

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE QUARTER

In the past quarter, one message rises above all else – the power of showing up. Showing up for learners. Showing up for communities. Showing up even when the work is challenging, the needs are great, and the outcomes are not always immediate.

This season reminded us that meaningful change does not always begin with big moments, but with consistent presence. It begins when someone listens, when guidance is offered, when support is extended beyond words and into action. Whether through mentorship, access to resources, or moments of encouragement, the simple act of being present can shift mindsets and open doors.

We have seen how collaboration strengthens impact. When individuals and organisations come together with a shared purpose, opportunities multiply and reach further than any one effort ever could. This quarter reaffirmed that partnerships rooted in trust, care, and shared values are essential to creating lasting change.

At the heart of it all are the young people we serve. Their resilience, curiosity, and determination continue to inspire us. When barriers are removed – whether emotional, academic, or practical – learners begin to see themselves differently. Confidence grows. Dreams take shape. Hope is restored.

As you journey through this edition, you will encounter stories that reflect growth, leadership, and the quiet victories that come from consistent support.



They are reminders that impact is not always loud – sometimes it is found in steady commitment and the courage to keep showing up.

We remain deeply grateful to everyone who walks this journey with us. Your presence, belief, and contribution make this work possible.

Together, we continue to show up – and together, we continue to build futures.

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## GROWING THROUGH GUIDANCE AND BELIEF

### Testimonial by Koketso Maphoto

Growing up in the rural village of Pankop, Koketso Maphoto learned early on that resilience is not a choice it is a necessity. Raised by a single mother who instilled in her the belief that challenges can be turned into opportunities, Koketso developed a deep appreciation for every chance to learn, grow, and rise above her circumstances.

Despite her determination, Koketso’s journey was not without obstacles. Before joining the Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation, she struggled with procrastination, low self-confidence, goal-setting, and self-motivation – challenges that threatened both her academic progress and personal growth. With limited access to mentorship, technology, and youth development resources in her community, navigating these challenges alone often felt overwhelming.

Koketso’s journey took a transformative turn when she joined the Foundation through the Girl in the Mirror mentorship programme. Inspired by the organisation’s mission to uplift young girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, she initially sought guidance, structure, and support—but what she found went far beyond her expectations.

Through consistent participation in mentorship workshops, leadership sessions, and goal-setting activities, Koketso experienced meaningful transformation. The structured support and resources provided helped her improve academically, build confidence, and develop a healthier outlook on life.



More importantly, she began to believe in herself. One of the most impactful aspects of her journey has been the sense of belonging and sisterhood she found within the programme. The relationships built with mentors, fellow mentees, and staff created a safe and supportive environment one where young women could speak openly, grow together, and uplift one another without fear of judgement.

Over time, Koketso developed key life skills including critical thinking, teamwork, resilience, accountability, and goal-setting. These skills not only strengthened her academic engagement but also shaped her character and sense of purpose.



A standout moment in her journey came when mentees were given the opportunity to speak openly about themselves and their goals. For Koketso, this experience helped her confront and overcome social anxiety and insecurity, allowing her to find her voice and step into leadership with confidence.

Today, Koketso is more motivated than ever to pursue higher education. She aspires to obtain a degree in Social Work, driven by a desire to support others who face challenges similar to her own. She is also working towards securing a scholarship and hopes to one day launch community initiatives that uplift and empower young people.

Reflecting on her journey, Koketso describes being part of the Foundation as more than participation it is a sense of empowerment, direction, and belonging.

Her story is a powerful reminder that when young people are given guidance, resources, and belief, they do more than overcome challenges they grow into future changemakers.

***“My dream is to study Social Work so that I can help other young people who face the same challenges I did. The Foundation showed me that my background does not define my future.”***

## Message from mentor:

***“Always remember that your background does not define who you are. Never allow anyone to dim your light you are unique, and your voice matters. Keep shining, keep pushing forward, believe in yourself, and never apologise for being unapologetically you. The world is full of opportunities; go out there and make the most of them.”***

***Constance Dlamini***

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## **BROADENING HORIZONS: ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME**

Learning extends far beyond the classroom and for learners from Tembisa West Secondary School, a recent career exploration tour to Waterstone College was a powerful reminder of what becomes possible when exposure meets opportunity.

For many of the learners, this visit marked their first experience of a private educational institution. From the moment they arrived, curiosity turned into awe as they were introduced to a learning environment vastly different from what they know one that sparked reflection, ambition, and big dreams.

The tour was carefully curated to give learners a holistic view of education beyond high school. The group explored various departments and classrooms, engaging directly with educators and staff who welcomed them with openness and curiosity.

The girls spent time in the preschool, interacting with younger learners and gaining firsthand insight into early childhood education. While the experience helped some refine their career interests, it also allowed them to confidently rule out pathways that didn't align with their passions a valuable outcome in itself.

Meanwhile, the boys were guided through the school's facilities by the facilities manager, whose initial skepticism quickly turned into admiration.

One of the most impactful moments of the day came during visits to the science and technology spaces, where learners were introduced to fabrication and 3D printing facilities. The Engineering Graphics and Design classroom was another highlight learners engaged deeply, asked questions, and even captured photos of the technical drawings on display.

One learner, in particular, stood out documenting the work and expressing a strong desire to one day study at Waterstone College.

Conversations with educators also opened honest discussions about class sizes. When Waterstone staff learned that some learners come from classes of up to 62 learners, it sparked reflection and empathy reinforcing the importance of equity, access, and continued support for under-resourced schools

What made the visit truly special was its ripple effect. The experience didn't only leave an impression on the learners it touched the educators and hosts as well.

***“It was incredible being with them and their teachers. They were fully immersed in everything we offered. It changed our lives too.”***

So moved by the experience, Waterstone College has committed to supporting the learners further through a stationery drive, ensuring the visit translates into tangible, ongoing support.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the staff at Waterstone College for opening their doors and embracing this collaboration, and to the staff and learners of Tembisa West Secondary School for their enthusiasm and partnership in making this impactful day possible.



# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2025



The release of the 2025 matric results in the Mmamethlake Circuit marks a powerful moment of pride, reflection, and celebration. Against the odds, through perseverance, discipline, and unwavering determination, the Class of 2025 has reached a milestone that speaks not only to academic achievement, but to resilience and growth.

For the learners supported through Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation, particularly the Girl in the Mirror programme participants, these results carry even deeper meaning. They represent long hours of commitment, moments of self-doubt confronted with courage, and a growing belief in their own potential. These young women have shown that when learners are supported holistically academically, emotionally, and personally success becomes attainable.

Throughout the year, Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation remained actively involved in learners' journeys, providing mentorship, academic support, motivation, and safe spaces for growth. The Girl in the Mirror programme played a critical role in helping learners build confidence, discipline, and self-awareness, equipping them not only to face examinations, but to navigate life beyond the classroom.

The overall performance of the Mmamethlake Circuit with Ratlhaahana Secondary School achieving a 97.9% pass rate and securing 1<sup>st</sup> position in the circuit. Reflects steady progress and dedication across schools, educators, and learners. Behind every result lies a story of perseverance learners balancing academic pressure with personal challenges, yet choosing to show up, remain focused, and finish strong.

What makes this achievement especially significant is the collective effort behind it. Educators, mentors, parents, and programme facilitators worked hand in hand to guide learners, provide accountability, and encourage them to believe in themselves, even when the journey felt overwhelming.

As the Class of 2025 prepares to take their next steps into higher education, skills development, entrepreneurship, or the world of work we celebrate not only what they have achieved, but who they are becoming. These learners have demonstrated that with consistent support, structure, and self-belief, success is possible.

To the Class of 2025, and especially our Girl in the Mirror participants:

**We are incredibly proud of you. May this achievement remind you that you are capable, worthy, and ready for the future ahead. Carry your strength, confidence, and lessons forward your journey is only just beginning.**

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## COMPLIANCE CORNER: UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Did you know** that South Africa recognises different types of organisations that are established specifically to serve the public good? These organisations operate on a pro-bono basis, meaning they exist to benefit communities rather than generate profit for individuals.

In this edition of Compliance Corner, we unpack the **three main types of public benefit organisations** in South Africa and what you should consider if you're thinking of starting one.



## 1. Non-Profit Company (NPC)

A Non-Profit Company is established in terms of the Companies Act 71 of 2008 and operates much like a private company – but with a public benefit purpose.

Key characteristics of an NPC include:

- It is incorporated to serve a public benefit
- Its income and property cannot be distributed to members, directors, or office bearers
- Its name must end with NPC
- It is registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC)
- It is governed by a Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI)
- It may qualify for tax exemptions and donation benefits if approved by SARS

Example: An organisation providing free skills training to unemployed youth.



## 2. Non-Profit Organisation (NPO)

A Non-Profit Organisation is established under the Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 and is commonly used by community-based initiatives.

Key characteristics of an NPO include:

- It is formed for a public purpose
- Its income and assets are not distributable, except as reasonable compensation for services
- Its name must end with NPO
- It is registered with the Department of Social Development
- It is governed by a constitution, trust deed, or MOI

Example: A community group that provides food parcels or runs after-school programmes.

## 3. Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

An NGO is not a legally distinct entity in South African law, but rather a term used to describe organisations that operate independently of government influence.

Key characteristics include:

- Focus on advocacy, humanitarian aid, or development work
- May be registered as an NPC, NPO, or trust, depending on structure
- Often rely on donor funding, grants, or international support

Example: An organisation advocating for gender equality or responding to disaster relief.



Thinking of Starting an Organisation? Here's What to Consider

Before registering an organisation, it's important to reflect on the following:

- Purpose: Are you focused on community service, development, or advocacy?
- Funding: Will you rely on local donors, international funding, or grants?
- Scope: Are you addressing a local need or a broader societal issue?
- Compliance: Are you prepared to meet governance, reporting, and legal requirements?

Understanding the right structure from the start can help ensure sustainability, credibility, and long-term impact.

**Compliance isn't just about ticking boxes it's about building organisations that are transparent, accountable, and trusted by the communities they serve.**

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# LEAP 4 LITERACY WALKATHON 2025: RUNNING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

On 9 November 2025, the Mqhele Yezizwe Foundation proudly hosted its annual Leap 4 Literacy Walkathon, promoting literacy and access to education.

From the early morning hours, the atmosphere was filled with excitement, determination, and unity. Participants of all ages showed up some running, others walking but all driven by the same goal: to support literacy development in under-resourced schools.

The event served as a reminder that literacy is not just about books, but about opening doors to confidence, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. Every step taken on the route symbolised a commitment to a child's future.

In many rural communities, limited access to reading materials remains a major barrier to educational success. Through Leap 4 Literacy Walkathon, funds raised contribute directly to:

- Book donations to schools
- Literacy support programmes
- Creating reading-friendly learning spaces for learners

By running for literacy, participants helped bridge the gap between potential and opportunity.

The success of the 2025 Leap 4 Literacy Walkathon was made possible through the collective effort of our supporters. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our sponsors, volunteers, schools, and every individual who registered, donated, or cheered from the sidelines.

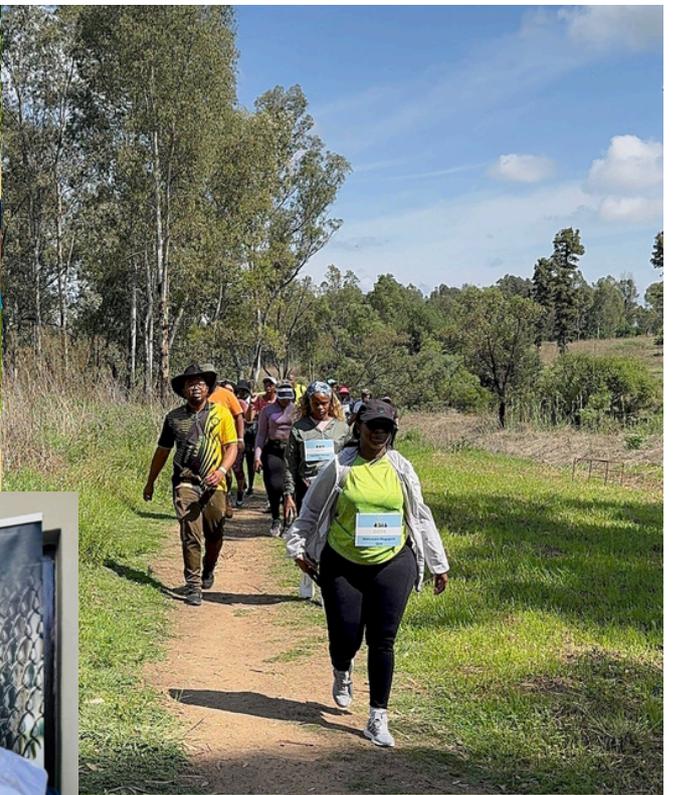
Your support goes beyond the event day it strengthens our mission and fuels our ongoing work in education and youth development.

As we reflect on the success of the 2025 Leap 4 Literacy Walkathon, we are reminded that change doesn't always begin in classrooms sometimes, it begins with a single step taken together.

Thank you for running with us, believing in literacy, and helping us build a future where every learner has the tools to thrive.

**Together, we leap towards a more literate and empowered generation.**

[www.mqheleyezizwe.com](http://www.mqheleyezizwe.com)



# WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE M.Y. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS?

## Donate

To ensure our initiatives are a success, we are relying on the generosity and support of donors like you.

Your contribution, no matter the amount, will directly contribute towards education initiatives (tutoring, mentorship, school shoes, career guidance) for learners in underprivileged communities.

## Volunteer

We are looking for dedicated volunteers to sign up to assist with any of our initiatives to make a positive impact in the lives of the Young learners.

You could volunteer to:

- Be a mentor in our 10 month #girlinthemirror mentorship program
- Assist learners with applying to tertiary institutions and applying for bursaries
- Assist the foundation in collecting dignity/hygiene packs from individuals, organisations and the community for the HealthyU campaign

## Get in touch

Whether it's an inspiring story, a shout-out, educational books, or a personal or educational milestone you or a colleague have achieved – we'd love to hear about it and share your news to highlight the positive impact within our community

**Email: [info@mqheleyezizwe.com](mailto:info@mqheleyezizwe.com)**

**Contact: 0828821704**



[www.mqheleyezizwe.com](http://www.mqheleyezizwe.com)