



The Lusaka Debating League

7-8 February 2026 @ Martin House School

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Conquer your fears.

Introduction

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." - Nelson Mandela

Welcome to the National Debating League. We work with over two hundred schools across South Africa, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Botswana to run structured and competitive debating programs.

With the help of over 300 educators, our tournaments give primary and secondary school students an opportunity to find their voice, learn more about the world around them, and embark on a journey of growth and camaraderie with their teammates.

Your school is invited to join to join the NDL's 2026 League Championship at Martin House School, Chisamba. This will be held on 7-8 February 2026 from 9am to 6pm each day.

Who is eligible to compete?

This tournament is open to schools from across Zambia. Participants can be in Grades 4 to A-Levels. We will offer training and assistance to schools with new debating clubs, making this the perfect time to start a debating program at your school! Students will compete in teams of between 3 and 5 members.

Our Founding Members in Zambia are: Ashford Academy, Childhood Joy Academy, International School of Lusaka, Lusaka Oaktree School, Martin House College, Pinewood Preparatory School, Saint Mary's Secondary School - Lusaka, Simba International School, and St Ignatius College.

Build teamwork and critical thinking.



Confidence

Your debaters will overcome their fears of public speaking and become more comfortable in their own skin.

Camaraderie and Teamwork

Debates are won through the collective effort of the team, and everyone has a unique role to play.



Friendships and Social Skills

Debating is an inherently social sport. Your debaters will meet dozens of new likeminded people from their city and across the country.

Resilience

Your debaters will learn how to handle victory and loss in a supportive (but competitive) environment.





**Join a community
of over 200 schools.**

Teams and Age Divisions

Schools may enter multiple teams, each consisting of between 3 and 5 members. For each team entered, the school will need to bring a teacher who is willing to join our adjudication panels.

These are the possible age divisions for teams to compete in:

Group A: Grade 10+ (Max 8 mins per speech)

Group B: Grade 8-9 (Max 6 mins per speech)

Group C: Grade 6-7 (Max 4 mins per speech)

Group D: Grade 4-5 (Max 4 mins per speech)

Each time a team debates, they will field 3 speakers. One of their members will either serve as the chairperson or timekeeper of the debate.

Further Competition

The top performing teams in the league will receive an invitation to compete at the National Championships. The primary school National Championship will be held in Gqeberha at Collegiate in October. The high school National Championship will be held at St Benedict's College, Bedfordview in October.



**Represent Zambia
Internationally.**

2026 Pan-African Debating Championship

The fourth edition of the 2026 Pan-African Debating Championship will be held at Reddam House Bedfordview in Johannesburg on 1-3 May 2026.

For the first time, we will merge both our Junior and Senior Pan-African Debating Championships, making it possible for schools to bring teams from all divisions.

This is an invitation-only championship and only the top 4 teams per division will be eligible to enter.

More information about this event is available at <https://ndl.org.za/tours/pac26>.

Schools from Zambia should register through Imeni, who will arrange a comprehensive package including flights, transfers, sightseeing, hotels, and so on.

2026 Cape Town Open

The 2026 Cape Town "Open" will be held on 14-16 August 2026. This event is open to all participants from our Lusaka Debating League. It is designed to give teams of all experience levels the opportunity to build international friendships and raise their standard of competition.

Schools from Zambia should register through Imeni, who will arrange a comprehensive package including flights, transfers, sightseeing, hotels, and so on.



**Flying the flag high
for Zambia!**



Rhodes Park School

Debaters from Rhodes Park School were runners up at the 2025 Pan-African Debating Championship in Cape Town. The final was against Durban Girls' College from South Africa.

St Ignatius College

St Ignatius College proudly and successfully represented Zambia at both the 2025 Pan-African Debating Championship in Cape Town and the 2025 Johannesburg Open in December.



Lusaka Oaktree School

Lusaka Oaktree represented Zambia at the Junior Pan-African Debating Championship in Cape Town and won the finals against Siyabulela Primary School from Cape Town.

International School of Lusaka

The ISL Junior team were runners up in the Junior Division of the 2025 NDL Johannesburg Open.



Thank you to our partners at Imeni for organizing comprehensive travel packages for our Zambian competitors.



Explore the world
around us.

Preparation

Most debate topics will only be available at the competition. This means students will need to have a good general knowledge, think on their feet, and carefully interpret the topics.

To aide your preparations, we have pre-released two topics per division. The complete version is available online at <https://ndl.org.za/leagues/lusaka/#topics>. The online version *also* contains a list of research links for students to consult.

We expect students to have fully written speeches for these prepared debates. They will only receive preparation time at the event for the unprepared topics.

Group A: Grade 10+

Topic #1: Zambia should recognize Somaliland as an independent state

Topic #2: Zambia should prohibit foreign online retail platforms that do not have a physical presence in Zambia (eg: Amazon, Shein, Temu, Takealot)

Group B: Grade 8-9

Topic #1: Developments blocking animal migration patterns should be demolished (eg: The Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya Hotel)

Topic #2: Sports teams should not be allowed to advertise gambling platforms on their playing kit

In Group B, each speaker has up to 6 minutes to speak. In Group A this is 8 minutes per speech. Please remember that the third speaker of each team *should not* have a prepared speech. The third speaker's role is to rebut their opponents, defend their team, and summarize.



Find your voice.

Group C: Grade 6-7

Topic #1: Hostile architecture should be banned

Topic #2: Governments should focus on making the internet free instead of funding libraries

Group D: Grade 4-5

Topic #1: We should ban fireworks

Topic #2: Schools should ban rugby

In Group C and D, each speaker has up to 4 minutes to speak. Please remember that the third speaker of each team *should not* have a prepared speech.

Debate Format Guides

The NDL has an online guide to our debate format. It can be found at <https://guide.ndl.org.za/>

Our 2025 training booklet can also be downloaded at this link: <https://ndl.org.za/downloads/lusaka/NDL-Workshop-Booklet-2026.pdf>



Alternatively, scan this QR code.

Please feel free to make copies of our training booklet.



Join a community
of passionate educators.

Professional Development

Many of our adjudicators are teachers. Some are even school principals!

Becoming an adjudicator gives you a unique opportunity to sharpen your own professional skillset.

You will work with a co-judge in every debate. Through doing this multiple times a year, our adjudicators have become skilled at building consensus with their peer and understanding different perspectives.

Over time, our adjudicators also become exceptionally good at expressing their perspectives, giving constructive critique, and understanding where the crux of an issue can be found.

Finally, adjudication also gives you practice in listening to and comparing large volumes of information quickly.

Training Workshop

We will run an online training session for teachers and adjudicators at the end of January. This will help ensure our judges and coaches share a common understanding of debating and how to judge.

Core Skills for an Adjudicator

Our most successful adjudicators have mastered the ability to separate their personal opinions from the arguments they are listening to.

They have also become great at listening and taking notes—we can't expect the human mind to remember *everything*!



**Build ambition
and resilience.**

Awards

At the end of the event we will recognize our top performing speakers and teams with medals, certificates and (sometimes) trophies. All recorded speakers will receive a participation certificate. All educators and coaches will receive certificates of recognition for their contributions to the community.

Registration Fees

The registration fee per debater is ZMW 1,400. There are no fees for registered adjudicators. The registration deadline is 2 February 2026.

The fee covers participation, any awards won, along with lunch, snacks, and dinner each day.

Fees should be paid by a school using a SWIFT bank transfer to the NDL's South African account. Alternative, we are able to receive payments using online Visa/Mastercard transactions or Airtel/MTN money transfers.

Schedule

The event schedule is available at <https://ndl.org.za/leagues/lusaka/schedule>.

Invite Letter

An invitation letter can be downloaded here: <https://ndl.org.za/downloads/lusaka/NDL-Lusaka-Invite-2026.pdf>

How to Register

Registration forms are available online, at: <https://admin.ndl.org.za/register/>

Please free to contact Thishin using thishin@ndl.org.za or 081 343 9036.

We are ready to answer any questions you may have about how to join or prepare.

Join an growing community



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South Africa



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Johannesburg,
South Africa



**Colegio
Angolano de
Talatona**
Luanda, Angola



**Colégio Kalabo
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Lycée Français Gustave-Eiffel
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Maseru, Lesotho



Maputo International College
Maputo, Mozambique



Maputo International School
Maputo, Mozambique



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Martin House College
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Africa



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Africa



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Africa



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Africa



**Yellow Wood
Environmental
Prep School**
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**Zwaanswyk
Academy**
Cape Town, South
Africa

We look forward to making memories with you



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