

SALB MAKWENZEKE NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- SALB Expands its Collection with 259 New Book Titles
- Breaking New Ground in Accessible Reading: SALB Launches High-Tech Recording Studios in Limpopo and Free State!
- SA Library for the Blind celebrates Library Week



THE IMPORTANCE OF BOOK DONATIONS TO LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND

Book donations to libraries for the blind are vital in expanding access to accessible reading materials, such as braille, audio, and large print formats, which are often costly to produce. These donations help promote literacy, education, and inclusion for persons with visual impairments.

They also support the development of a diverse and enriched collection that meets the varied interests and needs of blind and visually impaired readers.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



"Breaking New Ground in Accessible Reading"

As we close off the 2024/2025 financial year, the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) stands proud – having made bold strides toward a more inclusive, informed, and empowered society.

This quarter marked a historic milestone with the launch of high-tech recording studios in Limpopo and the Free State – powerful tools for amplifying local voices and expanding our accessible audiobook collection.

From pioneering braille training in George to Library Week celebrations that champion human rights, from welcoming 259 new indigenous language titles in quarter four to heartfelt member testimonials during our Valentine's Campaign – every story in this edition reflects our enduring mission: to light the way to knowledge for the blind and visually impaired.

Backed by a transformative Conditional Grant and a passionate team behind this grant, SALB is not only breaking barriers – we're building bridges. We invite you to explore this issue, celebrate with us, and continue supporting our journey toward a truly inclusive reading culture.

Until next quarter—keep turning pages, keep changing lives.

— **Vusumzi Mkhetsane, Editor**

CEO's MESSAGE



“Empowering inclusion, exceeding expectations — SALB continues to lead with purpose, innovation, and impact for the blind community of South Africa.”

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) has concluded the 2024/2025 financial year on a high note, achieving 100% of its performance indicators and targets as outlined in the 2020–2025 Annual Performance Plan. Operationally, all business units exceeded expectations, with a remarkable output that included registering 731 new members, circulating 54,881 books, and adding over 1,100 accessible book titles, reinforcing SALB's mission of equitable access to information.

In 2024/25, we marked transformative progress, including the historic onboarding of the first three blind graduate interns—an important step in promoting inclusion and professional development. SALB also remained active in social cohesion initiatives—donating smart canes, hosting motivational webinars, and supporting both provincial and national library strategies.

Despite challenges such as limited funding, staffing pressures, and the growing demand for services, SALB maintained an unqualified audit and introduced a cost-effective management model, which included staff performance incentives.

We remain firmly committed to a client-centred vision. I express my sincere gratitude to the SALB Management, dedicated SALB Staff, Board, our partners, and donors like the Josie Wood Trust, whose continued support enables us to serve South Africa's blind and visually impaired community with both dignity and innovation.

Dr Pateka Ntshuntshe – Matshaya, SALB CEO

BUSINESS PROCESS LIBRARY SERVICES

SALB Expands its Collection with 259 New Book Titles In the 4th Quarter

By Nosiphiwo Malaku

Bringing Stories Closer to Home, One Language at a Time

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) is proud to announce the addition of 259 new book titles in indigenous languages to its ever-growing collection – a major stride in promoting inclusive reading for informational and leisure purposes.

This exciting development comes as part of the Library's ongoing commitment to diversity, accessibility, and cultural preservation. All newly acquired titles are available in Braille and Audio formats and can be requested by registered members nationwide.

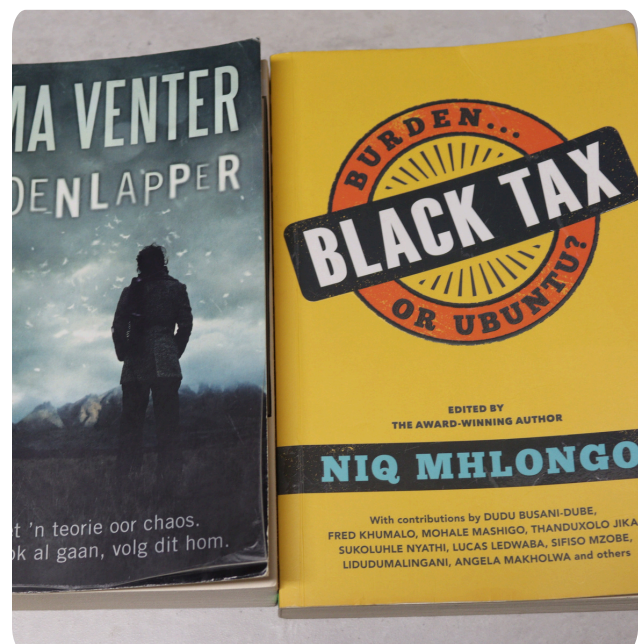
Some standout additions include:

- Black Tax by Nick Mhlongo
- A Scientific Bibliography of Drakensberg, Maloti & Adjacent Lowlands by Rodney Moffett
- Doing Research by K. O. Laetus Lategang
- Skoenlapper by Irma Venter
- Nkgono Mantsopa ke Kwenadifule by Kagiso Kolwane

These titles span a variety of genres and subjects, ensuring that there's something for every reader – from research and history to fiction and folklore.

SALB believes in the power of stories in every language. This expansion reflects our vision of a truly inclusive library that resonates with the diverse voices of our nation.

Members are encouraged to contact the Library to request their preferred titles and explore the rich, multilingual world that awaits them.



BUSINESS PROCESS DONATIONS

SALB Receives Inspiring Book Donation from Award-Winning Author Stan Montsho

By Vusumzi Mkhethshane



The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) is proud to announce the receipt of a generous book donation from celebrated author and publisher, Mr Stan Montsho, founder of Stan Montsho Publishers.

The acclaimed writer contributed three of his standout works to the library's collection: "Tears in My Hands" and "Money Touched Me"—both gripping fiction titles—and the heartfelt nonfiction piece, "Lonely by the Window." These powerful additions reflect Montsho's commitment to storytelling that resonates deeply with readers across backgrounds.

Montsho, a multi-award-winning author, boasts academic achievements from renowned institutions including WITS University, UNISA, and the AAA School of Advertising. His passion for inclusion and social justice is evident in his writing and advocacy. Currently, he is penning a new book dedicated to children with special needs, aiming to challenge and break down the stigma surrounding disability.



SALB extends its heartfelt gratitude to Mr Montsho for his thoughtful contribution, which will go a long way in enriching the reading experience of blind and visually impaired readers across South Africa. In the spirit of this generous gesture, SALB encourages other authors and publishers to follow suit by donating more inclusive literature. The library also calls for volunteers to support the production of books in accessible formats by becoming narrators of indigenous languages to ensure that all communities are represented and empowered through accessible knowledge.

**Together, we can turn pages that
change lives.**

BUSINESS PROCESS LIBRARY SERVICES

SA Library for the Blind celebrates Library Week

By Gcina Ntsaluba

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) celebrated South African Library Week 2025 with a special event held on Thursday in Makhanda to highlight the library's importance for social support and lifelong learning.

The event which aims to promote human rights issues amongst the blind and partially sighted communities was held under the theme "Libraries for Sustainable Communities". "Today's event is particularly significant as we focus on the crucial intersection of human rights and sustainable communities," said Vuyo Mandongana, a senior librarian for Outreach and Member Liaison.

She said that libraries, especially those that serve marginalised communities were essential pillars of sustainable development. "They provide access to resources that empower individuals, promote literacy and foster critical thinking," Mandongana said.

Some of the activities that took place included a South African Human Rights Quiz and a debate where teams from the mini libraries competed against each other in preliminary rounds, with the winners of each preliminary round advancing to a final round.



The mini libraries were represented by Duna library, Kirkwood library, Peddie library and Mdantsane library.

Mandongana also stated that the SALB played a crucial role in ensuring that blind and partially sighted people have equal opportunities to learn, grow and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

"By focusing on human rights, we are addressing the fundamental building blocks of a sustainable community. When everyone's rights are respected and protected, when everyone has access to information and opportunities, we create a society that is truly inclusive and resilient," she said.

Public Relations and Communications Officer for SALB, Vusumzi Mkhethane, said some of the objectives included providing access to information and resources as well as to bridge the gaps in education and information access.



"As we celebrate South African Library Week, it is fitting to acknowledge the human rights of blind and visually impaired individuals in our community. Today's event and discussions were a meaningful reflection of this goal," he said.

Mkhethane explained that some of the expected outcomes from the event include increased awareness and knowledge of South African Human Rights, increased confidence in expressing individual views as well as greater awareness of SALB services.

BUSINESS PROCESS

BRAILLE AND AUDIO PRODUCTION

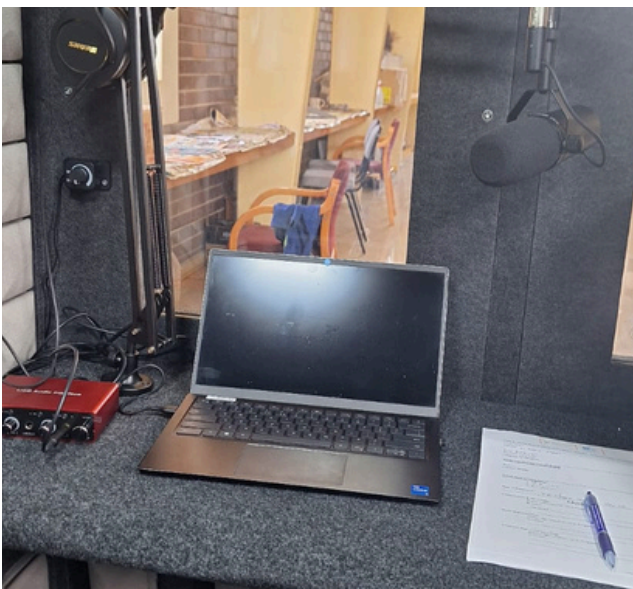
Breaking New Ground in Accessible Reading: SALB Launches High-Tech Recording Studios in Limpopo and Free State!

By Vusumzi Mkhetsane

Empowering Voices, Enhancing Access!

In a groundbreaking move to expand access to reading material for persons who are blind and visually impaired, the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) has proudly launched two brand-new recording studios—strategically located in the Free State and Limpopo provinces.

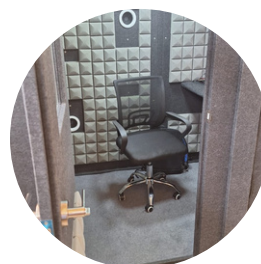
These state-of-the-art studios will act as powerful hubs for the narration of audiobooks, enabling SALB to further enrich its library collection with locally and internationally produced content. More than just rooms with recording gear, these facilities are fitted with top-of-the-line equipment: from LED reading lights and professional-grade microphones to soundproof headphones, ergonomic chairs, and high-end recording interfaces – all designed to provide the best audio experience for narrators and listeners alike.



“Our goal is to bridge the gap in accessible reading, one voice at a time,” said Bongile Matini the Senior Manager for Conditional Grants at SALB. “With these studios, we’re not only bringing books to life but also creating opportunities for community involvement in storytelling for the blind and visually impaired.”



This initiative reflects SALB’s ongoing commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and the power of the spoken word. The new studios are expected to significantly increase the volume and diversity of audio content available to SALB members across the country.



Stay tuned – because every voice matters, and every story deserves to be heard.

BUSINESS PROCESS

BRAILLE AND AUDIO PRODUCTION

SALB HOSTS BRAILLE TRAINING IN GEORGE, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

By Vusumzi Mkhetsane

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) held an exciting Braille training program in George, aimed at promoting literacy and accessibility for blind individuals. Running from March 24 to March 28, 2025, the initiative was set to benefit 12 blind members by equipping them with fundamental Grade 1 Braille knowledge.

The program addressed a growing need in the community, as more individuals are losing their sight later in life and facing limited access to reading and information resources. This training sought to empower such individuals, fostering independence and ensuring they continue to enjoy the benefits of literacy.



The week-long training proved to be a transformative experience, providing participants with essential skills to navigate the world of written communication. By the end of the program, attendees will have gained not only new skills but also the confidence to engage with books and other reading materials using Braille.

To mark the successful completion of the training, a certificate ceremony was held on Friday, 28 March 2025, recognising the achievements of all participants. This initiative is yet another way SALB continues to make a meaningful impact, bridging the literacy gap for the blind community and ensuring that knowledge remains within reach for all.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA

SALB's Valentine's Day Campaign Celebrates the Power of Accessible Reading and Member Love

By Vusumzi Mkhetsane

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) marked this year's Valentine's Day with a heartwarming and impactful campaign that celebrated the love members have for their library. The campaign encouraged members to share how the library has transformed their reading experience, changed their lives through accessible reading materials, and to reflect on their favourite books.

The Valentine's Day Marketing Campaign, which ran throughout February, sparked an overwhelming response from the SALB community across all nine provinces.

The initiative saw video submissions pouring in from members eager to express their gratitude and personal stories of how the library has empowered them through access to braille books, talking books, and other assistive reading formats.

Over 10,000 followers were reached through the library's social media platforms, with engagement rising as stories were shared and celebrated. Video submissions were received from members across all provinces, showcasing diverse voices, languages, and reading journeys. A panel of adjudicators reviewed the submissions, and winners were announced and awarded on 28 February 2025, and all participants received a token of appreciation from the Library.



The campaign not only highlighted members' deep connection with reading but also raised awareness about the importance of inclusive libraries and the critical role SALB plays in promoting literacy and access to information for persons with visual impairment.

"Reading is a powerful tool of independence, and for many of our members, the library is not just a building - it is a lifeline to the world of stories, knowledge, and empowerment," said Dr Pateka Ntshuntshe-Matshaya, CEO of SALB. "This campaign has been a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do, she added.

The Library extends its heartfelt thanks to every participant for their inspiring contributions and reaffirms its commitment to delivering inclusive and life-changing services to its members across the country.

As most participants eloquently said in their videos, *"SALB didn't just give the books - it gave them back their passion, dignity, and confidence."*

HUMAN RESOURCES STAFF MATTERS

SALB INTRODUCES GROUNDBREAKING INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED GRADUATES

By Nosiphiwo Malaku

The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) is thrilled to announce the introduction of its pioneering internship programme, dedicated to providing blind and visually impaired graduates with meaningful work experience. This bold initiative seeks to empower talented individuals by offering them opportunities to grow and develop within a professional environment tailored to their unique needs. Recognising the abundance of qualified and capable blind and visually impaired individuals eager to thrive in their chosen careers, SALB saw an opportunity to foster their professional journey in a place where they can make a direct impact – their library. The programme aims to equip interns with practical skills while allowing them to serve and uplift their community.

Welcoming the First Three Interns

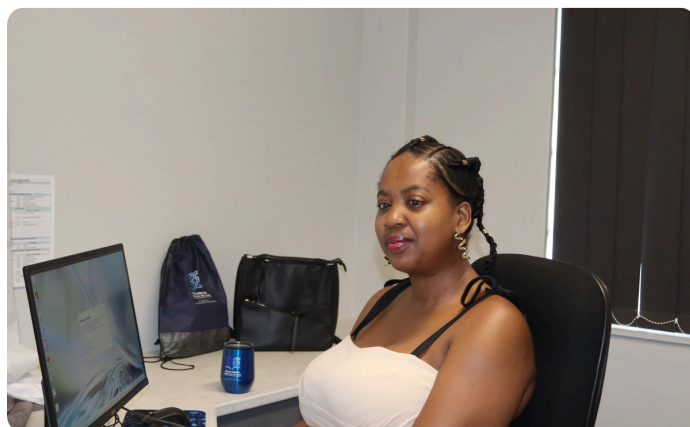
The internship programme proudly introduces its first three participants, who are set to pave the way for many more to come.



Zizipho Halutushe – HR Intern

Zizipho Halutushe joined the SALB Human Resources (HR) Office as an Intern on the 3rd of February 2025. A dedicated, highly motivated, and organised individual, she has a passion for growth and professional development. Zizipho began her schooling at Efata School for the Blind and Deaf in 2007 before transferring to Zamokuhle School for the Blind in 2011. She later obtained her N6 HR Certificate from Umfolozi TVET College.

Beyond her work commitments, Zizipho enjoys blind cricket, coal ball, traveling, and music. She is excited about the opportunity to collaborate with her colleagues and contribute meaningfully to the organisation.



Nosiphiwo Malaku – Public Relations & Marketing Intern

Joining SALB on the 10th of February 2025, Nosiphiwo Malaku steps into the role of Public Relations and Marketing Intern. Confident, driven, and adaptable, she brings valuable experience in Marketing, Communications, Creative Art Facilitation, and Theatre Practice.

After losing her sight at 15, Nosiphiwo attended Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind before obtaining her National Diploma in Marketing Management from Motheo TVET College.

A passionate reader, writer, poet, and motivational speaker, Nosiphiwo is excited to be part of a team that champions accessible reading. She understands firsthand the transformative power of literacy and is eager to promote inclusive reading experiences.



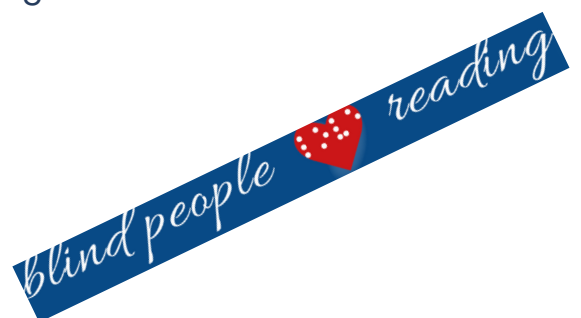
Mbulelo Mgcima – HR Intern

At 38 years old, Mbulelo Mgcima, an LLB graduate from the University of South Africa (UNISA), is also part of the internship programme in the Human Resources (HR) component. He commenced his journey at SALB on 10 February 2025, viewing this as a valuable opportunity for professional growth.

Mbulelo is particularly appreciative of SALB's efforts in providing assistive devices that accommodate the needs of blind and visually impaired individuals, ensuring a supportive and inclusive work environment.

This initiative is a significant milestone for SALB, reinforcing its commitment to creating employment equity and fostering meaningful inclusion for the blind and visually impaired. The new interns express immense gratitude for the organisation's dedication to breaking barriers and setting a precedent for accessibility in the workplace.

With this programme, SALB continues to lead the way in ensuring that visually impaired professionals not only gain employment but thrive in environments that recognise and celebrate their abilities.



CONDITIONAL GRANT

LIGHTING THE WAY TO INCLUSIVE KNOWLEDGE

By Vusumzi Mkhetsane



A brighter future for all is taking shape – one accessible book at a time. The Conditional Grant for Community Libraries, led by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), is sparking a bold shift toward a more inclusive knowledge society. With a funding boost of R10.3 million, this three-year initiative (April 2024 – March 2027) is revamping library infrastructure and services across South Africa, with a strong focus on empowering the blind and visually impaired.

At its core, the grant promotes a powerful idea: everyone deserves access to knowledge, regardless of disability, geography, or background. The South African Library for the Blind (SALB) is proud to lead this mission – bringing inclusive library services and accessible information to the heart of communities nationwide.

But this is more than bricks and books. It's about opening doors to braille and audio resources, adaptive reading technologies, and seamless cooperation across government levels. It's about turning libraries into inclusive spaces where progress becomes possible through access.

As this transformative journey unfolds, SALB calls on partners, stakeholders, and communities to walk alongside us. Because when knowledge is accessible, opportunity follows one page, one person, and one library at a time.

This impactful initiative is proudly steered by Dr. Pateka Ntshuntshe-Matshaya, CEO of SALB, in collaboration with Dr. Cynthia Khumalo, Acting Director-General of DSAC. Their leadership ensures that this grant doesn't just tick boxes – it changes lives.

To support the successful implementation of this grant, SALB has strengthened its human resource capacity with a passionate and dynamic team:

- Senior Manager: Conditional Grant – Mr. Bongile Matini
- National Grant Coordinators – Mr. David Lebelo, Ms. Ayanda Siwahla, and Ms. Nelisiwe Nodada
- Project Accountant – Ms. Karabo Dinyake
- Compliance Manager – Ms. Zama Dlodla

CONDITIONAL GRANT

- SCM Officer – Ms. Xolisa Mqubuli
- HR Officer – Ms. Fefekazi Msikinya
- Office Assistant – Ms. Nwabisa Maliti
- Roving ICT Technician – Mr. Hlumelo Bottoman

Together, this team is ensuring that inclusive knowledge isn't just a dream—it's a deliverable.

"Under the Conditional Grant, SALB plans to open two new narration studios in the Northern Cape and Northwest provinces," said Mr Bongile Matini, Senior Manager for Conditional Grant at SALB.



MEMBERSHIP STATUS

PROVINCIAL STATS 4th QUARTER 2025

- **Eastern Cape 690**
- **Free State 176**
- **Gauteng 190**
- **KwaZulu Natal 588**
- **Limpopo 280**
- **Mpumalanga 633**
- **Nothern Cape 262**
- **North West 423**
- **Western Cape 392**

