

Report on the Just Ended Belated International School Library Month Celebration Held at Manzvire Primary School in Chipinge District on 7 November 2025, Organised by Mutare Polytechnic Library Department.

Prepared by: Pretty Chibangwa- Librarian, Mutare Polytechnic.



Seated from left: Mr Chidhakwa-DSI Makoni, Mrs Chibangwa-Librarian Mutare Polytechnic, Mr Hove-Manzvire Primary Head, Mr Gabaza-Guest of Honour, the PED, Mr Mutomba-DSI Buhera, Ms Mutambirwa SI Chipinge, Mrs Chityori-SI Makoni. **Standing from left:** Mr Muparangi-SI Chimanimani, Mrs Mademutsa-DSI Mutare, Mrs Muyocha-DSI Chimanimani, Mr Mapfumo-SI Chipinge, Mr Masona-CI Chipinge, Mr Hungwe-SI Chipinge, Mr Musati SI Chipinge

1. Introduction

This report covered what transpired during the belated International School Library Month Celebration held at Manzvire Primary School on the 7th of November 2025. It also includes the planning and preparations leading to the much-adored successful event which left the Provincial School authorities well impressed, and geared to support the establishment of functional school libraries, in each school. During the program, the authorities continuously acknowledged the community engagement program by Mutare Polytechnic Library Department, the key organisers and coordinators of the program. They commended Mutare Polytechnic Principal and Administration for considering a rural school which is 215KM from Mutare urban, where the Polytechnic is located. The 2025 event was unique and exceptional because Mutare Polytechnic had considered a rural school, “leaving no place and no one behind”, as part of the country’s Vision 2030 Economic Agenda.

2. Background.

Mutare Polytechnic is a technical training institution, under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, and under the Tertiary Education Services Council (TESC). It is situated in Manicaland Province, the eastern mountainous part of Zimbabwe, in the border town of Mutare, neighboring Mozambique.

The institution is guided by several policies regulating excellence in training to meet up with global best practices. The Education 5.0, is one of the key documents or “Doctrine” that guides almost all the operations in training institutions in Zimbabwe, and Mutare Polytechnic is no exception. The provisions of Education 5.0 are; teaching, research, **community service**, innovation, and industrialisation.

Guided by the principles of the widely recognised ‘Doctrine’ of Education 5.0, particularly the tenet of Community Service, the Library Department identified gaps within the community where it could make a meaningful impact.. Previously the department had noted with concern, during Orientation and Information Literacy programs that some students would have their first encounter with a functional Library when they joined Mutare Polytechnic. This moved the department to engage the institution administration to support the community engagement endeavours, for improved quality education in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. The institution liaised with the Provincial Education Directorate for Manicaland Province where Mutare Polytechnic is situated, for this positive cause and the program was fully supported.

The program started at a low scale in 2012, where the Library Department introduced short courses in Library Skills, to train teacher librarians or anyone seconded to work in a school library without library qualifications. These programs were initially designed as workshops and eventually were included on the institutions Traditional Apprenticeship Programs (TAP) which trains livelihoods skills to the communities, and the entry qualification is “ability to read and write”.

In 2018, the Library Department decided to increase awareness on the importance of functional school libraries in the learning ecosystem. The department took advantage of the International School Library Month and celebrated together at a selected school in Mutare District. (Follow the link for more details of the program, <https://www.iasl-online.org/ISLM2018/> , and go on Zimbabwe, then Chancellor Primary in Mutare (hosted by Mutare Polytechnic)). During the program, the school authorities, requested that this should be an annual event, where each of the seven districts were to be rotated and a selected school would host the program. In 2019 the second program was hosted at Hartzell Primary in Mutasa District. (For more details of the program, follow this link, <https://www.iasl-online.org/ISLM2019/>, and go to Hartzell Primary School, Zimbabwe). Covid 19 disrupted the following years for the celebration of International School Library Month, until 2022, when Mutare Polytechnic Library Department, assisted Hartzell Primary School to automate the school library using Koha Integrated Library Management System. Mutare Polytechnic partnered Capetex Company, the service provider for Koha in Manicaland Province, to assist with the technical expertise in installing Koha System at Hartzell. That same year, the Department in liaison with the Provincial Education Directorate organised for a launch of the Koha System. **See Appendix 2** for more pictures of the program. Mutare Polytechnic Library Department, due to other institution commitments,

did not manage to organise the celebrations of the International School Library Month, from 2022-2024, which they resumed this year, 2025.

3. Planning and Preparations

Mutare Polytechnic during the first quarter of the year, engaged the Manicaland Provincial Education Directorate (PED) on resuming the community engagement programs in facilitating the establishment of functional school libraries, within their own capacity. The PED office granted authority for the community engagement and assured the institution full support. Mutare Polytechnic facilitated three rural and one urban school under this engagement to receive books from Book Aid International. Manzvire Primary School, the host school in Chipinge District, for 2025 International School Library Month, also benefited on this program.

Continuous engagements and documentation towards the celebration of the International School Library month were done. Programs, speeches, registration forms, comment book, were all prepared prior to the program. Mutare Polytechnic also engaged other partners, Zimbabwe Library Association (ZIMLA) and Higher Life Foundation for Akello Digital Library and Smart Learning Platform to be part of the program. All the information pertaining to the planning and preparations of the program was continuously communicated to the Director National Library and Documentation Services (NLDS) for further assistance and direction. Higher Life Foundation through the existing partnership with Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and engagements by the Director NLDS, agreed to set up installations for Akello Digital Library. The host School Manzvire Primary School, would receive the package and training support of the Akello Digital.

4. Mazvire Primary

Hosting an event comes with a lot of responsibility. The School Headmaster, Mr Hove and his dedicated team opened their school to host such a big Provincial event which would attract seven districts of the province. This also involved engagement with local leadership where the school is situated, and inviting them to the program. The school was supposed to ensure a clean and conducive environment for all the participants. They also planned on receiving guests serving lunch and refreshments. The Teacher Librarians, Mrs Mugwazeni and Ms Chiduwa worked tirelessly to improve and upgrade the library, as well as assisting learners to develop poem presentations. They had also anticipated that Akello Digital Library would be set before the program, as was on initial plans, before some unanticipated programs caused the delay, and the installation was rescheduled on a date after the program.

5. 7 November 2025-The International School Library Month Proceedings.

Mutare Polytechnic Library Department team of nine (9) and the Music Band comprising of one (1) lecturer and thirteen (13) students departed Mutare Polytechnic at 0530hrs. This meant the team had travelled from their places of residence at/before 0500hrs. The dedication and commitment by the whole team, just to give to their communities, was something intriguing. The institution's unwavering support for its communities, 215km away, released the 30-seater bus, and the driver Mr Mashava, was supposed to ferry the whole team safely to and from the event, which he safely did. The students, kept the whole team laughing and entertained along

the way, as they would chant their funny songs that could come to their mind, some songs were just composed on the bus.

The bus arrived at 0900hrs and welcomed by the school ushering team and handed us to the Headmaster, Mr Hove. The whole scenery of the school communicated coordinated effort which made the whole environment clean and conducive for the program. The environment did not depict an extravagant expensive event, but showed, the sincere effort made by the school, to make the best for the event.

6. Briefing

The program commenced with a briefing attended by the Provincial Education Director (PED), the host school's Headmaster leading the delegation, the Mutare Polytechnic team, District Schools Inspectors (DSIs), headmasters from various schools, and members of the local leadership, including three headmen.

The headmaster, briefed the PED and the guests on the history of the school, their developments, the pass rate and finally the challenges as well as the possible solutions. He highlighted deep appreciation for Mutare Polytechnic, for considering his school to hold such an event. Mutare Polytechnic Librarian, Mrs Chibangwa was also asked to give a briefing, on the program, which she did. She highlighted on the auspices of community engagement by Mutare Polytechnic Library Department, the major objective of ensuring that each school must have a functional library, the support that the institution have been offering over the years, and the plans to hold writing and reading competitions during such programs, as well as ensuring that these stories are published. She highlighted that learners should be nurtured to write their own imaginations and assisted to publish, so that stories from Manicaland Province would be shared globally instead of relying on foreign stories, produced by other learners.

The PED commended the determinations by Mutare Polytechnic in partnering the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, particularly Manicaland Province, for improved quality education. He highlighted and acknowledged the support he received from the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Prof. Torerai Moyo and the Permanent Secretary to attend this program. The whole Ministry management were attending the 2026 strategic planning workshop, at Golden Peacock Hotel in Mutare, including the PED himself. He mentioned how the Ministry valued this partnership to enhance quality education, which is why he was released to officiate as the Guest of Honour, despite having a very important program.

After the briefing the whole team was directed to visit the school library, where we were welcomed by the two teacher librarians, Mrs Mugwazeni and Ms Chiduwa, and the learners who were reading books. The PED randomly picked any learner to read loudly and ask some comprehension questions. The learners displayed high reading and comprehension skills. The learners were encouraged to develop their own imaginary stories both in English and Local Indigenous Ndaue Language.

The International School Library Month Celebration, drew participants from all over the Manicaland Province. Mutare Polytechnic Librarian, **presented the speech, which is accompanying this report.**

Higher Life Foundation representative Mr Herbert Chitongo, presented on Akello Digital Library and how it functions. He also highlighted on the thrust of the organisation and its impact on disadvantaged communities and to quality education.

7. Student Presentations.

Learners presented various poems, music, dances and physical education gymnastics. Their theme was focusing on importance of books, reading and digital resources. **See Appendix 3** for pictures on these presentations.

8. Guest of Honour Speech.

The Guest of Honour, the Provincial Education Directorate Mr Gabaza, delivered a thought-provoking speech, stirring listeners and school authorities to action. He continuously emphasised that headmasters and School Development Committees (SDCs) should ensure that schools must have functional libraries. He tasked Mr Maseure the Provincial Schools Inspector, responsible for school libraries, to collect data on schools with functional libraries and those without, so that coordinated efforts would be done to ensure all schools have functional libraries. In his Speech, he emphasised that Manicaland Province was supposed to be the champion and pacesetter on functional school libraries. Throughout his speech, he commended Mutare Polytechnic for such impactful community engagement programs. Local Community leaders, who also graced the occasion were also commended for supporting education, and Manzvire Primary School endeavours. He also endorsed every last Friday of October every year, that the province joins the world in celebrating the International School Library Month, where learners would also hold competitions on reading and writing best stories, which will be published. The Guest of Honour encouraged school authorities to set budgets towards development of functional school libraries, and ensure learners are exposed to reading. For more details on the speech, **see the minutes of the program, accompanying this report.**

Mutare Polytechnic Music Band, Manzvire School Choir, Mwanyisa Primary School, Morning Star kept the participants very live, by their performances, poems, music and dances.

The program ended at 1400hrs and group photos were captured, **see Appendix 4.** The participants were served with well-prepared delicious lunch, courtesy of Manzvire Primary School. During the lunch and networking session, participants continually expressed their appreciation to Mutare Polytechnic for hosting such an insightful event and encouraged that it be held annually. The Chimanimani District school authorities also requested that their district be considered as the host for the 2026 program, a proposal to which the Mutare Polytechnic team was amenable. After lunch, the participants travelled back to their far and wide destinations, full of joy and appreciation of the successful event, geared to implement functional school libraries, and looking forward to the next year program.

During the program some participants wrote their comments about the event. **See Appendix 1 for the comments from participants.**

9. Conclusion

The celebration of the International School Library Month was a success. It was attended by the PED, who was the Guest of Honour, District Schools Inspectors, Schools Inspectors, Headmasters, Teachers, SDC, Local Community Leadership, Librarians, Teacher librarians, learners and the organisers of the community engagement program, Mutare Polytechnic. The

total number of attendants was three-hundred and forty-two (342), including learners who attended. The program encouraged schools to set up functional school libraries. The last Friday of every October was set as a day that schools in Manicaland Province celebrate the International School Library Month, and learners would hold writing and reading competitions, and their stories would be published. The Provincial Schools Inspector was tasked to collect data on schools with functional libraries and those without for coordinated efforts to ensure functional libraries in all the province.

10. Recommendations.

- i. More partnerships for establishment of functional school libraries in Manicaland Province are welcome.
- ii. More partnerships in assisting learners to publish their stories in 2026 after celebrating the ISLM are welcome.
- iii. All provinces should participate in this program.

Appendix 1_ Participants Comments_PC.

PC_1: Well organised event, you can add on literature of local provincial and national books to give evidence of importance of books for the Library.

PC_2: Can also invite pupils from all the districts to give presentations that will be selected as best from celebrations that shall be carried out once every year in the month of October at district level for cross pollination of ideas.

PC_3: The day was very educative and was an eye opener on how we can achieve better reading through libraries.

PC_4: It was a learning point for all education supporters.

PC_5: Quite beneficial.

PC_6: The library program is a welcome development in ensuring non readers in our schools. It should be held yearly.

PC_7: This is an eye opener. We learnt a lot. The pupils had a number of activities. However we request for more schools in Chipinge to be assisted.

PC_8: This is a welcomed programme, as it enhances on improving the reading programmes through physical and digital means. This should be an annual event-maybe starting at district level.

PC_9: We have learnt the importance of having functional libraries @ school as this will help improve the results @ school level as well as provincial level.

PC_10: We have learnt quite a lot about the importance of libraries. It is an eye opener to the educators and teachers.

PC_11: The programme was fruitful but time consciousness is needed in order to catch up with time as other facilitators failed to participate as on the schedule.

PC_12: This program have made us a step ahead and innovative as librarians.

PC_13: The programme was an eye opener. I wish the installation of digital library also be established in secondary schools.

PC_14: The stage should be set up on a more centralised place next time, otherwise it was a good programme.

PC_15: What a wonderful day we had. Keep it up.

PC_16: It was well organised, however the issue of punctuality need to be improved. Well done.

Appendix 2-Pictures_Hartzell Koha Installation, Training and Launch.



Figure 1: Mr Matembudze, Capitex ICT installing Koha

Hartzell Librarian Ms Noizi (in white cap) is looking on.



Figure 2: Mutare Polytechnic Librarian, Mrs Pretty Chibangwa training Ms Noizi on Koha usage

Koha Launch



Figure 3: During the launch of Koha Integrated Management System and Group photo.

Appendix 3_Student Presentation Pictures

Manzvire Primary School.



Pamfrey Sibiyá & Vortex Mabuyawa-Artificial Intelligence. **Stacey Chikumba (ECD learner)-Bhuku Ishamwari Yangu (The Book is My Friend)**



Tanatswa Khosa- Mabhuku Haaperi - **(Books are Infinite)** Linah Mhlanga-Library



Shyline Simango-Shoko Riri Mubhuku-(Word in the Book)



Prestige Mhlanga-Kuverenga Mabhuku (Reading Books)



Kimberly Safanosi-Technology



Great Konzo-Story Tellers Unite

Morning Star and Mwanyisa Primary Schools



Sento Kumbaira-Drug Abuse





Learners presented a poem as a group titled The International School Library month. Their names were:

1.Zimanyiya Agage

2.Mangove Kaylee

3.Nyagumbo Chipo

4.Kamuloni Rumbidzai

4.Matembudze Blessing

5.Gapara Previous

6.Mushayi Ruvimbo

Appendix 4_Proceedings_Pictures

Briefing



Figure 4: From Left: Mr Mapfumo SI Chipinge, Mr Hove-Headmaster Mazvire Primary, Mr Gabaza-Guest of Honour, PED, Mr Masona-The Circuit Schools Inspector for Chipinge District, Mrs Pretty Chibangwa-Librarian Mutare Polytechnic, and Mr Maseure-Provincial Schools Inspector, also responsible for School Libraries.



Briefing Conti...



Briefing Conti...



Figure 5: Headman Mapiye speaking during the briefing



Figure 6: Participants during the briefing

Library Tour



Proceedings



Proceedings Cont...



Proceedings Cont...



Manzvire Primary School Choir

Group Photos



Guest of Honour-PED, DSIs, CI, SIs and Headmasters and Mutare Polytechnic Librarian.



Seated from left: Mr Chidhakwa, Mrs Chibangwa-Librarian Mutare Polytechnic, Mr Hove-Manzvire Primary School Head, Mr Gabaza-Guest of Honour, the PED, Ms Mtetwa-Community Leader, Mr Zamuchiya-Community Leader, Mr Manzvire-Headman. Standing from left: Mutare Polytechnic team, DSIs, CI, SIs, Mr Maseure Provincial Schools Inspector standing behind Chief Manzvire.

Group Photos Cont...



Figure 7: Mutare Polytechnic Library Team From Left Seated: Pretty Chibangwa, Catherine Fana, Doreen Ruwocha, Costa Saungweme, Margret Bandura, Prisca Chigodora. Standing: Netsai S. Murungu, Perseverence Chigodora and Sam Mugayiri.



Group Photos Cont...



Group Photos Cont...



Mutare Polytechnic Music Band

The End