



Newsletter



This month's edition explores how Ubuntu—the spirit of “I am because we are”—is transforming classrooms, communities, and young lives.

LEAP INSTITUTE

A WORD FROM OUR EXCO

2 OCTOBER, 2024

THIS MONTH'S EDITION EXPLORES HOW UBUNTU—THE SPIRIT OF "I AM BECAUSE WE ARE"—IS TRANSFORMING CLASSROOMS, COMMUNITIES, AND YOUNG LIVES.

The LEAP Institute's work is shaped by a broadened, holistic understanding of Ubuntu. This evolving framework moves beyond the traditional phrase, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" ("I am because you are"), into eight deeply human dimensions: Humanisation, Breath, Body, Language, Mind, Heart, Spirit, and Power. Each of these dimensions resonates with a component of LEAP's model.

AT THE CORE OF THE LEAP INSTITUTE LIES A PHILOSOPHY THAT IS BOTH ANCIENT AND URGENT — UBUNTU.

In the April edition of the newsletter, we explore the work done by the LEAP Institute team upon their return to Tabase Village in Mthatha — not just to facilitate workshops, but to walk alongside a community steadily shaping its future from within. This visit was more than a scheduled engagement. It was a moment of reflection, renewal, and recommitment to the values at the heart of this work: Ubuntu, resilience, and local ownership.



RESILIENCE AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL

The LEAP Institute defines resilience not as survival, but transformation.

In partnership with Neurozone®, using neuroscience-informed strategies like the Adolescent Resilience Index (ARI) educators gain real-time insight into key resilience indicators — including emotional safety, agency, stress mastery, and interpersonal connection. In practice, this means more than just tracking data — it means shaping interventions that meet learners where they are.

In Tabase, the groundwork is being laid through self-reflective teaching, and purpose-driven youth programs. Resilience here isn't about bouncing back — it's about rising with purpose.



LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOMS AT THE HEART OF TABASE

Lever 5's work in Jumba and Tabase brought the learner-centred education model into sharp focus. Through workshops and culture shift, educators were trained to build classrooms prioritising student voice, curiosity, and agency.

This shift mirrors Ubuntu in action: co-creating knowledge, cultivating shared leadership, and honouring every learner's story as part of a greater whole.



But this work is also a reflection of resilience in practice. By helping teachers shift from traditional, passive instruction to student-driven learning, Lever 5 is fostering the kind of cognitive and emotional agility that defines resilient education systems.

Environmental Work in Tabase and North West

Ubuntu is not an abstract philosophy at the LEAP Institute. It is felt in the soil, the sweat, and the shared learning of communities. Nowhere was that more visible than through the recent work of Lever 3 in the Eastern Cape and North West provinces.

In Tabase, 35 students planted 35 Spekboom saplings – a small act with a powerful message: we grow when we grow together. More than a lesson in climate action, this was a lesson in shared responsibility and honoring the land.

In Motlhabi village North West, learners launched a “Stop Littering” campaign and led peer-teaching workshops on plastic safety. The result? Community-rooted environmental leadership built on Ubuntu’s ethic of collective care.



Digital Transformation in Tabase

Resilience in the Staffroom

Through the establishment of Digital Hubs, educators and community members in Tabase Village gained access to essential digital tools and foundational training — closing the digital divide and sparking self-liberation through technology. By fostering digital competencies, the LEAP Institute is doing more than teaching skills; it is expanding the horizons of self-reliance and cultivating resilience across the community.

During the visit, Lever 1 brought foundational training to teachers in Tabase Village, focusing on computer literacy and baseline digital assessments.

***But this was more than just upskilling.
It was a resilience mission.***

Educators, often stretched thin in under-resourced environments, gained not only tools but confidence — the kind of quiet empowerment that fuels long-term change.



The training began with a baseline assessment to understand each teacher's digital fluency, ensuring that the approach was both personalised and supportive. Lever 1 facilitators emphasised a growth mindset, encouraging educators to view mistakes not as setbacks, but as stepping stones — a fundamental shift that builds cognitive resilience.



By integrating reflective learning with digital literacy, LEAP is building a resilient teaching ecosystem — one where teachers feel supported, equipped, and hopeful.

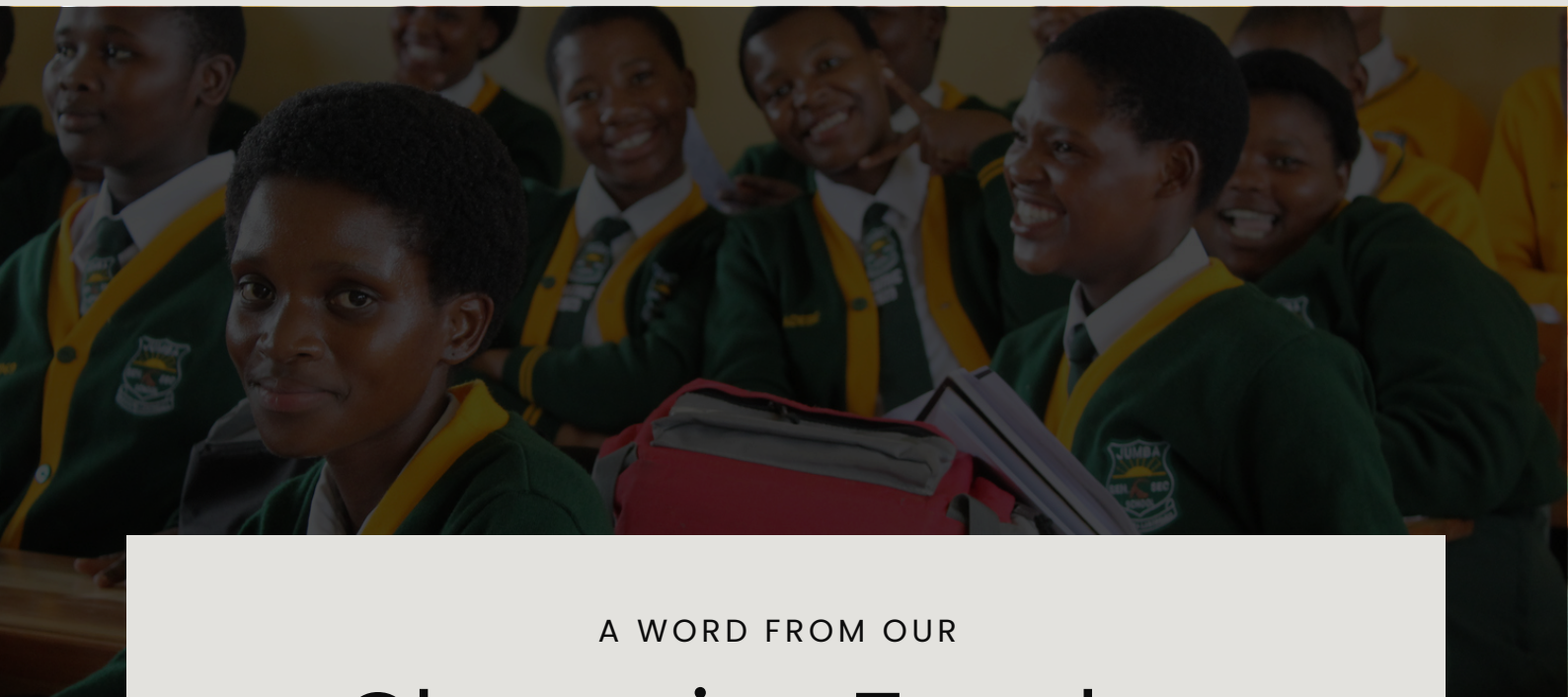


At the Ubuntu Mathematics Institute (UMI), we are reimagining what it means to teach and learn mathematics — centering our work on the principles of Ubuntu, the commitments of our UMI Charter, and the six strategic pillars in our UMI Conceptual Model. Our programs are grounded in the belief that mathematics should not only build intellect, but also restore confidence, connection, and dignity — especially in under-resourced learning environments.

One of our active flagship programs is the Tabase Village Mathematics Program, where we are walking alongside two schools in Mthatha, Eastern Cape to co-create practical, sustainable strategies for closing mathematics learning gaps. This includes running Ubuntu-based teacher workshops, designing context-sensitive intervention models, and helping educators shift toward teaching for understanding, not just coverage. In our LEAP Science & Maths Schools, we are currently supporting the creation of short-term Grade 12 mathematics interventions, while facilitating conversations around a shared long-term strategy that can serve all LEAP campuses going forward.

Looking ahead, we are laying the groundwork for our UMI Champion Teachers initiative — a movement to develop and connect committed educators who embody the values of Ubuntu in their classrooms and communities. As we continue to grow our hub spaces and school partnerships, our focus remains clear: build strong teachers, inspired learners, and ecosystems of care and excellence in mathematics.





A WORD FROM OUR

Champion Teacher



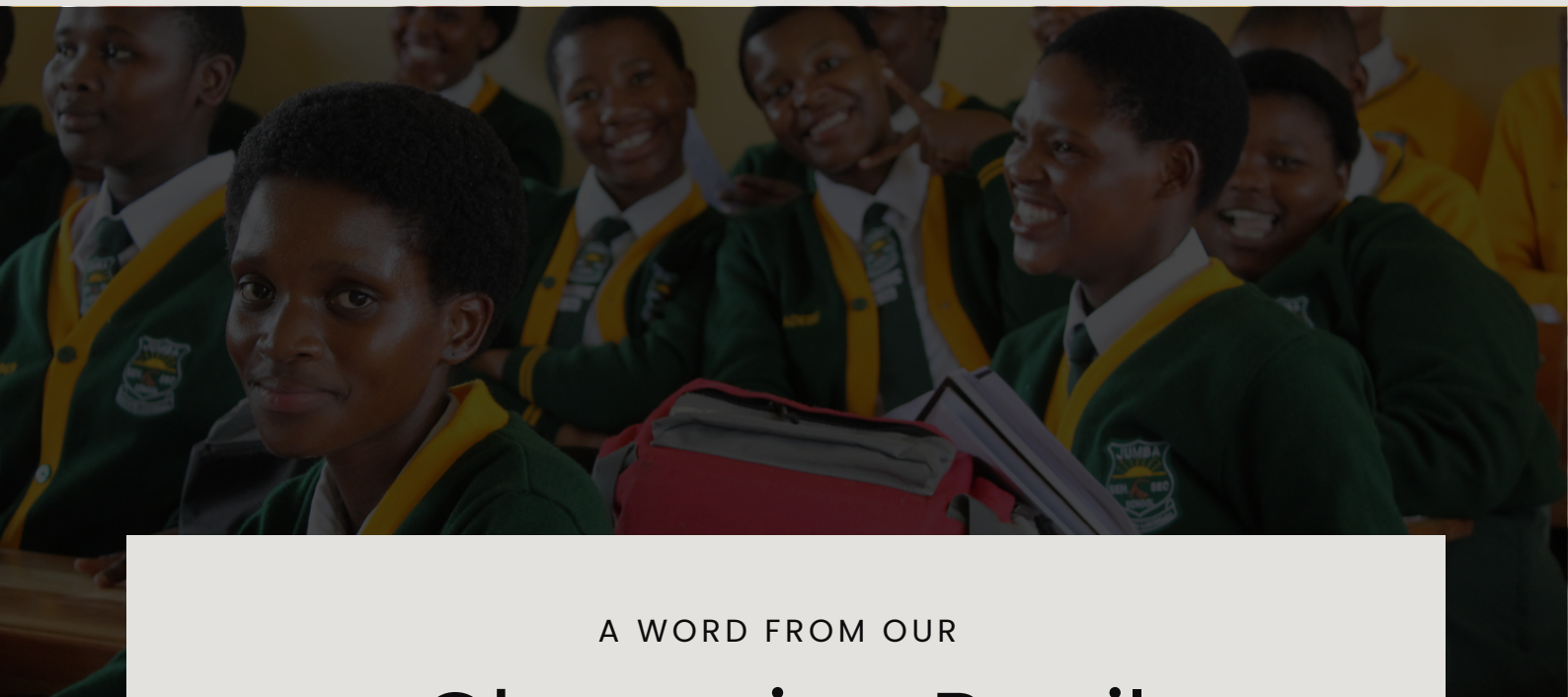
Bulelani Myanda



Bulelani Myanda

Mathematics Champion Teacher

“During one of our sessions with Sizwe Tafane, there’s a lot I learned there. I learned that we as teachers have to look at the psychological part of the learner and why learners are not performing” – Bulelani Myanda



A WORD FROM OUR

Champion Pupil



“For the past few years it has been nice attending sessions with the LEAP institute. We discovered things we never knew about and realised we can do things that we thought were impossible. We learned about the bad effects of plastic and how we can combat it.

We even came up with a project titled “Eco Bricks” made from old recyclable plastics that can be turned into eco-friendly bricks and later used in things like chairs and bridges”

Jumba Secondary School Pupil.

A LOOK AHEAD

South Africa's education system is still shaped by deep inequalities and outdated models that fail to honour the full humanity of our children. For too long, learning has been something done to students rather than with them.

It's time to place children at the center — not just focusing on what they must learn, but on how they learn, who they are, and what they need to thrive. It is time to reimagine education as a deeply human act — one that honours each child's mind, heart, and context. To do this, we must center learning on the child, guided by how they learn, what they need to thrive, and who they are becoming. Not in theory, but in daily classroom practice. Not someday, but now.

The LEAP Institute is answering this call with courage and clarity. We are not waiting for permission to transform — we are doing the work. One school at a time. One teacher at a time. Through Ubuntu, resilience, and community-rooted learning, we are building a future where education heals, connects, and uplifts. This is the movement to rehumanise education — and it is already underway.



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