



COLAU

Community Libraries Association Of Uganda

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2nd Edition



Welcome to COLAU's biannual newsletter! You'll get bi-annual updates on what's going on in the Community libraries ecosystem, projects, activities, partnerships and upcoming events.

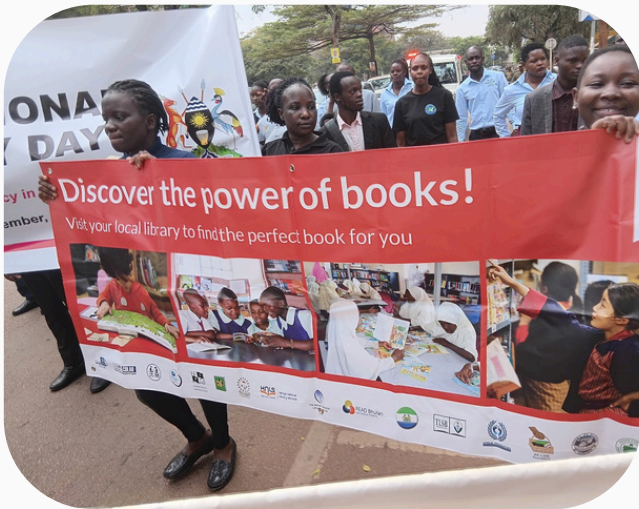
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*Merry
Christmas*

International Literacy Day Celebrations: COLAU



International Literacy day March in Kampala city.



Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo bending over to speak to some of the children at the Presidential auditorium in Kampala.

This year, COLAU joined the country in the National Literacy day celebrations at the Presidential auditorium, in Kampala.

The day started with a march from the Ministry of Gender to the main venue and was followed by a day-long symposium.

With support from Book Aid International, COLAU was able to support participants to attend the event and also exhibit some of the services and activities they carry out at their libraries to enhance digital literacy in their communities in line with this year's theme, "Literacy in a Digital Era."

The Centre for Youth Driven Development Initiatives showcased digital resources used in their literacy development activities that include; tablets and a RACHEL gadget from the Uganda Community Knowledge Project. The latter gives off a WiFi signal for access to numerous information materials over several terminal devices. It was exciting to see children engage in activities such as reading aloud, painting and individual reading among others.

The Minister of State for Gender and Culture Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuzo graced the event and visited the exhibitors' stalls.

International Literacy Day Celebrations: Member Libraries

Kawempe Youth Centre (KYC)

Other celebrations, courtesy of Book Aid International, were held at Kawempe Youth Centre in partnership with Famy Primary school. Children enjoyed a series of activities such as balloon spelling games, information for young adults on digital platforms available to enhance their education, read-alouds, and sessions on how to care for books.



One of the staff at KYC reading aloud to the children on how to take care of books.



Some of the children, school staff and KYC library volunteers pose for a photo after the activities.

Centre for Children and Library Foundation (CECLIF)

Centre for Children and Library Foundation (CECLIF) is located in Abwanget, Katakwi district in Eastern Uganda. The children in the community spent their time at the Library on International Literacy Day 2025.



Children at Centre for Children and Library Foundation (CECLIF)



International Literacy Day Celebrations: Member Libraries

Mummy Foundation Library

Mummy Foundation celebrated literacy with refugees, to show unity and connection under the theme “Every child a reader, Every story a home”. This was coupled up with independence day celebrations.



Pupils reading out aloud to fellow students at Mummy Foundation Library

Other COLAU member libraries that commemorated the literacy day celebrations were; Nyarushanje Community Library, Amuno Rural Hub-COLAU's latest member library and Mukasa Foundation Community Library.

In the latter, learners of Mukasa Foundation Nursery and Primary school, the adult learning class of Mukasa foundation Community Library, Guests from Ryan Okello Foundation Kenya, community leaders and Mukasa foundation community joined the rest of the world to celebrate and actively participate in celebrating this year's International Literacy Day through reading, reciting poems, singing, loud story-telling and tree planting for environment conservation.



Children and parents at Mukasa Foundation



Children at Amuno Rural Hub engaged in individual reading

Librarians Capacity Building: by COLAU in partnership with Goethe-Zentrum Kampala:

COLAU partnered with the Goethe-Zentrum Library to carry out a 4 days capacity building exercise for 11 librarians representing 6 community libraries. For each of the 4 days, topics discussed were; Collection Development, Book Processing, Automation of library services and social media marketing, respectively.



Participants pose for a group photo with Goethe-Zentrum Library staff at the end of the training.

Most of the community libraries are founded by individuals who are not necessarily trained librarians but they are extremely passionate about literacy and community transformation in their communities.

This training came in handy as it introduced the participants to the basic library management practices.

We look forward to having more of these trainings in the different regions in Uganda.



Esther Kyazike, the Director of Kawempe Youth Centre and Treasurer of COLAU taking participants through the collection development session.

Librarians in Tech Event:

COLAU hosted the Librarians in Tech online event with support from Library Aid Africa.

The online event attracted over 40 participants who registered for it. About 27 librarians attended and they learnt about emerging trends in library science and the importance of tech in the library ecosystem.

We look forward to having many more online and physical events next year.



Activities in COLAU Member Libraries

Nyungu Streams Community

Resource Centre:

Nyungu Streams Community Resource Centre is a community library in Sheema District in Western Uganda. This library serves the community through providing space for all age groups to read, a play area for children, computer training, a Read Aloud and mental health space, and outreach activities among others.

Last year, under the Uganda Community Knowledge Project supported by Book Aid International through COLAU, they received about 10 tablets and a RACHEL gadget that gives out a WiFi signal to access numerous information materials such as ebooks, videos and audios. These have greatly enhanced their reading activities at the library and in the Community amongst the schools they work with.



Children at Nyungu Streams Community Resource Centre watching videos on the tabs.



Read to Learn Foundation:

Read to Learn Foundation is an indigenous Ugandan women-led nonprofit organization committed to early literacy development. They create community-driven and community-led interventions that ensure every child, regardless of their socio-economic background, has access to quality educational resources.

Amongst their programs is the Literacy Champions Fellowship, in which they equip 13 to 18-year-olds to lead literacy initiatives in underserved communities (community libraries, slums, refugee settlements, and public schools).



A literacy Champion taking pupils through literacy sessions.

Activities in COLAU Member Libraries

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Activities in COLAU Member Libraries



Children at Motherly Heart Organisation's
Community Children's Library

Newest COLAU Member:

Motherly Heart organisation was founded in 2023 and operates in Busia district Dabani sub county (close to the Kenyan border). They envision a society where every child and adolescent girl thrives through education and empowerment.

Motherly Heart Organisation's Community Children's Library provides free access to books for children living in rural areas of Busia District. Through reading, children learn to read, read to learn, and gradually improve their literacy skills. In addition to the community library, they carry out reading lessons every week to three Universal Primary Education(UPE) schools that do not have libraries.



This ensures that children in these underserved schools develop a love for reading and are exposed to a rich variety of learning materials in the classroom environment.

The activities they carry out in their schools and communities keep children engaged, support them to grow from listening during read-aloud to becoming confident independent readers, and significantly improve their academic performance in school. Develop their writing and drawing skills and spark creativity.



A literacy Champion taking pupils
through literacy sessions.

Activities in COLAU Member Libraries & the Secretariat



Some of the Reading Promotion volunteers watching an educational video at Nyarushanje Community Library

Nyarushanje Community Library:

Nyarushanje Community Library and Empowerment Center identifies and trains Reading Promotion Volunteers (RPVs). Reading Promotion Volunteers (RPVs) are community based school going children, youth and students who are trained to guide and support other children and promote reading at school, community and household level.

Busesa Community Library:

Busesa Community Library is located in Eastern Uganda on Bugiri Road. This library serves the community through a variety of services ranging from a children's clinic, modern library services, computer literacy and music dance and drama among others.



Children reading at Busesa Community Library

A BOOK IS A GIFT
YOU CAN OPEN
AGAIN AND AGAIN.

—CARLETON KELLOR

The 6 Community Libraries:

The 6 community libraries serves the community through; library services, Information Communication Technologies and outreach services. Below is a photo of an American peacecorp teacher training pupils of Nakoola Primary School to use computers.



Children during a computer literacy lesson at The 6 Community Libraries.

Malaika Children's Mobile Library.

Ms. Rosey Sembatya, the founders of Malaika Children's mobile library that runs in communities and schools paid a courtesy visit to COLAU and donated a copy of her book titled, "Where Can I Start?" A Guide to sexual reproductive health talks to young people. COLAU appreciates this kindness & generosity.



Catherine Amia, the COLAU Coordinator receives Ms. Rosey's book.

Activities in COLAU Member Libraries



Graduants from Kawempe Youth Centre ATC

Kawempe Youth Centre

A library is more than books & shelves. It is a space for knowledge & skills acquisition. On 11th December, a number of students who were taking online courses such as Foundations of Software Development, Cyber Security and Cloud Computing among others, graduated with certificates in their respective courses. One of our members who also doubles as a host for our secretariat had 9 students graduating with a Certificate in Foundations of Software Development at the National ICT Centre in Nakawa, from the Refactory Academy under the ReFactory 10X program. They gained skills in entrepreneurship, website development using HTML, CSS & Creating Content management Systems using Woo Commerce platforms such as Elementor & Word Press.

Hope Institute Uganda-Bugodi Community Library (Mayuge)

We are changing generations through literacy by embracing the following activities:

- Reading Everyday(That's our motto).
- Training community people digital literacy.
- Weekly devotion through bible reading, preaching and teaching through religious movies on projectors.
- Training children chess game to attain critical thinking, football, netball, basketball etc.
- Reading and Spelling bee competitions with little motivational gifts to children.
- After school Mathematics classes.

Julius Kay Mulebi



ICT Training at Bugodi Community Library

Activities in COLAU Member Libraries

Buganda Kingdom Library

Buganda Kingdom Library is Located directly opposite the main gate of the Kabaka's Palace and in close proximity to Butikkiro. It stands as a distinguished centre of reading, learning and research, with a pivotal role of preserving Buganda's cultural and historical legacy while fostering learning from a global perspective.

At the heart of this library is its rich and diverse collection, designed to cater to scholars, students and general readers alike. While it houses authoritative works on Buganda's history, governance and cultural traditions, the library also offers comprehensive collections spanning Uganda, Africa and the wider world. A few notable sections include:

- Buganda/Luganda literature.
- Juvenile and children's fiction to foster early reading habits.
- Adult fiction, catering to literature enthusiasts.
- Biographies, psychology, economics, history and geography.
- African stories and women's interest.
- Encyclopedias and reference materials to support rigorous research.

Beyond being a traditional library, the space functions as a specialized research centre serving students, cultural scholars, writers, and visitors seeking verified and well-documented information on Buganda and beyond. Access to the collection is structured to support serious study and academic inquiry, ensuring that users engage with reliable sources that uphold historical accuracy and cultural integrity.



Buganda Kingdom Library

Most importantly, the Buganda Kingdom Library has evolved into a dynamic space for interaction and collaboration whereby, visitors frequently use the library not only for research, but also to meet colleagues, exchange ideas and forming new professional connections. This organic interaction has enhanced the library's role as a hub for informed discussion and intellectual exchange within the cultural and academic community.

The facility further offers ample, well-organized space designed to accommodate a range of activities like book launches, book club sessions, training workshops, engagement meetings, board meetings and other knowledge-driven functions.

Therefore, by combining local heritage preservation with international knowledge resources, the Buganda Kingdom Library continues to be a space where the past, present and future of learning intersect.

By Allan Twesige

Activities in COLAU Member Libraries

Echo Rural Arise Africa

Echo Rural Arise Africa is a rural, last-mile reaching organization committed to reaching communities vulnerable to trafficking, poverty, and educational deprivation. ERAA's mission is to strengthen literacy, promote safe learning environments, and narrow skills gaps among children and youth in remote communities. Our work primarily revolves around community rooted literacy interventions empowering children, families, and educators to value reading as a pathway to opportunity. We implement what we call the ERAA Community Reading Zones model: A Literacy centered activities including: Guided reading sessions, Arts & crafts, Pal-Pale letter-writing, Read2Spell Challenges, Debates and public-speaking activities, Family Reading Days. In the last mile schools and communities, catalyzing literacy as a community wide practice, Strengthening safe, meaningful engagement for children and youth. Our little endeavors are extended in four districts as we close 2025, Budaka & Luuka districts in Eastern Uganda, Semuto-Kapeeka Central Uganda and Kigyende village Mitooma district in Western Uganda, With in the year our involvements from phone calls, travelling community meetings schools and church visits community service and celebrations as pictured below within different locations but same vision.

By Emmanuel Birigwa



Activities at Echo Rural Arise Africa

Activities at the COLAU Secretariat

Quarterly Board Meeting at the COLAU Secretariat.

The COLAU board had their quarterly meeting to discuss the progress this year and also plan for activities next year. The discussions were very fruitful and among the proposed activities is a knowledge sharing webinar that is scheduled to take place on Friday, 5th December 2025.



Some of the Board members who were present during the quarterly Board meeting at the secretariat. On the right is an e-poster that was created for the Online Knowledge sharing webinar.

Visit from the Buganda Kingdom Library.

Buganda Kingdom Library paid a courtesy visit to the Community Libraries Association of Uganda for a strategic engagement focused on strengthening library services and exploring areas of collaboration. This library is under the Buganda Heritage and Tourism Board, and will soon become one of the newest members of COLAU. It is working towards setting up satellite libraries in various chiefdoms of Buganda kingdom. We shall collaborate around this area and others to come.



The COLAU Board chairman, Dennis and the Brian, the Head of marketing at the Buganda Heritage and Tourism Board.

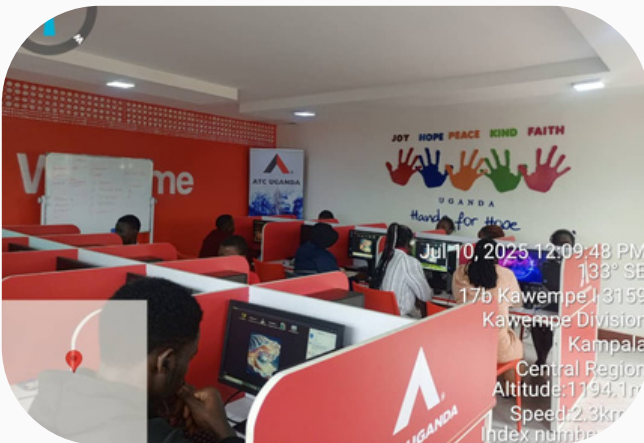


COLAU representatives represented by 2 board members & the Coordinator pose for a group photo with the staff from the Buganda Kingdom Library.

PICTORIAL



On the left, Children at the Buganda Kingdom Library and on the right, a user picking a book from the shelf at the same library.



Digital skills training at Kawempe Youth Centre ATC



An outreach activity in one of the schools Nyungu Streams Community Resource Centre works with.



Christmas party at Tusome Children's Resource Centre



After school lessons for students within the Bugodi Community Library vicinity



DONOR & PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

FRIENDS OF AFRICAN VILLAGE (FAVL)

It was so lovely to host Prof. Kate Parry, one of the founders of the Community Libraries Association of Uganda, and the Executive Director of Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL), East African region.

FAVL runs an active blog on which they share impactful stories of the libraries they support in Africa.

Here is a link to the FAVL blog: <https://fav1.org/>



UBONGO

Ubongo is the proprietor of Akili and Me, a children's educational cartoon that is broadcasted on YouTube and the Uganda Broadcasting services. Some of the community libraries share videos from Ubongo with their users such as children and teachers to supplement the book resources they provide.

A team from Ubongo visited the COLAU secretariat to share how they can distribute more of their content to other community libraries and schools across Uganda.



Representatives from Ubongo meet at the secretariat with the COLAU Coordinator.

Fun Christmas Activities

Kid's Christmas Word Scrambles

1. nstaa _____
2. rdeainer _____
3. fel _____
4. wsonman _____
5. rtee _____
6. resntsep _____
7. cskoitng _____
8. oletmiset _____
9. iselgh _____
10. otsrnenma _____
11. sebl _____
12. rats _____
13. lloyh _____
14. ahtwer _____
15. enydc naec _____



Partnership Highlight

COLAU continues to appreciate our partners and donors such as FAVL for support with administration costs and Book Aid International for the extension of the Uganda Knowledge Project for 6 more months through mini grants to 5 libraries to carry out outreach activities in their communities. The Books to Go project and Discovery Book Boxes that shall be launched next year in schools.

Further more, we also appreciate the National Library of Uganda and Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) for the computer donations to 31 community libraries so far. The computers are greatly enhancing ICT services in these libraries.

Read to Learn Foundation is also appreciated for the Literacy champions program which is being implemented in about 10 libraries. In this program, young people are empowered with literacy skills to be advocates in their communities by organizing literacy activities in their communities.

Ubongo Kids is a new partner that availed COLAU with a drive containing numerous educational videos to share with members. These shall be shared during library visits to boast on the information resources that libraries already have.

Special thanks to the Goethe-Zentrum Library, Kampala for the incredible partnership under which we carried out the capacity building exercise for 11 librarians.

We look forward to continuing working with you all, and our new potential partners (KEY libraries, Feed to Dream Foundation, ALVA AF & the British Council).

