

# 2025 Annual Report



EXPANDING HORIZONS



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# REFLECTIONS FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



Left Mainess Chilumbwa, co-founder, Cente Dr.Anja, Gutenberg University,  
Right Nachizo Manza, co-founder

First of all, we turned 10. Ten whole years! My heart is filled with gratitude as I reflect on this milestone. The past decade has been a journey of learning, lesson after lesson that has helped shape our growth in many ways.

Even with very limited resources, we were still able to expand our work. In 2024, we introduced three new programmes, and in 2025, we began implementing projects under two of them: the School Leaver Volunteer Project and the Health and Wellness Education Project. These initiatives now complement our ongoing Literacy and Education Program, helping us support children and young people in more holistic ways.

Another highlight of the year was when our co-founders represented the organization at a symposium titled “Celebrating African Literature Libraries” at Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. During the event, we had the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and organizations who are also working to build and strengthen collections of African literature across the continent. For me, this moment reinforced something we have always believed in: the importance of putting books into the hands of children that truly resonate with them. Books written by African authors for African children, stories that reflect their lived experiences, places they recognize, and names that feel familiar.

In 2025, we also surpassed our visitation target, increasing the number of visits to our library by 50.5% compared to 2024. With 13,129 visits, we exceeded our goal of 10,000. Of these visits, 7,075 were from boys and 6,054 from girls. While we are encouraged by the strong turnout, we observed that boys accounted for 7.8 percentage points more visits than girls. Understanding the reasons behind this gap, and exploring how we can encourage more balanced participation, will be one of our goals for 2026. Reaching and exceeding our target was largely made possible by our strong outreach to local schools, parents, and the wider community.

Of course, some challenges remain. Like in previous years, we continue to face limited space for our activities, an unbalanced patron-to-staff ratio, employee turnover, electricity cuts, and insufficient funding to run our programs as efficiently as we would like.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to our mission and we are grateful to everyone who continues to believe in and support our work at Natubelenge Children’s Library.

Warm Regards,

Mainess N. Chilumbwa  
Co-founder/ Managing Director

# OUR 2024 IMPACT

## Learning through play Interactions

Girls: 3,106  
Boys: 4059

7,165

## Number of library visits

13,129

Girls: 6,054  
Boys: 7,075

## Children Reached

4,376

### Access to Educational Resources

Seventeen-year-old Prosper Daka, a Form 2 pupil, began visiting the library in May 2025, and he quickly became a familiar face. From personal study sessions to lively Friday chess games and health and wellness programs, Prosper has come to view the library as more than just a place to read.

When asked about his reading journey, Prosper shared honestly that while he can read well, comprehending some information can still be challenging. What has made the biggest difference, he says, is asking for assistance from library staff and taking the time to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. "It helps me understand better," he explained.

Prosper also spoke about how valuable the library has been, especially with the introduction of Zambia's new Competency-Based Curriculum, which many schools are still adjusting to without textbooks. "Having access to books and other learning materials at the library has made it easier for me to complete assignments and research my school projects", he added.



## Targeted Intervention

“When my eight-year-old daughter, Sarah, joined the Lit for Life Literacy Program at the library, she couldn’t even write her own name. Like many schools in our area, her school is overcrowded, and it was hard for her to get the individual attention she needed. But things began to change when she started attending the literacy classes at the library. Little by little, she grew more confident. She learned to read. She learned to write.

Today, Sarah reads the Bible at home and even leads our family prayers, something she was not able to do before. Her progress at school has been just as encouraging. She recently came third in her class, and we are very happy.

As her father, I’m grateful to the literacy program for allowing my daughter to learn how to read and write. It has truly changed her life. I will continue encouraging her to take part in the library’s programs because I have seen the difference they make.” - **Mr. Manda**



## Impact Summary

Our programmes continue to evolve in response to the needs of the children and families we serve. Creating more opportunities for children to learn about topics that directly affect their well-being.

Throughout the year, we hosted health professionals to lead interactive sessions during important global health awareness days, including World Mental Health Day, World Toilet Day, World Oral Health Day, and Menstrual Hygiene Day. These sessions provided safe spaces for children to ask questions and learn about issues that are often difficult to discuss openly. Since introducing these conversations, we have noticed encouraging changes. More children are now willing to speak openly about their feelings and ask questions about their health, something that was rarely observed before.

Toward the end of 2025, we also received a generous donation of laptops and tablets from Labdoo, an organization in Germany. This support has made it possible for us to begin preparing for the launch of our Digital Literacy Project, which is scheduled to start in March 2026. The project will equip school leavers with essential digital skills for learning, employment, and entrepreneurship.



## About Our Programmes

Alongside our Literacy and Education Programme, we made steady progress in strengthening three additional programme areas: Health and Wellness, Skills and Career Development, and our Volunteer Programme, allowing us to support children and young people in more holistic ways.



## Accomplishments and Challenges

### Accomplishments

- We partnered with new organisations throughout the year, a move that enhanced our service delivery in our various programmes .

-Labdoo  
 -Birdwatch Zambia  
 -Calendonian Society Trust  
 -Wald Schafft Zukunft  
 -Chilenje Level one Hospital  
 -Dazzling Dental Clinic  
 -American International school of Lusaka.

- We introduced two new projects.
- We exceeded our target of 10,000 visits

### Challenges encountered in 2025:

- Limited space for activities, especially during rainy season.
- Inadequate staff
- Insufficient funds to implement some of our programmes.
- Electricity cuts affected library operations.

## 2024 IN NUMBERS

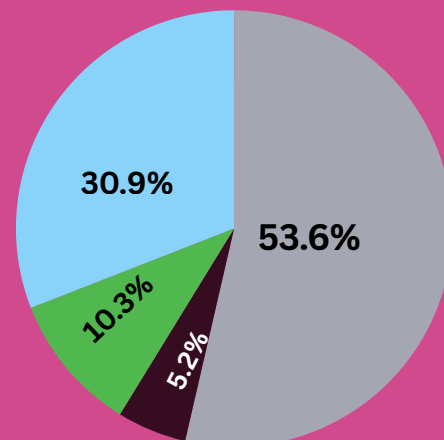
### Income

We received a total of \$10,533 in 2025

- Chinese Embassy in Zambia- \$ 7,407.23
- Wald Schafft Zukunft \$992
- Calendonian Society Trust \$ 520
- Global Giving \$ 654
- Library fees-\$ 689.77

### Expenses

- Admin & Operations
- Volunteer Programme
- Health & Wellness Pro...
- Literacy Programme



# PERMANENT SOLUTIONS: BUILDING MAKENI BRANCH

As we look ahead to 2026, our vision remains rooted in the goals we set in 2025, with continued focus on growth, sustainability, and reaching more children.

A key priority is developing our Makeni branch. We remain hopeful about building a larger, self-sustaining space to serve more young people. This project is part of our long-term commitment to creating permanent educational and recreational spaces in underserved communities. The Makeni branch will help address persistent challenges such as high illiteracy rates, limited access to reliable health information, and a lack of educational resources and capacity-building opportunities.

Within our Literacy and Education Programme, we also hope to host the annual Natubelenge Children's Book Festival on a larger scale to reach more young readers.

At the same time, we plan to introduce at least one new initiative or maintain already existing ones under each of our somewhat new focus areas: Health and Wellness, Skills and Career Development, and the Volunteer Programme. These programmes will complement our core literacy work and allow us to respond more holistically to the needs of the children and communities we serve.

In 2026, we also look forward to welcoming new partnerships with organisations and individuals who share our mission. By working together, we believe we can expand the library's reach and deepen our impact.

## BE PART OF THE CHANGE

To achieve our vision for 2026, we will need your support. Together, we can expand access to educational resources and create meaningful opportunities for children and young people in underserved communities.

At Natubelenge Children's Library, we are eager to work with partners who share our belief in the power of education to transform lives. We welcome collaboration with donor organisations, businesses, embassies, governments, and individuals who are committed to creating positive social change.

We invite you to join us in making a lasting difference where it matters most.

# THANK YOU!

A big shout out to the Chinese Embassy in Zambia who have been our partners for seven years. Partnerships continued to play an important role in our work. In 2025, we collaborated with a diverse group of partners, including dental clinics, international schools, and conservation organizations etc, each uniquely enriching the learning experiences of the children who visit our library.

## Special thanks to our official partners



Chinese Embassy  
in Zambia



Wald schafft Zukunft  
Sambia e.V.



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Free reading session



Learning through play activity



Mental Health session



Parents Vs Children fundraising event

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