

litasa

LITERACY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**THE 21ST ANNUAL LITASA CONFERENCE**

**“Reading the Future, Ukufunda Ikusasa,  
Ho Bala Bokamoso:  
Literacies for Transformative Education”**

**4 - 6 SEPTEMBER 2026,  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG**



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**Celebrating 21 years of literacy research, practice and advocacy.**

For more than two decades, the LITASA Conference has brought together educators, researchers, policymakers, community organisations, and literacy advocates committed to shaping South Africa’s literacy landscape. As we celebrate LITASA’S 21st conference, the 2026 conference committee invites you to reimagine literacy’s role in building equitable, multilingual, and socially just futures - futures where every South African can access knowledge, participate fully, and exercise agency with dignity.

In a moment marked by challenging PIRLS findings, widening inequalities, rapidly advancing AI technologies, and shifting linguistic and cultural ecologies, literacy remains a powerful tool for transformation. This year’s theme, Reading the Future / Ukufunda Ikusasa / Ho Bala Bokamoso, foregrounds multilingual literacies as dynamic resources for bridging home and school, local realities and global opportunities, and foundational learning and higher education.

We invite contributions that explore innovative research, classroom practice, community work, and policy directions that speak to multilingualism, literacy development across the lifespan, and education in a changing world.

**Transformative Literacy: Keeping Pace in a Changing World**

- How might literacy education contribute to more just, equitable, and participatory societies?
- How can pedagogical and technological innovations respond to emerging literacy challenges?
- What does literacy education look like in the age of AI?
- How can literacy support critical thinking, civic participation, and the creation of democratic cultures?
- How can partnerships, innovative funding models, and effective monitoring and evaluation strengthen long-term literacy impact?
- How do we ensure sustainable literacy models?

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## **Foundations for the Future: Literacy in the Early Years**

- How do strong early literacy foundations shape long-term learning outcomes?
- What strategies best support literacy development in the early years?
- How can home languages and cultural knowledge be meaningfully integrated into early literacy pedagogy?
- How can partnerships, including “third spaces,” strengthen young children’s literacy learning?

## **Reading Across the Years: Transitions and Continuities**

- How do literacy skills evolve as learners progress through the school system?
- What practices deepen reading and writing engagement beyond the foundational phase?
- How can schools ensure continuity in reading and writing instruction and assessment across grades?
- How do language transitions influence literacy development?

## **Literacies in Higher Education: Access, Equity and Epistemic Justice**

- How do universities cultivate academic and disciplinary literacies in linguistically diverse settings?
- What does epistemic justice look like in reading and writing pedagogies?
- How can interventions empower rather than remediate?
- How do higher education institutions respond to challenges posed by AI, digital writing tools, and shifting literacy demands?

## **Rethinking Assessments: Assessment for Meaningful and Equitable Literacy Learning**

- How can assessment strengthen literacy development in multilingual contexts?
- How do classroom, school, national, and international assessments shape literacy teaching?
- What assessment designs validly capture learners’ multilingual and multimodal repertoires?
- How can teachers use assessment data to guide responsive instruction and curriculum planning?

## **Back to the Future: Literacies Beyond the Classroom**

- How do literacies flourish in community, family, workplace, and cultural spaces?
- How do libraries, NGOs, community groups, and literacy organisations widen access to reading and writing?
- What new literacies are emerging in digital, social, youth, or cultural spaces?

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## Submission Details:

### Language of Submissions:

- We welcome submissions and presentations in all twelve official South African languages. Please indicate your preferred presentation language when submitting.

### Presentation Categories:

- Individual papers - 15-min presentation | 10-min engagement
- Practitioner presentations - 15-min presentation | 10-min engagement
- Workshops - Workshops | 1 hour
- Poster presentation - On display throughout the conference
- Panel Discussions - 1 hour | 3-5 speakers
- Community project showcases - 15-min presentation | 10-min engagement
- Innovative or multi-sensory literacy demonstrations - 15-min presentation | 10-min engagement

### Length:

Abstracts for research papers, practitioner presentations, workshops, posters, community project showcases and innovative multi-sensory literacy demonstrations should not exceed 200 words, and should not contain citations. Abstracts for panel discussions should not exceed 350 words, including the details of the panellists.

**DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS: 15 MARCH 2026**

**EXTENDED SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 30 APRIL 2026**

Join us as we reflect, challenge, reimagine, and celebrate the multilingual futures of literacy in South Africa and beyond.

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# EXHIBITION & PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## Why Partner with LITASA?

The 21st Annual LITASA Conference 2026 brings together educators, researchers, academics, literacy practitioners, NGOs, publishers, policymakers, librarians, students and education partners from across South Africa and beyond to engage with the latest thinking, research and practice in literacy education.

As LITASA celebrates its 21st Annual Conference, we invite organisations that share our vision of building a more literate, multilingual and equitable society to partner with us in creating a meaningful and memorable conference experience.

A partnership with LITASA offers your organisation the opportunity to:

- Connect with a diverse community of literacy and education professionals from across South Africa.
- Showcase your programmes, resources, products or services to a highly engaged audience.
- Demonstrate your commitment to advancing literacy, multilingualism and transformative education.
- Build meaningful relationships with educators, researchers, NGOs, universities, publishers and government stakeholders.
- Increase your visibility through conference marketing, social media, the conference website and on-site recognition.

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## **EXHIBITION PACKAGES**

### **GOLD PACKAGE - R 30 000**

- Inclusion of promotional items in the conference bags & Logo in the programme.
- Exhibition stand (2 tables, 3 representatives.)
- 1 x 30 minute opportunity to present an educational session, product demonstration or innovative literacy solution relevant to conference delegates.
- Advertising on LITASA’s social media platforms for 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after the conference. (content to be provided by organisation)
- Social media coverage during conference, content to be provided by organisation (2 x reels, 1 daily story / post)
- 1 x pull up banner in plenary venue throughout conference.
- Inclusion of logo in advertisement of pre - conference activities.
- Inclusion of logo and link to website on conference website page and prospectus.

### **SILVER PACKAGE - R 16 000**

- Inclusion of promotional items in the conference bags & Logo in the programme.
- Exhibition stand (2 tables, 2 representatives.)
- Advertising on LITASA’s social media platforms for 1 week before and 1 week after conference. (content to be provided by organisation)
- Social media coverage during conference, content to be provided by organisation(1 x reel, 1 daily story / post.)
- Inclusion of logo and link to website on conference website page and prospectus.

### **INSTITUTIONAL - R 10 000**

- Inclusion of promotional items in the conference bags & Logo in the programme.
- Exhibition stand (1 tables, 1 representative.)
- Advertising on LITASA’s social media platforms for 1 week before or after conference. (content to be provided by organisation)
- Social media coverage during conference content to be provided by organisation (2 x posts.)
- Inclusion of logo and link to website on conference website page and prospectus.
- A 15-minute presentation on your institution’s services and the courses it offers.

### **GENERAL - R 8 000**

- Inclusion of promotional items in the conference bags & Logo in the programme.
- Exhibition stand (1 table, 1 representative.)
- Social media coverage during conference, content to be provided by organisation (1 post.)
- Inclusion of logo and link to website on conference website page and prospectus

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## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to our Exhibition Packages, organisations may choose to support specific aspects of the conference through one or more of the following partnership opportunities.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION
Conference Partner	Support the successful delivery of the 21st Annual LITASA Conference 2026 through a financial or in-kind contribution. Partnership benefits will be tailored according to your organisation's level of support and objectives.
Conference Networking Evening Partner	Support the official LITASA Networking Evening held on the first evening of the conference—a relaxed space where delegates connect, exchange ideas, build new collaborations and strengthen existing partnerships within the literacy community.
LITASA Reading & Imagination Initiative Partner	Partner with LITASA's annual conference legacy project by supporting the collection and distribution of children's books in all South African languages to underserved communities, ensuring that the impact of the conference extends well beyond its closing session.
Conference Lunch Partner	Sponsor lunch on one or more conference days, providing delegates with an opportunity to continue conversations, network and engage across sectors while receiving recognition throughout the catering area.
Tea & Coffee Partner	Support the conference refreshment breaks that encourage informal networking, discussion and knowledge sharing between delegates throughout the conference.

## CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT FIT? WE'D BE DELIGHTED TO DEVELOP A CUSTOMISED PARTNERSHIP PACKAGE TAILORED TO YOUR ORGANISATION'S OBJECTIVES AND BUDGET.

Every organisation has unique goals and priorities. We would be delighted to work with you to develop a partnership package that aligns with your objectives while contributing to the success of the 21st Annual LITASA Conference 2026.

To discuss a partnership opportunity, please contact:

**Taffie Chizu**

**National Operations Coordinator**

**Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA)**

**Email: [info@litasa.org.za](mailto:info@litasa.org.za)**

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# LITASA READING & IMAGINATION INITIATIVE

READ • WRITE • RIDE THE WAVES OF IMAGINATION

A LEGACY PROJECT OF THE LITASA ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SIYAFUNDA DONATE A BOOK

THE LITASA READING & IMAGINATION INITIATIVE IS THE ANNUAL LEGACY PROJECT OF THE LITASA CONFERENCE, ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE THAT EVERY CONFERENCE LEAVES BEHIND MORE THAN CONVERSATIONS—IT LEAVES BEHIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO DISCOVER THE JOY OF READING. THE INITIATIVE COLLECTS NEW AND GENTLY LOVED CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN ALL SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGES, WHICH ARE DISTRIBUTED TO RURAL AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES THROUGH A SELECTED LITERACY PARTNER EACH YEAR. EVERY BOOK DONATED IS AN INVITATION FOR A CHILD TO READ, WRITE, AND RIDE THE WAVES OF THEIR IMAGINATION, CREATING A LASTING IMPACT LONG AFTER THE CONFERENCE HAS CONCLUDED.

FOR ITS INAUGURAL YEAR, LITASA IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH, SIYAFUNDA DONATE A BOOK, AN INITIATIVE OF THE WEB FOUNDATION NPO, WHOSE WORK IS GUIDED BY THE BELIEF THAT "NO RURAL CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND." THROUGH SIYAFUNDA'S ESTABLISHED BENEFICIARY SELECTION PROCESS, THIS YEAR'S COLLECTION WILL PRIORITISE SCHOOLS IN NORTH WEST, MPUMALANGA, FREE STATE, AND LIMPOPO. CONFERENCE DELEGATES, EXHIBITORS, SPONSORS, PARTNERS, MEMBERS, FRIENDS OF LITASA, AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE ARE INVITED TO SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE BY DONATING A NEW OR GENTLY LOVED CHILDREN'S BOOK IN ANY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGES. BOOKS MAY BE DROPPED OFF AT THE REGISTRATION DESK ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE, WHILE THOSE ORGANISING COLLECTIONS IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS, WORKPLACES OR COMMUNITIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT THE LITASA NATIONAL COORDINATOR TO ARRANGE DELIVERY OR SHIPPING. TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A LASTING TRADITION—ONE CONFERENCE, ONE COMMUNITY, AND ONE BOOK AT A TIME.



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**KEYNOTE**

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# DR GODWIN KHOSA

Dr Godwin Khosa is the founding CEO of the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), a multi-stakeholder organisation that has raised and invested nearly R3 billion towards improving basic education in South Africa since 2013. Before leading the NECT, he served as CEO of JET Education Services, where he led the Secretariat that facilitated the establishment of the NECT. Dr Khosa began his career as a teacher before moving into education policy research at the Centre for Education Policy Development and later

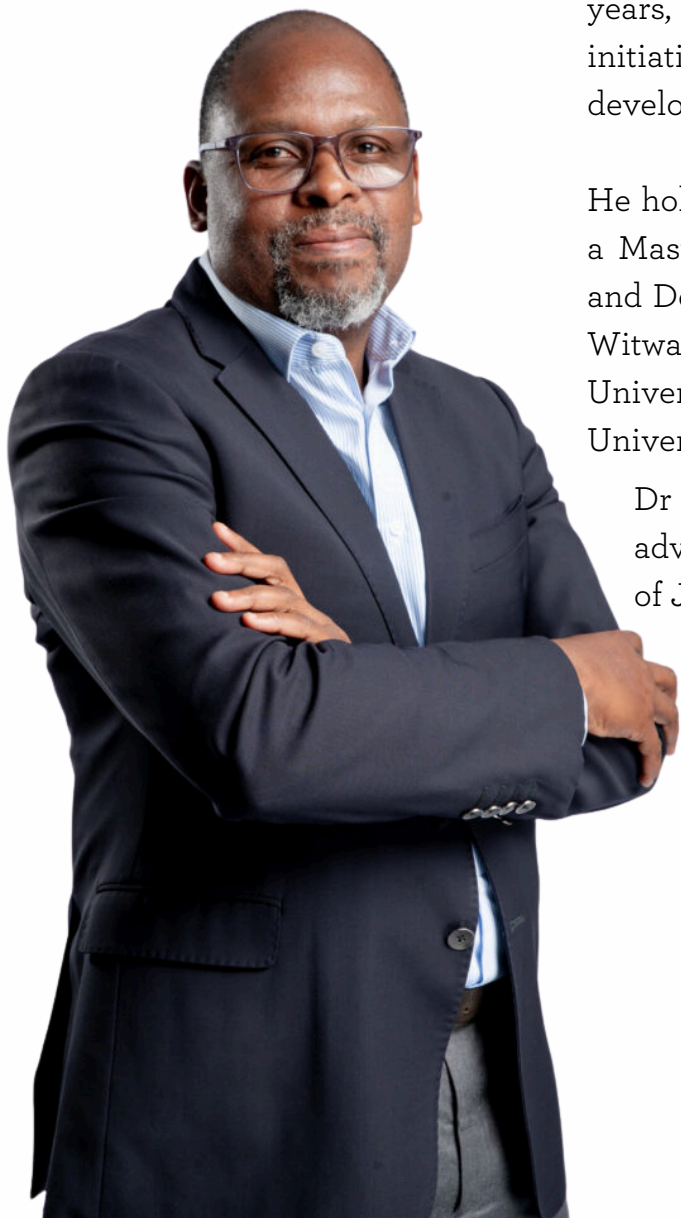
the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Over the years, he has led and managed large-scale social impact initiatives in partnership with governments, international development agencies, and the private sector.

He holds a Doctoral degree from the University of Sussex, a Master's degree and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public and Development Management from the University of the Witwatersrand, a BA (Hons) in Geography from the University of South Africa, and a BA in Education from the University of the North.

Dr Khosa has served on a number of boards and advisory bodies, including the Council of the University of Johannesburg, ABSA Bank's CSI Trust and BBBEE

Holding Company, the Advisory Board of CPUT's Global Institute for Teacher Education and Society, and the Education Academic Advisory Board of the University of the Free State.

He is currently a Professor of Practice in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg, where his work focuses on social policy and programme implementation science.



# PROF HILARY JANKS

Professor Hilary Janks is Professor Emerita in the Wits School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand and one of South Africa's most distinguished scholars in language and literacy education. Her research has profoundly influenced the fields of critical literacy, multilingual education, language policy, teacher education, and the relationship between language, literacy and power.

With more than four decades of experience in English and literacy education, Professor Janks has made an outstanding contribution to teacher education, literacy research, and educational transformation in South Africa and internationally. She is the author of the widely acclaimed books *Literacy and Power* and *Doing Critical Literacy*, and her work continues to shape literacy policy, research and practice across the world.

Professor Janks was the first South African to be inducted into the Reading Hall of Fame and is a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association. She received the Education Association of South Africa's Medal of Honour and was the inaugural recipient of the Literacy Association of South Africa's Significant Contribution to Literacy Award. In 2022, she received an A-rating from the National Research Foundation in recognition of her international standing as a researcher.

LITASA is honoured to welcome Professor Hilary Janks as a keynote speaker at the 21st Annual LITASA Conference 2026, where she will share insights drawn from her lifelong commitment to literacy, multilingual education, critical pedagogy, and educational transformation.



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**PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME**

4 - 6 September 2026, Johannesburg, Gauteng

<b>Friday 4 September 2026</b>	
08:00-10:00	Registration
10:00-10:30	Plenary: Welcomes, nuts and bolts
10:30-12:00	Parallel sessions – papers/snapshots/colloquia/workshops
12:00-13:00	LUNCH
13:00-15:00	Official Opening_Plenary Keynote speaker
15:00-15:30	TEA
15:30-17:00	Parallel sessions - papers/snapshots/colloquia/workshops
17:00-20:00	21st Annual LITASA Conference Networking event
<b>Saturday 5 September 2026</b>	
08:00-08:30	Registration
08:30-10:00	Plenary Keynote
10:00-10:30	TEA
10:30-12:50	Parallel sessions – Workshops and Colloquia
13:00-14:00	LUNCH
14:00-15:30	Parallel sessions – papers/snapshots/colloquia/workshops/Panel discussion/Book Launch
15:30-16:00	TEA
16:00-17:00	Plenary Session
<b>Sunday 6 September 2026</b>	
08:00-10:30	LITASA AGM, Awards and Official LITASA Reading & Imagination Initiative Handover
10:30-11:00	TEA
11:00-12:00	Parallel sessions - papers/snapshots/colloquia/workshops
12:00-13:00	Plenary Session
13:00-13:30	Official closing and Announcement of 2026 Conference Theme
13:30	Conference Closure

# 2026 Conference

FAQ

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**Q** Who is eligible to submit an abstract?

**A** The Literacy Association of South Africa welcomes abstract submissions from a wide range of individuals and organisations working in literacy, education, research, and community development.

**Q** Which groups of people are encouraged to submit abstracts?

Abstract submissions are welcome from:

- A**
- University researchers and academics
  - Postgraduate students (Honours, Masters, and PhD)
  - Teacher educators and lecturers
  - Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners
  - Foundation Phase teachers
  - Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers
  - Literacy specialists and literacy coaches
  - School and public librarians
  - NGO and non-profit literacy practitioners
  - Community literacy organisers and reading club facilitators
  - Education policymakers and education department officials
  - Curriculum developers and assessment specialists
  - Higher education academic development practitioners
  - Writing centre practitioners and tutors
  - Educational technologists and EdTech developers
  - Artificial intelligence and digital literacy researchers
  - Community organisations running literacy initiatives
  - Language activists and mother-tongue education advocates
  - Cultural knowledge practitioners and storytellers
  - Workplace literacy trainers
  - Family literacy programme facilitators
  - Book publishers and literacy programme designers

**Q** Do I need to be a researcher to submit an abstract?

**A** No. The conference encourages both research-based and practice-based submissions, including presentations from educators, community practitioners, and organisations working in literacy.

**Q** Can presentations be delivered in languages other than English?

**A** Yes. Submissions and presentations are welcome in all twelve official South African languages. Presenters should indicate their preferred presentation language when submitting their abstract.

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