

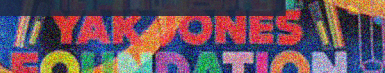


# 2024 NEWSLETTER

FIRST EDITION



[#wereadtochangelives](#)







**Leading the Yak Jones Foundation is fulfilling, as every book, library, and advocacy helps create a generation of empowered, critical thinkers.**



**Dr. Yakama  
Manty Jones**

At Yak Jones Foundation, we believe that reading is the foundation for all learning. Yet, the harsh reality of learning poverty—where children are unable to read and understand simple texts by age 10—remains a daunting challenge in Sierra Leone and beyond. This critical marker highlights whether children are acquiring the basic skills necessary to continue learning throughout their lives. According to the Global Partnership for Education, the global learning poverty rate is alarmingly high, with 7 out of 10 children in low and middle-income countries unable to meet this basic literacy threshold.

Changing this trajectory requires a collective effort—one where every book shared, every learning initiative supported, and every learner reached contributes to accelerating progress.

All of us at the Yak Jones Foundation are proud to be part of this movement for change, witnessing the powerful impact of reading and literacy in the lives of Sierra Leone's young learners. One of the most fulfilling aspects of leading the Yak Jones Foundation is knowing that every book donated, every library or reading squad established, and every competition hosted brings us closer to creating a generation of avid readers fully empowered to be critical thinkers and on track to meet their fullest potential.

2024 has been a year of both challenges and triumphs. Like many in our community, we faced moments that tested our resilience, but these challenges only strengthened our resolve. Thanks to the incredible support of our donors, partners, and volunteers, we turned obstacles into opportunities and celebrated some remarkable milestones you will read about in this newsletter.





**Our mission remains clear: to build a nation of readers, empowered to become leaders and changemakers in their communities.**



**Dr. Yakama  
Manty Jones**

I will highlight a remarkable one. This year, we held our inaugural Reading, Comprehension and Debate Competition for secondary schools under the theme: We Should All Be Feminists: A Necessity or Cultural Imposition? For the first time, we also had schools from outside our capital city, Freetown, participating. Watching young minds engage critically and express themselves eloquently reaffirmed our belief in the transformative power of literacy. Thanks to the generosity of partners like the American International School, Arimah's Reading Club, and the Visao Foundation, we expanded our literacy resources and increased our potential to reach even more young readers.

However, the journey has not been without its challenges. Funding remains one of our greatest hurdles, and this year, we were unable to operate our beloved Reading Squads—a cornerstone of building literacy skills among our beneficiaries. Reviving and scaling these squads will be a key focus in 2025 as we strive to deepen our impact. Our mission remains clear: to build a nation of readers, empowering young minds to become leaders and changemakers in their communities. Our vision is still ambitious but achievable- with your continued support, we aim to create a Sierra Leone where every child has access to quality books, robust literacy programmes, and the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

We cannot do this alone. Your contributions—whether through books, financial support, or volunteering—are the lifeblood of our work. Together, we are not just nurturing a love for reading; we are changing lives, one book at a time. Thank you for standing with us. Let us continue this journey together and make 2025 a year of renewed hope and greater impact.

With heartfelt gratitude,  
*Dr Yakama Manty Jones*  
*Founder, Yak Jones Foundation*





# Key Activities in 2024



## Primary and Secondary School Reading, Comprehension & Debate Competitions.

There is a powerful saying: "Catch them young," which is why, until recently, we had only organised a Reading, Comprehension, and Quiz Competition for primary school pupils.



On 25th May, 2024, we witnessed six schools (two pupils per school) from Freetown showcase their reading and comprehension skills.

The participants from the Tower Hill Kindergarten and Primary School secured the first and second positions, solidifying the THKPS as the top participating school.

They were closely followed by the Merewether Preparatory School and Murraydeen Preparatory School

Later in the year, we hosted the Secondary School edition of our competition for the first time.

This edition was a Reading, Comprehension and Debate Competition. We chose to include a debate instead of a quiz as we wanted to challenge the secondary school pupils to be more critical thinkers.

The topic for this engaging debate was "We Should All Be Feminists: A Necessity or Cultural Imposition," inspired by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's iconic essay and her influential 2012 TEDx talk.





We had ten outstanding participating schools(2 students per school) from across the country, including Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Moyamba. The top three schools in this edition were the Sierra Leone Grammar School, The International School Ltd Secondary, and St. Edward's Secondary School.





## Book donations and library support initiatives.

We donated over 500 books to schools, competition judges, and a creative art initiative. We are currently in the process of supporting the Dr. S.M. Broderick Municipal School to establish a new and vibrant library that will serve as a valuable resource for pupils.

## Community engagements.

We were present at the Narnia Kiddies Career Fair, where we had a mobile library to share the joy of reading and literacy with students from both primary and secondary schools. We had the pleasure of accompanying Moiyattu Banya-Keister, founder of Kingdom Girls and author of "Leila and Her Jar," to read to the brilliant pupils of St Joseph's Primary School. We were also invited to talk about our mission at Afri Radio and Rise Radio. We also launched our LinkedIn page in the last quarter of the year.

## NPSE prep with the Dr. S.M Broderick Municipal School Pupils

As one of our long-standing beneficiaries, every year we organise a two-week revision session designed to equip the Class 6 pupils for success in their National Primary School Exams. On the final day of this intensive revision period, we provided each student with a comprehensive examination kit, thanks to the generous support of our donors: Madam Mary-Ann Kaikai of Madam Wokie, Madam Fatima Sesay of UNIMAX Logistics, Madam Eleanor Thompson, Mr. Edward Foday, and Mr. Benjamin Rogers. Your contributions made a significant impact!





# Impact So Far



**17,500+**

Books Distributed



**11**  
Mobile  
Libraries



**40**  
Books  
Donated



**03**  
Libraries Supported



**16**  
Reading squads  
Established



**9k+**  
Learners matched  
with books

**15K+**  
Adults  
Engaged



# Books that Inspired Us in 2024

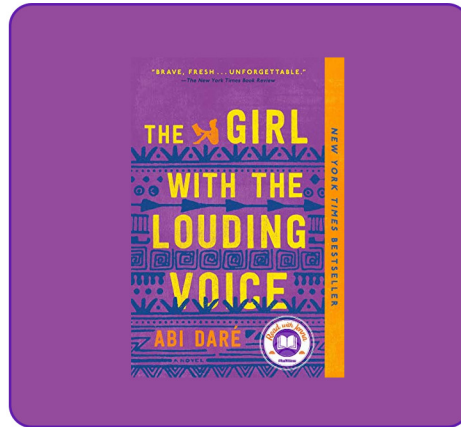
This year, we explored a series of books from various genres that introduced young learners to important discussions on topics such as feminism, gender equality, and the significance of literacy.

## Books for teenagers



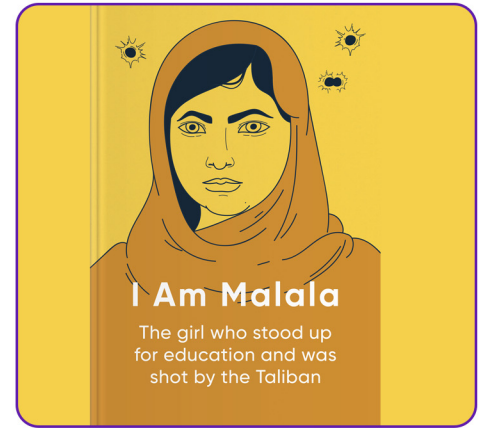
### Dear Ijeawele

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



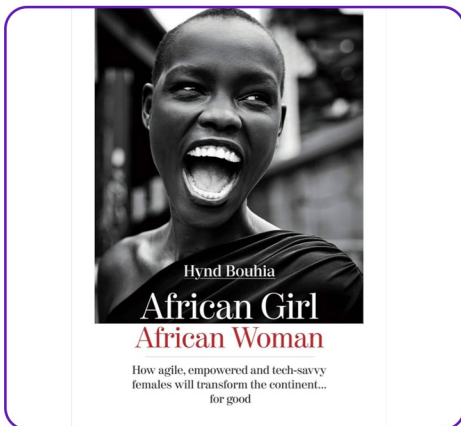
### The Girl with the Louding Voice

by Abi Daré



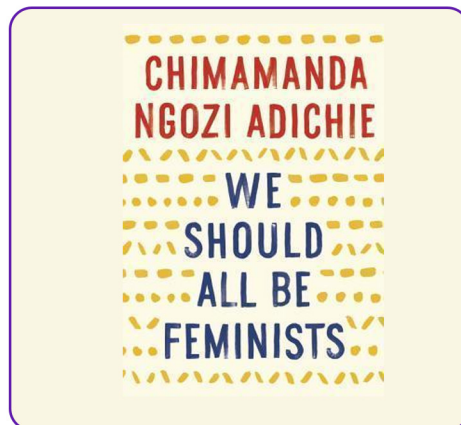
### I Am Malala

by Malala Yousafzai & Patricia McCormick



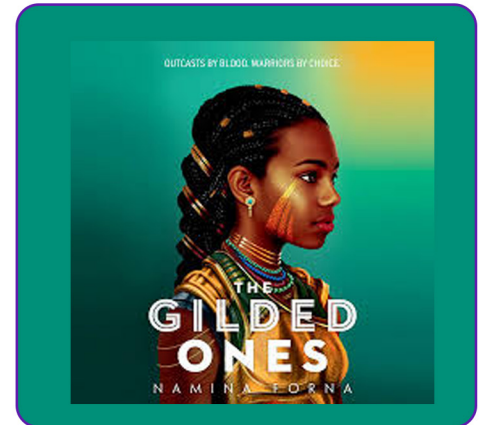
### African Girl, African Woman

by Hynd Bouhia



### We Should All Be Feminists

by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



### The Gilded Ones

by Namina Forna

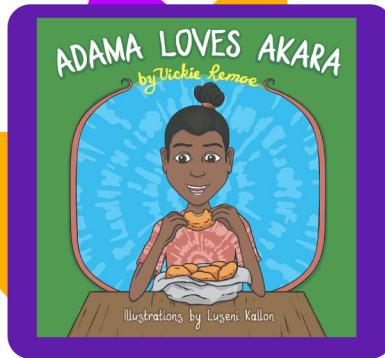


## Books for younger readers



### **Black Girl, Black Girl**

by Ali Kamanda &  
Jorge Redmond



### **Adama Loves Akara**

by Vickie Remoe



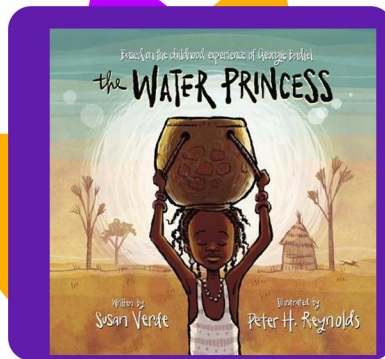
### **Leila and her Jar**

by Moyattu Banya-Keister



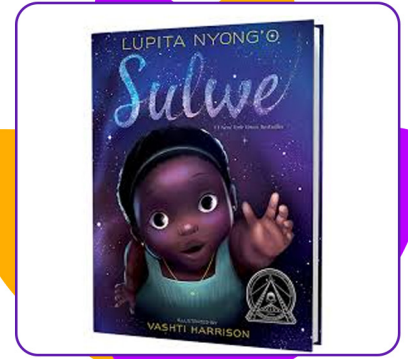
### **A Print for Ami**

by Vickie Remoe



### **The Water Princess**

by Susan Verde



### **Sulwe**

by Lupita Nyong'o



# A Glimpse into 2025

As we welcome the new year, our commitment to our mission remains unwavering. Here are our ambitious plans for the upcoming year:

**Revamping Reading Squads:** We're excited to bring back our Reading Squads, implementing new strategies and resources to inspire a love of reading within our community.

**Establishing a Library at Dr. S.M. Broderick Municipal School:** We aim to create a vibrant library, providing students with access to a diverse range of books and learning materials to foster their educational growth.

**Yak Jones Foundation Merchandise Launch:** Look out for the launch of our unique merchandise. It will not only promote our cause but also allow supporters to proudly showcase their commitment to literacy.

**Hosting Advocacy Events:** We plan to organise a series of engaging advocacy events designed to raise awareness about literacy issues and mobilise community support for our initiatives.

**Forging Local and International Literacy Partnerships:** Our goal is to establish meaningful partnerships both locally and internationally, collaborating with other organisations to promote the importance of reading and literacy.





# Thank You and Recognition

As we reflect on an impactful year, we extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible individuals and organisations who have stood by us. To our volunteer reading coaches who dedicated their time and expertise, our competition sponsors whose generosity made our events possible, and our partners and literacy champions who joined us in celebrating key literacy days—thank you.

Your unwavering support has been the backbone of our mission, and without your contributions, we would not be able to continue empowering young learners and fostering a love for reading across Sierra Leone.

Together, we are creating lasting change. Here's to achieving even greater milestones in the year ahead.

infinity





# Join Our Mission

**Bank Name: Union Trust Bank**  
**Account Name: Yak Jones Foundation**  
**Account Number: 210-056076-01**



**079 12 14 80**



**030 15 07 96**



**yakjonesfoundation@gmail.com**

## Other ways to support

- 01** Donate books, laptops, or funds
- 02** Volunteer as reading coaches
- 03** Co-host book drives

**To discuss other ways we can collaborate or donate, contact us via email.**

**Info@yakjonesfoundation.org and donate@yakjonesfoundation.org**



# Together, We Make a Difference

As we close this edition of our newsletter, we are reminded that every milestone we've achieved is a result of collective effort. Whether you've donated books, volunteered your time, sponsored our competitions, partnered with us or simply cheered us on—you are an essential part of our journey.

With your continued support, we can reach even more young minds, establish more libraries, and create brighter futures for Sierra Leone's youth.

Thank you for being a part of our mission and for believing in the power of literacy to transform lives. Together, we are not just making a difference—we are shaping a better tomorrow.

Here's to another year of growth, impact, and shared success!

## Exciting News for Our UK Literacy Champions!

We're thrilled to share that the Yak Jones Foundation is now officially a registered charity in the UK (Registered Charity Number:1211452). This milestone enhances our ability to continue empowering young learners through literacy.

For our generous UK donors, your contributions may now qualify for tax relief, further amplifying the impact of your support. Together, we can change lives, one book at a time. Thank you for being part of our journey.





# Contact Us

**Visit our website**

[www.yakjonesfoundation.org](http://www.yakjonesfoundation.org)

**Send us an email**

[info@yakjonesfoundation.org](mailto:info@yakjonesfoundation.org)

**Reach us via**

