Meet the Panel

Mubanga Kalimamukwento is a multi-award-winning editor and writer. She is the founding editor of Ubwali Literary Magazine and a PhD student in the department of Gender, Women and Sexualities Studies with a minor in Development Studies and Social Change at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, where she researches Zambian married women who are long-term survivors of HIV.

Mubanga was born in Lusaka, Zambia. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Law from Cavendish University Zambia, a Master's degree in Law from the University of Minnesota, and a Master's degree in Fine Arts from Hamline University.

She won the Dinaane Debut Fiction Award for her debut novel, *The Mourning Bird*. Mubanga also won the Kalemba Short Story Prize and was shortlisted for the Bristol Short Story Prize. In 2024, she became the first African writer to win the Drue Heinz Prize for Literature.

Leslie Wells is the Deputy Director, Program Partnerships at the Stephen Lewis Foundation. She works to create the conditions for the Foundation's 90+ community-led partner organizations to tell their story and share their impact with the SLF's donors and supporters, as well as managing large grants and major projects, including those funded by the Government of Canada. She has been working in the health equity and human rights sector both internationally and close to home for the past 15 years. Outside of work, she enjoys backcountry camping, elaborate cooking projects, and spending time with her geriatric corgi.

Linda Sestock is the National President of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) and a dedicated advocate for gender equality education, and community leadership. A long-time leader within CFUW, she previously served as Club President, Regional Director, VP Québec, and Deputy President.

In September 2025, Linda spent almost 3 weeks in Zambia, visiting rural schools outside of Lusaka, and a taking a trip to the Eastern

Province of Chipata, with other CFUW members and the SLF, to visit 3 schools that benefit from the Young, Happy Healthy Safe (YHHS) International Service Project (ISP).

As CFUW National President, Linda is honoured to support the YHHS ISP, championing programs that empower youth and foster bright, safe futures for children and families in Zambia.