

CAPOLSA NEWSLETTER

MISSION: To promote behavioural and educational research and practice in Sub-Saharan Africa

VISION: To become an international centre of excellence in behavioural and educational research and practice

● **Honesty** ● **Excellence** ● **Teamwork** ● **Integrity** ● **Accountability**

Editorial Letter



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural edition of the CAPOLSA Newsletter. This issue marks a new and exciting chapter in our journey as we continue to grow and expand in vision, scope, and impact.

Over the past months, CAPOLSA has taken significant strides in advancing behavioural and educational research across Sub-Saharan Africa. One of our proudest milestones has been our recognition as a Centre of Excellence within the University of Zambia, a reflection of our team's commitment to diligence, hard work, collaboration, and innovation, all culminating in excellence. This achievement not only affirms our institutional growth but also strengthens and re-energises our resolve to translate research and science into meaningful societal impact.

In this edition, you will find highlights from our benchmarking visit to one of our partner institutions - the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA); reflections from the activities we have participated in, such as the UNZA Open Day and the International Mother Language Day commemoration; and stories of our growing partnerships and community engagement. We also share insights into our internship programme, designed to nurture the next generation of researchers and innovators.

At CAPOLSA, we believe that progress is a shared journey - taken one step at a time. Our mission to promote behavioural and educational research and practice thrives on the partnerships we build and the communities we serve. We invite you to walk with us to read, engage and collaborate as we shape a future where knowledge truly transforms lives.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we look forward to your feedback and continued partnership.

Haatembo Mooya PhD
Centre Leader, CAPOLSA
University of Zambia

FEATURES

CAPOLSA'S BENCHMARKING VISIT TO CSDA



Dr Haatembo Mooya, Dr Khanya Ndhlovu and the Orange Farm BPS site team (PIC)

The Coordinator for CAPOLSA Dr Mooya from 22 to 25 April 2025 visited the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA), a research centre at the University of Johannesburg . This was a benchmarking visit to gain insights into the development, operations and management of established research centres. The visit was of great essence as it supported CAPOLSA movement into its next phase of growth. CAPOLSA at that time was applying to be established as a Centre of Excellence in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zambia. Additionally, this visit was meant to foster research collaborations.

The three-day programme involved presentations about the establishment of the CSDA, outlining its vision, mission, and impact as well as the growth and sustainability of the CSDA covering the Centre's evolution, key milestones, support mechanisms and governance structures. Lessons and best practices from other research centres were also presented. All the CSDA's current projects were discussed.

Dr Mooya shared the CAPOLSA experiences tracing its origins and its step by step growth, projections for growth and future plans with colleagues from CSDA. He participated in a tour of the centre and he visited the Orange Farm Basic Package of Support (BPS) site and the University of Johannesburg Soweto Campus.

FEATURES

AWARDED THE STATUS OF CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY.



Since its inception in 2021, CAPOLSA has grown and has continued to expand in terms of its mandate and scope.

In the University of Zambia structures, Centres of Excellence are recognised as being key units that are essential for directly contributing to the advancement of research and innovation. This not only grows and expands the university's portfolio, but it also contributes to the uplifting of the lives of the Zambian people.

Being recognised as a Centre of Excellence in the University means that a unit has been awarded more responsibilities and as such, much more is expected of such a unit.

As CAPOLSA has grown, it has been our dream to achieve the status of a centre of excellence.

This dream came to fruition in the second quarter of 2025 when, after a vigorous process, The University of Zambia management under the office of the Vice Chancellor - Research and Innovation conferred CAPOLSA as a centre of excellence

The team at CAPOLSA welcomes the position of centre of excellence with great humility and excitement. We take this not only as an opportunity to directly contribute to research and innovation in the University, but also to contribute to research whose findings or output will have an impact on society and the people of Zambia and the region.

As we proceed as a centre of excellence, as immediate steps, we plan to have an impact by expanding our networks and collaborations. We further plan to diversify and consolidate CAPOLSA's scope of work through the creation of clusters. CAPOLSA has been doing a lot of work in educational research with a lot of emphasis on literacy. Thus educational research is set out to be our initial cluster. Being housed in the Department of Psychology, CAPOLSA works with staff with vast experiences in behavioural psychology. We plan to have behavioural Psychology as the second cluster. These clusters will be overseen by cluster leads.

The educational research cluster will advance CAPOLSA's current contribution to research in literacy and educational research

The behavioural psychology cluster will focus on research that targets the well-being of children, youths and the elderly. It will embody studies on mental health, adolescents and aging.

The CAPOLSA team envision a very busy and highly productive 2026 and sees itself contributing significantly to research and innovation not only in the University but in the region and globally as well. We look forward to engaging with stakeholders that may be interested in working with us.



ACTIVITIES / COMMEMORATIONS

International Mother Language Day Commemoration



On 21 February 2025, CAPOLSA joined the rest of the world in commemorating International Mother Language Day with the theme 'Making languages count for sustainable development'.

At CAPOLSA we believe that when we use the power of languages and linguistic diversity we indeed can achieve sustainable development goals. This can be attained through embracing the role of language as a critical tool for inclusion, education, cultural preservation, communication, and community empowerment.

The Commemoration hosted by the Department of Arts, Languages and Literary Studies showcased performances in various languages, games, speeches and a keynote lecture. For CAPOLSA, the event was a powerful reminder of the importance of placing value on the preservation and promotion of the local languages.

UNZA Open Day



THE University of Zambia held its first ever open day on 27 June 2025. The day was meant to provide an opportunity for school learners, parents, educators, and members of the public to interact with the university and explore its academic programmes, research, and innovation initiatives. The day was also meant to offer a unique platform for industry stakeholders and partners to connect with Zambia's future workforce, showcase their brands, and align with the country's largest and oldest institution of higher learning.

As CAPOLSA we were happy to participate in this important activity. The CAPOLSA team set up their exhibition stand at the Psychology Department. On this day we interacted with parents, teachers and pupils. We were happy to showcase the CAPOLSA local language story books and we were excited to see the interest that the pupils showed in interacting with the local language books. The pupils asked questions concerning acquiring literacy and they were interested in being assisted with how they could access literature in the local languages.

ACTIVITIES / COMMEMORATIONS

Launch of IWRM



Japanese Ambassador to Zambia and Ministry of Water and Sanitation Representative



UNZA Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Innovation



Japanese Ambassador to Zambia and JICA representative



CAPOLSA was honoured to attend the launch of the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Centre of Excellence. Established in 2006, the IWRM CoE is hosted by the School of Mines at the University of Zambia. IWRM was officially launched as a centre of excellence at the University of Zambia on 26 September, 2025. The vision of the centre is the advancement and implementation of IWRM interventions in Zambia and the region through education and training, advanced research and consulting services for a sustainable water sector performance. Over 300 postgraduate students have graduated from the centre contributing directly to the nation and regions' pool of skilled water professionals.

A key highlight of the launch of IWRM CoE was the launch of the Prof. Imasiku A. Nyambe Water and Environment (WET) laboratory. The laboratory is set out to contribute to the collection of high quality water and sanitation data as the laboratory boasts of having one of the highly advanced quantitative data analysis capabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

It was encouraging to see the strides that IWRM CoE is making in its contribution towards research and innovation.

Community & Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Internship Program

As part of our social corporate responsibility, we engaged two students to intern with us for a month. Find their experience below;

Cynthia Mungalu



My internship at the Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa (CAPOLSA) was an incredibly enriching experience. As an Administrative Assistant Intern, I gained hands-on experience in bookkeeping, filing, and organizing documents, as well as drafting memos and letters. These tasks helped me improve my attention to detail, time management, and understanding of administrative processes. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Haatembo Mooya for his exceptional mentorship and to Mrs. Bether Mwale Moyo and Ms. Grace Lutombi for their guidance and support throughout the internship. Working alongside my co-partner, Ms. Grace Kakoma, also gave me fresh perspectives and strengthened my teamwork skills. I was especially touched by the farewell lunch organized for me – it reflected the warmth, unity, and professionalism that defined my entire experience. CAPOLSA has truly helped me grow both personally and professionally, and I now have a deeper appreciation for literacy development and a renewed commitment to excellence.

Grace Kakoma



As someone with a deep love for literature, science, and psychology, applying for an internship at CAPOLSA felt like the perfect opportunity to broaden my knowledge and practical experience. Initially, I was nervous and unsure if I would be selected, but I am incredibly grateful that I was. My time at CAPOLSA exposed me to a dynamic and encouraging work culture that taught me the value of stepping into tasks even when I didn't feel fully confident. I learned to trust the process and grew significantly in areas like teamwork, something I previously found challenging as someone who often prefers working independently. The supportive and accommodating team at CAPOLSA showed me the power of open leadership and collaboration, and this experience has given me the confidence to explore my passions beyond my traditional academic interests.

Upcoming Events

CAPOLSA Launch

As already highlighted, 2025 has been an exciting year at CAPOLSA. Following the award of the status of Centre of Excellence, CAPOLSA is excited to announce to the public and to its partners and key stakeholders that the official launch of CAPOLSA as a Center of Excellence in the University will be held in the first quarter of 2026.

During the launch, members of the public, partners and key stakeholders will have an opportunity to learn about how CAPOLSA as a Center for Excellence is poised to advance literacy research, practice, and public impact through a clear, forward-looking direction. Our core emphasis is on advancing research and scholarship across the full spectrum of literacy development—from early childhood to adult literacy—through rigorous, high-quality studies that synthesize findings across developmental stages and contexts. We will pursue interdisciplinary inquiries that integrate educational and behavioral sciences, cognitive psychology, linguistics, and information technology to generate insights that inform policy and practice.

To translate knowledge into action, CAPOLSA will develop targeted short courses and postdoctoral programs that deliver professional development, coaching, and mentorship for faculty, educators, and community stakeholders. These offerings will be designed to build capacity, improve instructional outcomes, and empower learners at all levels of society.

Being committed to accessibility and equity, CAPOLSA will produce child-friendly, easy-to-read books for early-grade learners to support literacy acquisition and lifelong engagement with reading. This work will be complemented by strategic partnerships with schools, libraries, community organizations, and industry to expand literacy opportunities and resources.

Looking ahead, CAPOLSA will strengthen local impact while growing collaborations and partnerships internationally, leveraging global networks to share best practices, scale successful interventions, and contribute to a more literate world.



Upcoming Projects at a Glance

CAPOLSA is excited to present two flagship initiatives that fuse cultural heritage with accessible learning for today's diverse audiences.



Story Time At CAPOLSA

A bold effort to modernise and revive storytelling as a living, dynamic practice. As education trends shift toward Western paradigms and screen-based learning, Story Time at CAPOLSA aims to safeguard oral traditions for future generations.

What we're doing

- Documenting traditional stories from communities nationwide
- Digitising folktales to ensure preservation and wider access
- Decolonising narratives by challenging the idea that folktales are archaic and highlighting their relevance today

Impact

- Open-access archives for educators, researchers, and communities
- Renewed appreciation of storytelling as culturally rooted knowledge
- Enhanced digital literacy through multilingual, accessible resources



Playful Minds

Playful Minds centers on traditional games, exploring how play connects math, literacy, strategy, social learning, and cultural heritage.

What we're doing

- Cataloging traditional games from diverse communities
- Demonstrating how these games foster mathematical concepts, literacy skills, planning, and collaboration
- Preserving heritage while linking it to contemporary learning

Impact

- A resource bank linking play to learning outcomes for educators
- Deeper understanding of heritage's role in cognitive and social development
- Opportunities for families to engage in meaningful intergenerational play

What's next

Join us or share stories and games from your community.

RECOMMENDED READINGS AND WEBSITE

CAPOLSA Children's books

With support from The University of Jyväskylä and the Finnish government, CAPOLSA in 2013 and 2015 produced valuable storybooks in an easy-to-read spelling system in order to ease the acquisition of literacy among early learners in the seven regional languages, namely ciNyanja, iciBemba, chiTonga, siLozi, kiKaonde, Lunda and Luvale. The books contain various stories and poems, enabling Zambian children, no matter which is their first language, to enjoy these fruits of our African storytelling tradition while practicing and perfecting their new skills of retrieving the meaning of a text by reading it.

The books contain a mixture of 4 to 5 texts comprising of stories and poems, cumulatively totaling 49 stories and poems across the 7 regional languages. They are illustrated with full colour pictures. All texts and illustrations were designed by Zambian authors, artists and editors to appeal to children aged 6-10, and to be easy to read and understand as soon as they have taken the first steps of literacy in that language. Each text is followed by a set of three questions for an adult teacher or parent to use for prompting reflection by a young reader on the meaning of the text. Keep your ears to the ground as these books are currently under review and will be published in an easy to access digital form.

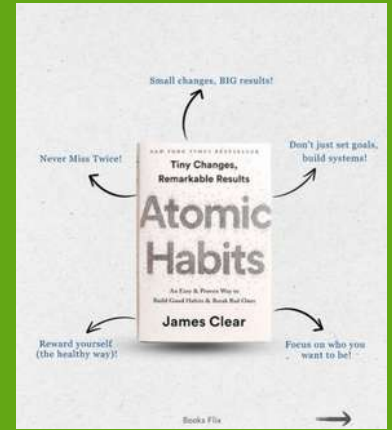
The titles are:

- Chitonga Book 1: Sulwe A Selofoni
- Cinyanja Book 1: Kalulu Na Lamy Ya Kumanja
- Icibemba Book 1: Kalulu Na Lamy
- Silozi Book 1: Shakame Ni Selofoni
- Chitonga Book 2: Chiti Wakunka Mulilo
- Cinyanja Book 2: Chiti Ayasa Moto
- Icibemba Book 2: Chiti Akosha Umulilo
- Silozi Book 2: Chiti Utumbula Mulilo
- Luvale Book 1: Vula Namijimbu Yikwavo
- Kikaonde Book 1: Mvula Nebyambo Bikwabo
- Lunda Book 1: Nvula Nansang'u Jikwawu



Storybooks Zambia

Storybooks Zambia is a free open educational resource that promotes literacy and language learning in homes, schools, and communities. Part of the [Global Storybooks](#) project, it makes 40 stories from the [African Storybook](#) available with text and audio in English, Bemba, and the most widely spoken [languages](#) of Zambia. Toggle for dual language texts, many with audio! visit <https://storybookszambia.net/>



Atomic Habits by James Clear.

James Clear's Atomic Habits teaches that meaningful change comes from small, consistent actions rather than big, one-time efforts. The first lesson emphasizes that small habits compound over time—improving by just 1% each day can make you 37 times better after a year, while neglecting small actions leads to decline. The second lesson shifts focus from setting goals to building effective systems, since success depends not on ambition but on the processes that support it—you don't rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems. Finally, the third lesson highlights the power of identity-based habits: lasting transformation begins by deciding the kind of person you want to be and proving it through small, consistent actions. Together, these principles show that change is not a single act but an ongoing process of aligning habits with identity and systems that make progress inevitable.

“If you know all the languages of the world and you don’t know your mother tongue, or the language of your culture, that is enslavement. But if you know your mother tongue or the language of your culture, and add all the other languages of the world to it, that is empowerment.”

— Ngugi Wa Thiong’o

Engage with us!



Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in Sub Saharan Africa - CAPOLSA

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