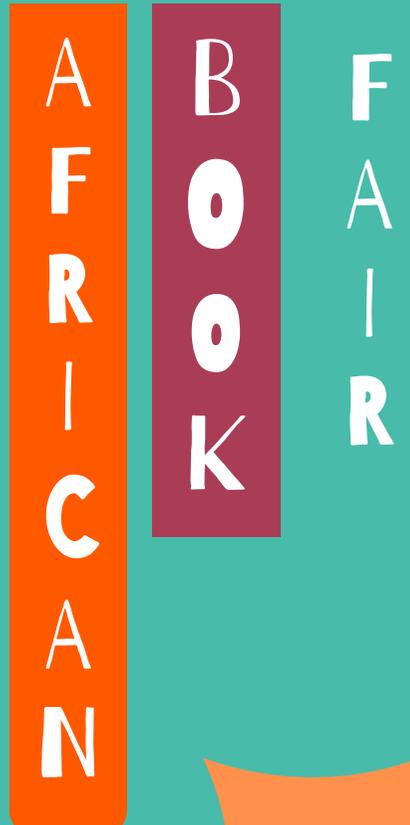


REPORT 2025

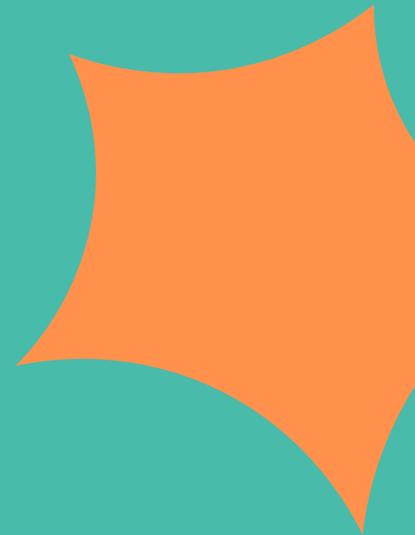
African Book Fair

by Soma Nami Books



Reporting Period
07 Aug - 10 Aug

Prepared by
Soma Nami Books



Executive Summary



Theme:

“African Stories in a Connected World”

August 7 – 10, 2025

Maktaba Kuu,

Kenya National Library Service,

Upperhill, Nairobi, Kenya.



The African Book Fair 2025, hosted by Soma Nami Books, took place from August 7–10 at The Kenya National Library, Maktaba Kuu, Nairobi, and reaffirmed its position as Kenya’s largest B2C fair of African books.

Now in its third edition, the fair continues to be a key highlight of Kenya’s literary and cultural calendar, attracting authors, publishers, readers, educators, and industry professionals from across Africa and beyond.

With this year’s theme, “African Stories in a Connected World,” the fair brought together writers, publishers, thought leaders, readers, and cultural influencers from across the continent and beyond. Over four days, we hosted a rich programme of panels, book launches, performances, and community events, drawing strong participation from thousands of attendees.

Prepared by

Soma Nami Books

Programme Highlights

Spotlight Session & Official Opening: Naming the Silence – Literature as a Tool Against Gender-Based Violence at the Embassy of Colombia, Nairobi

The African Book Fair officially opened with a powerful spotlight session titled Naming the Silence, organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Colombia in Kenya and Soma Nami Books. Held at the Embassy of Colombia on 7th August 2025, the session brought together diplomats, government representatives, writers, and activists to reflect on how literature can confront gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide.

The event was formally opened by Ambassador Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz, whose remarks underscored the shared struggles and solidarity between Africa and Latin America in tackling GBV. Additional contributions came from Dr. Josephine Obonyo (Secretary for Gender, Ministry of Gender, Culture, Arts & Heritage), Ms. Philomena Mwirigi (Kenya National Library Service), and Muthoni Muiruri (Founder, Soma Nami Books), who emphasized the critical role of literature and community spaces in addressing silence and fostering dialogue.



L to R: Dr. Martha Lucía Sánchez, H.E. Ambassador Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz, Muthoni Muiruri, Munira Hussein, Mariela Palacios, Kui Kabala and Njeri Migwi

A keynote address by Dr. Martha Lucía Sánchez highlighted Colombia's public policies on GBV, offering comparative lessons relevant to African contexts. The program also included a spotlight on Munira Hussein's book *Unfit for Society*, a moving performance by Masala Sefu, and a panel discussion that examined storytelling as a tool for justice, ethical representation of survivor narratives, and the potential of literature to influence activism and policy reform.

Programme Highlights

Spotlight Session & Official Opening: Naming the Silence – Literature as a Tool Against Gender-Based Violence at the Embassy of Colombia, Nairobi



H.E. Ambassador Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz, Ambassador of Colombia to Kenya with Soma Nami founder, Muthoni Muiruri

By opening with Naming the Silence, the African Book Fair set the tone for the days ahead—establishing the Fair not only as a celebration of books but also as a platform for urgent conversations, cultural exchange, and collective action.

Key highlights of the opening session included:

- Over 50 participants, including members of the diplomatic corps and literary community.
- Ambassador Pedro's keynote, which framed the global urgency of addressing GBV.
- A powerful cross-cultural dialogue on literature's role in justice and healing.
- Spotlight on African women's writing through Munira Hussein's work.
- Remarks by Muthoni Muiruri, affirming Soma Nami Books' role as a hub for literary and social transformation.

The Embassy partnership elevated the festival's global resonance and showed how stories can bridge communities and cultures.

PICTORIAL



Programme Highlights

Book Chats

The Book Chats were a standout feature of the African Book Fair 2025, offering intimate spaces where authors and readers connected directly. Highlights included Iris Mwanza's *The Lion's Den*, Shiko Nguru's *The Intasimi Series*, Natasha Omokhodion's *No Be From Hia*, and the collective discussion on *Let Us Conspire, and Other Stories*. These sessions went beyond literary critique, creating personal encounters that made literature feel accessible, alive, and deeply relevant.

Panel Discussions

The panel discussions formed the core of the African Book Fair, tackling urgent themes in African literature and society. From the Opening Spotlight on Gender-Based Violence to debates on the right to read, African stories in global spaces, and the rise of book clubs, the sessions brought together diverse voices. Sunday's panels deepened the discourse with conversations on libraries, migration, memory, language politics, and a tribute to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Collectively, these panels positioned the Fair as a forum for advocacy, cultural exchange, and critical reflection beyond the marketplace.

Book sales

The book sales exhibition was a lively hub of the African Book Fair 2025, with over 13,000 titles from all 54 African countries and the diaspora. Sanaa Hall at KNLS became a true marketplace of ideas, where readers engaged directly with authors and their works. The exhibition not only showcased the richness of African literature but also advanced the Fair's mission to revitalize Kenya's reading culture and support the literary ecosystem's sustainability.

Poetry/Spoken Word Sessions

The Poetry Party on Saturday, August 9, was a vibrant highlight of the Fair—an electrifying night of rhythm, words, and performance. Blending spoken word, musical poetry, and storytelling, the event explored themes of love, resistance, memory, and identity. It affirmed poetry's enduring place as one of Africa's most powerful and unifying storytelling traditions.

PICTORIAL



By the Numbers

Across four days, the African Book Fair demonstrated both cultural and social impact. A total of 16 events were hosted, featuring 38 guest speakers and artists, and drawing an audience of more than 4,400 attendees. Beyond physical participation, the Fair achieved strong digital reach and engagement, generating over 319,000 impressions on social media. Importantly, the literary marketplace was equally vibrant, with more than 13,000 books circulated. Together, these outcomes highlight the Fair's success in convening diverse audiences, amplifying African literature, and converting cultural experiences into sustained community engagement.



Days
4



Attendees
4.4k



Books
+13K



guests/artists
38



Conversions
+2.9k

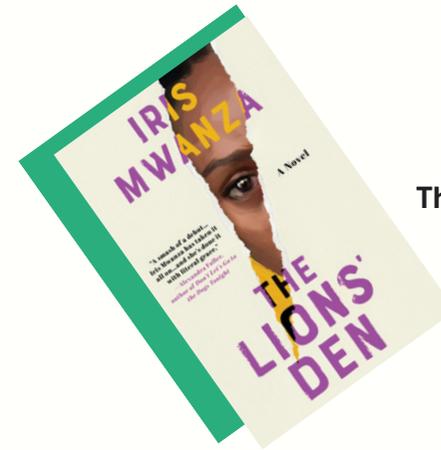


Events
16



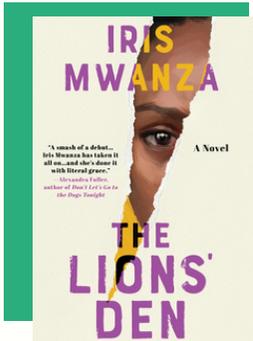
Impressions
+319K

Top Reads of the Fair



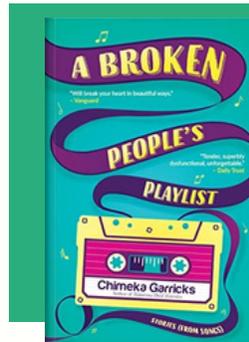
1

The Lion's Den by Iris Mwanza



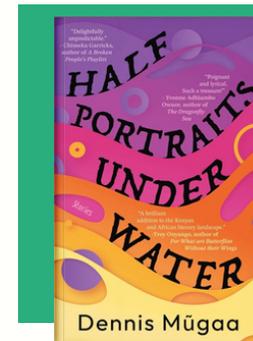
2

**Confessions of Nairobi Men and Women
Joan Thatiah**



5

**A Broken People's Playlist
Chimeka Garricks**



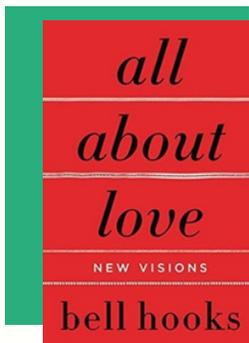
8

**Half Portraits Under Water
Dennis Muga**



3

**Big Little Fights
Jackson Biko**



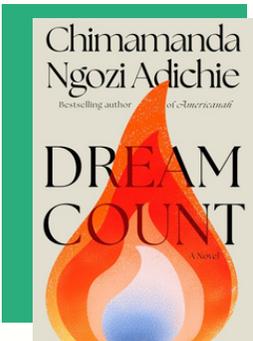
6

**All About Love: New Visions
bell hooks**



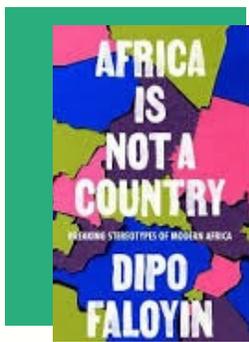
9

**Stay with Me
Ayobami Adebayo**



4

**Dream Count
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**



7

**Africa is not a Country
Dipo Faloyin**



10

**Decolonize, Humxnize
Kathryn Toure**

PICTORIAL



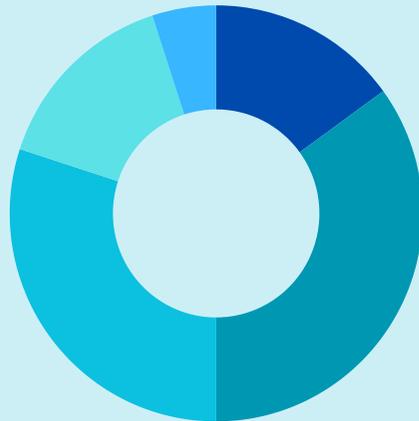
Demographic

Gender

Female Male



Age



18-24

15%

25-34

35%

35-44

30%

45-54

15%

55+

5%

Interests

Literature

Reading

Culture

Festivals

Africa & Politics

Active Times

Thursday 7th 15%

Friday 8th 20%

Saturday 9th 35%

Sunday 10th 30%

In the Spotlight

African Book Fair in the Media

Brittle Paper

The African Book Fair Returns for its Third Edition in Nairobi

Writing Africa

Soma Nami African Book Fair Program Out Now

Soma Nami African Book Fair 2025 Starts August 7

Iris Mwanza to healind Soma Nami's African Book Fair 2025

The Black British

Out of Africa: Soma Nami's African Book Fair Returns

KNLS

The African Book Fair 2025 is coming to KNLS Maktaba Kuu

Geek Speak

African Book Fair by Soma Nami Books

iN Nairobi

Turning the Page: Soma Nami's 3rd African Book Fair - in nairobi

TNX Africa

African Book Fair brings together readers, writers at KNLS

University of North Carolina

African Book Fairs and Literary Festivals

Casure Concierge

African Book Fair by Soma Nami Books at KNLS, Upperhill

PICTORIAL



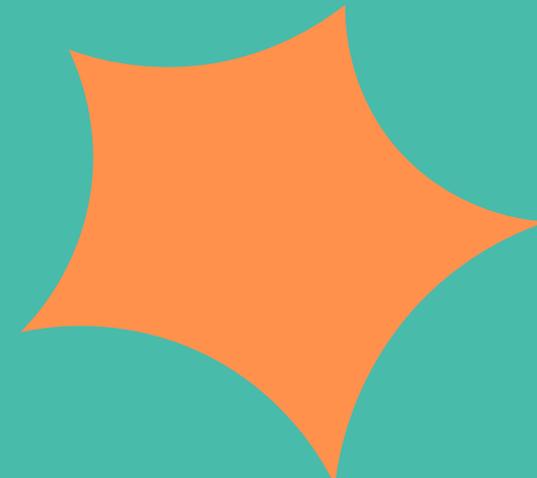
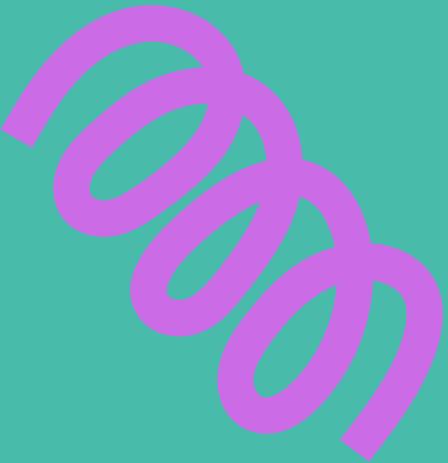
Our Gratitude



We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who made the African Book Fair a resounding success. To our partners and sponsors, thank you for believing in the vision and investing in the power of literature to inspire change. To our friends, supporters, and community, your encouragement and solidarity carried this dream forward. To the authors, artists, and guests, we are grateful for the voices and creativity you shared, which enriched the Fair in immeasurable ways. And to the attendees, whose presence brought energy, curiosity, and dialogue, thank you for making this celebration of books and culture truly meaningful. This collective effort is what made the Fair not just an event, but a movement.

Special thanks to our 2025 partners





Thank you!

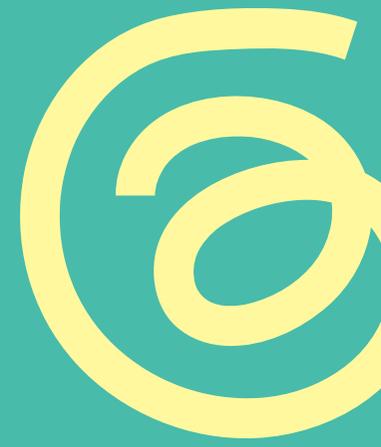
Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to partner with us for the next edition of the African Book Fair, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Soma Nami Books

The Greenhouse Mall, Ground flr, Ngong Rd, Nairobi

Tel: +254 705 548 02

Email: africanbookfair@somanami.co.ke



African Book Fair 2026, 4-9 Aug