part of an ongoing initiative to cultivate technological skills among young learners and nurture creativity in a supportive environment.



## ii) Flight Lab Workshop Takes Off at American Corner Mtaani

**O**n 14th November 2024, American Corner Mtaani buzzed with excitement as participants gathered for an engaging Flight Lab workshop focused on drone technology. This interactive session provided attendees with a unique, hands-on introduction to the fascinating world of drones.

The workshop delved into the fundamentals of drone technology, exploring its diverse applications and the transformative potential it holds for industries such as agriculture, delivery services, disaster management, and more. Participants, many of whom were beginners, gained valuable insights into how drones operate and their impact on the future.

The session featured practical demonstrations, allowing attendees to experience the thrill of operating drones firsthand. The hands-on approach and engaging delivery by facilitators ensured a fun and educational experience for all.

One participant shared their enthusiasm: "I've always been curious about drones, but this workshop made the technology feel approachable and exciting. I can't wait to explore more!"

The success of the Flight Lab workshop reflects American Corner Mtaani's commitment to offering innovative programs that inspire learning and creativity.

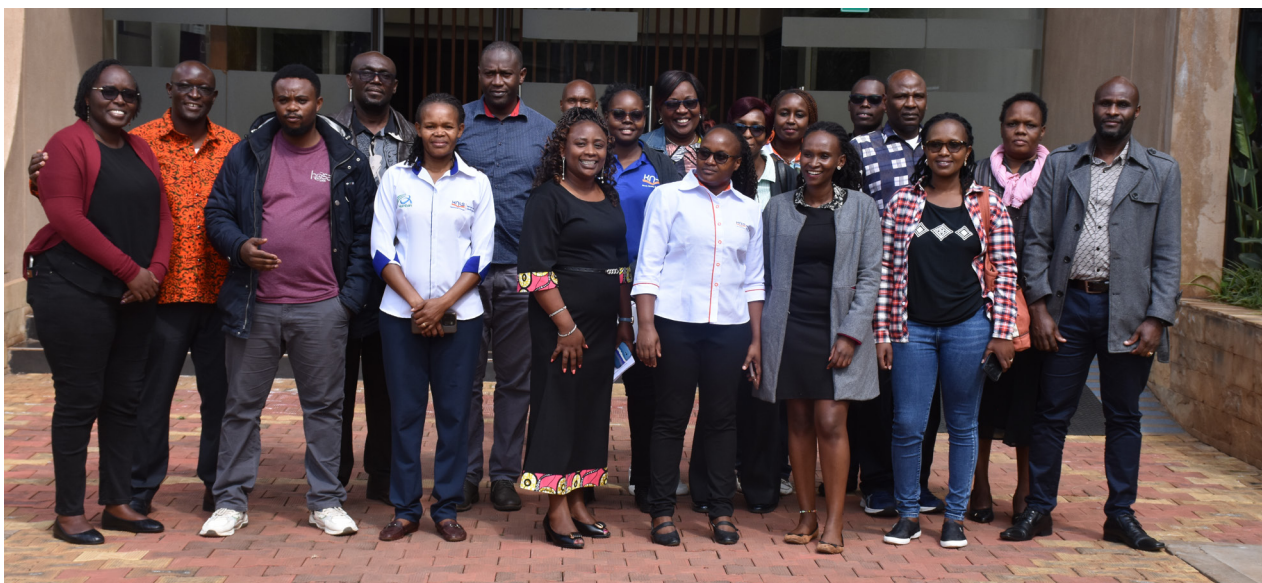
On 11th December 2024, KNLS Buruburu Library hosted the American Corner Mtaani Outreach Event, aimed at inspiring youth aged between 13 and 35 with hands-on experiences in cutting-edge technologies. The event featured exciting workshops on Robotics, 3D Printing, Virtual Reality, Drone Technology, and Coding, offering participants a unique opportunity to explore the world of tech and innovation.

Attendees were able to engage with experts, learn new skills, and connect with other like-minded individuals passionate about technology. The event was designed to empower the next generation, equipping them with valuable insights and practical knowledge. Whether students or curious tech enthusiasts, the attendees left inspired and ready to explore more in the ever-evolving tech landscape.





## The Fifth Librarians & Archivists Gathering at Kenya National Library Service



**T**he Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) hosted the Fifth Librarians & Archivists Gathering in November 2024, a key forum fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing in library and archival sectors. Launched in August 2023 by Dr. Kyama Mugambi of Yale University's Divinity School, the gathering has grown into a vital platform for addressing challenges in physical and digital domains.

The latest event focused on Appraisal and Survey of Records, emphasizing the importance of identifying, preserving, and managing vital records. Participants discussed effective record appraisals, best practices in records management, and standards for libraries and archives. Challenges such as limited resources and training gaps were also explored.

KNLS showcased its innovative services, including a Data Center for secure digital storage, a Digitization Lab to convert physical materials into digital formats, and a Virtual Library Platform offering diverse resources. These initiatives underline KNLS's commitment to advancing information sharing and modernizing libraries in Kenya.

The gathering concluded with participants inspired to address sector challenges, leverage emerging opportunities, and drive progress in libraries and archives. KNLS's leadership continues to shape the future of information access and preservation in the country.



## Eco Kite Festival at Ngong Hills: A Day of Fun and Sustainability



**T**he Eco Kite Festival, held on 16th November at Ngong Hills, celebrated both creativity and sustainability. This year's theme, "Have Fun Recycling," encouraged participants to craft kites using recycled materials, promoting eco-friendly practices.

The event was a wonderful fusion of nature, fun, and environmental consciousness, as families and friends gathered to enjoy a day of flying kites against the stunning backdrop of Ngong Hills. By incorporating recycled materials, the event highlighted the importance of sustainable living while offering an unforgettable experience for attendees, reinforcing the message of environmental responsibility in a fun and creative way.

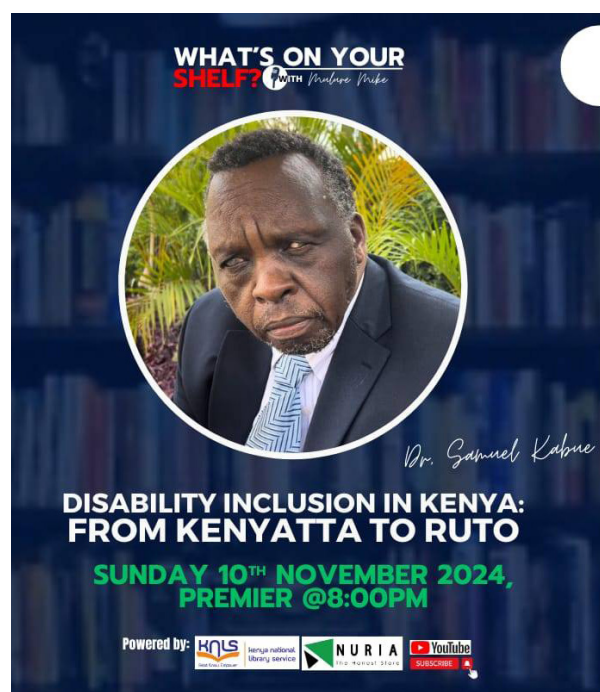
## What's on Your Shelf Podcast: A Special Episode on Disability Inclusion in Kenya

**I**n a special episode of the #WhatsOnYourShelf podcast, KNLS took a deep dive into Kenya's progress towards disability inclusion, with a conversation featuring Dr. Samuel Kabue, a renowned disability rights advocate.

Dr. Kabue shared his perspectives on the evolution of disability inclusion in Kenya, particularly under the leadership of five Kenyan presidents.

With over 40 years of experience, Dr. Kabue discussed the advancements in disability legislation, such as the Persons with Disabilities Act, and the vital role of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

This thought-provoking episode highlighted Kenya's position as a leader in disability rights within the African context, marking significant milestones in social inclusion.





## KNLS Delegation Visits National Library of China

On 8th November 2024, a delegation from KNLS, led by Chairman Bishop Robert Theuri, visited the National Library of China as part of their participation in the “Digital Culture Construction for the ‘Belt and Road’ Countries” seminar. The visit provided valuable insights into China’s innovative strategies in the digital library sector. During the tour, KNLS explored how digital technology is used to enhance library services and preserve cultural heritage. This collaboration between Kenya and China is a promising step toward strengthening global partnerships in preserving and sharing cultural knowledge.



## Likizo Reading Buddies Challenge: A Holiday Reading Adventure

KNLS in partnership with Worldreader, kicked off the Likizo Reading Buddies Challenge, an exciting holiday reading adventure for kids aged 3 to 12. This engaging initiative invites young readers to participate in weekly quizzes every Friday, where they can win prizes such as shopping vouchers, movie tickets, and data bundles. The challenge encourages children to explore books across various age groups and helps nurture a love for reading during the festive season. Parents showing top engagement and consistency will also be rewarded with grand prizes, including shopping vouchers and e-readers. The challenge aims to make this holiday season the best reading experience for children across Kenya.

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## Mashujaa Wa Kusoma Awards: Celebrating Young Reading Heroes

**O**n 21st October 2024, KNLS in partnership with Worldreader, celebrated the young readers who excelled in the Mashujaa Wa Kusoma Awards. The standout achiever was Racheal Nafula, an 11-year-old from Kibera School for Girls, who read an impressive 1,178 books in just three months.

This inspiring achievement highlighted the transformative power of literacy and the importance of libraries in shaping young minds. The event also showcased the role of digital tools, like the Worldreader BookSmart app, in facilitating access to books and fostering a culture of reading in Kenya. This celebration reinforced the message that reading has the power to change lives and inspire future generations.





## Get-Kreatives 2024 Workshop: Empowering African Youth through Photography and Digital Storytelling



In partnership with Kreative Foundation, KNLS hosted the Get-Kreatives 2024 Workshop, offering African youth an incredible opportunity to enhance their photography and digital storytelling skills.

Held from 14th to 18th October, the workshop provided participants with hands-on experience in planning and executing personal photography projects. They learned the art of visual storytelling and how to engage communities through their work. The workshop culminated in a public exhibition, allowing participants to showcase their creative projects..

## KNLS Donates 2,500 Books to Garissa Libraries

On 4th October 2024, KNLS, in partnership with Book Aid International, donated 2,500 books to the County Government of Garissa. The donation is part of KNLS's ongoing efforts to support libraries in post-devolution Kenya. These books will benefit libraries in Garissa, Mbalambala, and Masalani, helping to strengthen the county's library infrastructure and promote literacy.

The donation event was attended by the County Chief Officer for Information & Library Services, Madam Nimo Bashow, and KNLS Director of Acquisition and Distribution, Madam Philomena Mwirigi. The donation represents a significant step in KNLS's mission to expand access to knowledge and promote lifelong learning across the country.



## Transforming Lives at Ngewa Autism Center: KNLS, Nation Media Foundation, and Worldreader Join Hands

**O**n 13th December 2024, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), in partnership with the Nation Media Foundation and Worldreader, made a significant impact at the Ngewa Autism Center with a generous donation of books, e-readers, food, and diapers.

This initiative was aimed at empowering the children at the center by providing them with resources that inspire learning and creativity. The e-readers, provided through Worldreader's innovative digital library platform, give children with autism access to a world of stories and educational content, enhancing their cognitive development and communication skills in an accessible way.

The donation also addressed immediate needs, with food and diapers helping to support caregivers and families, reducing stress and allowing them to focus on the well-being and development of the children.

This collaboration highlights the power of community partnerships in driving social change, with KNLS, Nation Media Foundation, and Worldreader working together to foster inclusivity, education, and support for children with autism. Their collective efforts are creating a brighter future for the children at Ngewa Autism Center and helping to shape a more compassionate and educated society.





## Cohort 6 Graduates from KNLS Basic Computer Skills Training



On 21st October 2024, the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) kicked off the Basic Computer Skills Training for Cohort 6, welcoming individuals eager to enhance their digital literacy. This inclusive program, designed for beginners, provided participants with essential skills such as internet navigation, document processing, and online safety, empowering them to navigate the digital world with confidence.

After weeks of dedicated learning, 48 participants successfully graduated, marking the completion of this transformative journey. The training emphasized inclusivity and practical knowledge, equipping learners with tools to thrive in both personal and professional settings.

## Empowering Knowledge: Interview with Dr. Charles Nzivo, CEO of KNLS

In an exclusive interview, Dr. Charles Nzivo, CEO of KNLS, shared his vision for empowering communities through knowledge and the transformative role of libraries in the digital age. Dr. Nzivo discussed how KNLS's innovative programs, such as digitization efforts and the Virtual Library Platform, are shaping the future of learning in Kenya. He also highlighted the importance of literacy and knowledge in Kenya's development, emphasizing the role of libraries in equipping individuals with the tools to succeed. The interview, featured by Parents Magazine, provided an insightful look into how KNLS is at the forefront of creating a knowledge-based society in Kenya. Special thanks to Parents Magazine for featuring this inspiring conversation! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5eHCQ-C5o0&t=8s>







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