



**LEBONE
CENTRE**

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



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INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TRUST

Registered Trust: IT:183/2005

NPO: 043-669

PBO: 930016023

Audited financial statements available on request





MESSAGE FROM THE **CHAIRPERSON** OF THE BOARD

Dr Barbara Matthews

Reflecting on the work of the ICDP Trust during 2025, I was reminded of Parker J. Palmer's essay on the difference between looking at the world with "hard eyes" and with "soft eyes". Hard eyes narrow the field of vision. They focus on threat, scarcity, difference and difficulty. They are the eyes of defence and survival. Soft eyes, by contrast, widen the field. They allow us to take in more of the world, to see complexity without turning away, and to respond not only with urgency, but with wisdom, compassion and imagination.

This distinction speaks deeply to the work of the ICDP Trust. The communities, families and children with whom we work often navigate complex and demanding realities, shaped by social, economic and relational pressures. In such contexts, it becomes especially important to remain attentive to the whole person and the whole story: not only to challenges and needs, but also to strengths, networks, relationships, hopes and possibilities. Soft eyes help us to hold this fuller view.

The ICDP approach calls us to look gently. It reminds us that every child is more than their vulnerability; every caregiver is more than their struggle; every community is more than the challenges it carries. To work with soft eyes is not to be naïve or sentimental. It is to remain fully awake to hardship while refusing to let hardship become the whole story.

During 2025, the ICDP Trust has continued to hold this wider vision. Through training, mentoring,

partnerships and practical support, we have sought to strengthen relationships where they matter most: between caregivers and children, between practitioners and families, and between communities and the systems intended to serve them. At the heart of this work is a simple conviction: that human beings grow through connection, recognition and care.

Soft eyes also invite us all to examine how we lead and how we operate. They challenge us to pause before judging, to listen before deciding, and to notice what may be hidden at the edges of our usual field of view. In a demanding environment, where funding is uncertain and social needs are great, it is easy to become reactive. Yet our responsibility is to remain steady, thoughtful and kind.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to the Trust's work this year: our trustees, staff, facilitators, donors, partners, and the communities who continue to teach us. Your commitment gives practical form to the values we hold. A special thank you to Mr Leon Grové and his team at Kingswood College for their ongoing support.

As we move forward, may the ICDP Trust continue to see with soft eyes: eyes open to pain, but also to possibility; eyes that recognise both vulnerability and strength; eyes that help us respond not with fear or fatigue, but with courage, tenderness and hope.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Jolene Tarr

2025 was a year of celebration, as the ICDP Trust and Lebone Centre turned 20 years old!

We were blessed to host a Thanksgiving chapel service in the Kingswood College Chapel, led by Reverend Tim Marshall, who is not only one of our Trustees but also the Chaplain of the School. Reverend Tim Rist, who was instrumental in establishing the organisation, sent a heartfelt message, and I was reminded that the ICDP Trust and the Lebone Centre would not be in existence today without the dedication, love, and prayer from all the wonderful people who have been involved with the organisation over the past 20 years. Thank you to everyone who has at any stage been involved with our organisation – without your support, we would not be standing proud today. The organisation has impacted many people in numerous positive ways, and I was humbled by the stories shared at the celebration.

Over the past year, our Pipeline Programme has once again expanded the number of projects we can offer our community. Our **Next Step, Baby!** project now includes a parenting programme for mothers of toddlers, providing valuable support and toys made from recycled materials for them to play and bond with their children at home. We also initiated a **Fathers4Futures** project – the first of its kind at Lebone, specifically targeting fathers (or male role models) to be involved with their children and to read and support their literacy development at home.



We are proud of our longstanding relationship with the Wordworks literacy organisation, for which Cathy Gush and the Centre received a special award at their 20-year celebration in Cape Town.

Other new projects included doing hearing screening with over 200 preschool and Foundation Phase learners attending local schools, and the facilitation of Leaping into Literacy, a service-learning course for third-year B.Ed students working with Grade R learners at George Dickerson Primary.

We are grateful to our loyal funders who have partnered with us over many years, and made possible the range of educational support programmes that we are able to implement.

As we close the chapter on 2025, I am struck by the words of Maya Angelou:

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

We look forward to doing better in 2026 based on what we learnt in 2025!



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

First 1000 Days

The #Every Baby Matters (EBM) programme continued to work with mothers and babies aged 0 – 2 years, both through Clinic Activations and Home Visits.

The Clinic Activations took place at 4 community clinics (Middle Terrace, Tantiyi, Joza and Raglan Road) and reached over 1000 caregivers, raising awareness about the issue of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) as well as the importance of bonding and early stimulation. All participants received a take-home package of books and information leaflets.

30 mothers and babies were involved in a series of 8 Home Visits each, done by the Lebone Centre's

experienced and trusted Home Visitors over the period of a year. With each visit, information was shared about responsive caregiving, early stimulation and ways of interacting with your baby, based on the Every Word Counts programme. Participants also received resources such as baby books, toys and a custom-made sensory blanket manufactured by the women's sewing co-op of the Ubunye Foundation.

Next 1000 Days

Next Step, Baby! is a programme that follows on #Every Baby Matters and helps young children and their families build early literacy skills before entering the preschool stage. Two key initiatives were implemented:



Playmat Process (introduced in 2025):

- 4 facilitators trained by dIalanathi, an NPO based in KZN.
- Facilitators reached 41 mothers in total through two rounds of training.
- Mothers created toys from recycled materials, learned how to use them for child development, and received weekly parenting guidance reinforced through home visits.
- Each family received a playmat, a storybook in their home language, and Vroom cards.
- Feedback from both caregivers and facilitators has been highly positive.

Coffee Club:

- 20 sessions were held across two community venues (Sun City and Tantiyi).
- 22 mothers and their babies/toddlers participated, with 17 attending regularly.
- Provided social support, community connection, and safe spaces for mothers and children to enjoy play activities together.
- At year-end, 20 care packages that were donated by a local family, were distributed to regular attendees and bursary families.

Pre-Grade R

Little Red Dragon Preschool

Our on-site preschool continued as a Centre of Excellence with 28 children in two classes (English-Afrikaans and English-Xhosa). The focus for literacy and numeracy development was on the Little Stars story-based programme and the use of Lego Six Bricks.

Six children from disadvantaged families received bursaries to attend the preschool, of whom five progressed successfully into Grade R and the remaining child continued in Grade 00 with ongoing bursary support.

Outings included a visit to the Livestock Auction at Hobson & Co, attendance at a concert in the Kingswood Music School, a visit to the local library, and participation in the Family Literacy Day at Rhodes. The children also did their bit for Mandela Day by visiting the local old age home and brightening the old people's day with their songs.





The dentist visited for a health talk on how to care for your teeth, and the local clinic sisters visited regularly to check on immunisations and administer vitamin drops.

LRD learners took home a new book at least once a term in 2025, courtesy of Book Dash.

Little Stars Training

In partnership with Wordworks, the Lebone Centre implemented the Little Stars Early Literacy Programme across ECD centres in Makhanda, strengthening early literacy practices and supporting practitioners in creating language-rich learning environments for young children.

Statistics for the programme in 2025:

- 240 children reached through classroom-based implementation of the programme.
- 16 practitioners directly trained, mentored, or supported through workshops, Communities of Practice sessions, and classroom visits.
- 4 Communities of Practice that were attended by between 15 and 25 participants per session.
- A total of 66 classroom support visits, providing personalised coaching and mentoring.

The Communities of Practice became an important platform for peer learning, reflection and professional growth as practitioners shared experiences, discussed implementation challenges and celebrated successes together.

FOUNDATION PHASE (GRADE R – 3)

Grade R: Leaping into Literacy

The Lebone Centre partnered with Rhodes University's Education Department to pilot a 14-week service-learning project with Grade R learners at George Dickerson Primary called Leaping into Literacy. The project provided reciprocal learning opportunities for the R learners as well as Third Year B.Ed students in the subject: Professional and Pedagogical Studies. The pilot project was developed by the Lebone Centre's Dr Jennifer Hodgskiss (an early language and literacy specialist) and Jolene Tarr (an Occupational Therapist).

Leaping into Literacy was designed to teach 6 letter sounds, letter names and letter shapes using a multisensory approach, as well as to build gross and fine motor skills. A key feature of the programme was a strong kinaesthetic approach.

During the first semester in 2025, 70 third-year students provided weekly one-on-one support to two Grade R classes of about 38 learners each. The pilot project consisted of training of the students, conducting a pre-baseline assessment, delivering 6 lessons, conducting a post-baseline assessment and writing a summative assessment for their semester mark.

A significant result of the service learning approach was that many students discovered themselves as teachers, and were able to offer deeper insights during the lecture room discussions. The Grade R teachers on the other hand indicated that their learners thrived on the individual attention which the students were able to provide.



Grade 1: Project Read

The Lebone Centre was directly responsible for weekly literacy support sessions at two no fee-paying schools in the area: George Dickerson and Grahamstown Primary. Each Grade 1 learner on the programme received a one-one session once a week around the building of vocabulary, letter-sound knowledge, etc.

George Dickerson Primary

We started the year with 80 Grade 1 learners because we had Social Employment Fund (SEF) participants who could manage this number of children in a week. However, when their contracts ended, we scaled down to 35 learners with the help of the teachers, who identified only those learners who really needed the extra intervention.

Grahamstown Primary

We worked with the whole Grade 1 class of 36 learners every week for the duration of the year. Initially the SEF participants also worked with the Grade R learners, but this was discontinued after April when their contracts ended.

Every child on the programme received a gift pack at the end of the year with books, a reading bunny, stationery and sweets.

In addition to the above, the Lebone Centre also collaborated with the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUC) Office to oversee student volunteers that worked with a further 181 learners across 3 primary schools (St Mary's, CM Vellem and Ntaba Maria).

Grade 2: Reading Clubs

Reading Clubs were run on a weekly basis with 40 Grade 2 learners at George Dickerson and 36 learners at Grahamstown Primary respectively, utilising the Nalibali newspaper supplements. These supplements contain 2 stories that can be cut out and folded into books, a story that can be read aloud to the learners, and fun activities related to the story.

After the SEF contracts ended, it became a challenge to do both schools at the same time, and we changed to alternate weeks, so that we only saw each school every second week.

In addition to the above, the Lebone Centre also provided oversight and mentoring for a reading club with 65 Grade 2 learners at CM Vellem Primary, facilitated by RUC volunteers.

All Reading Club participants received a gift bag at the end of the year, along with an ice-cream container that was decorated and could be used to store their Nalibali cut-out stories.





LEBONE CENTRE PIP

A PATHWAY OF SUPPORT FROM THE



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Providing families, teachers
improve children's lit

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



FIRST 1000 DAYS

#EveryBabyMatters

- Clinic activations
- Home visits
- Responsive caregiving
- Early language stimulation



NEXT 1000 DAYS

Next Step, Baby!

- Play Mat: play through the use of toys made from recycling
- Coffee Club: social support and interaction



PRE-GRADE R Little Red Dragon Preschool

- Quality early learning programme (on-site)
- Mentoring and support for ECD Practitioners



GRA Leaping Liter

- Early la and lite develo
- Gross motor
- Service learning year B studen



LONG-TERM

CHILDREN READ FOR MEANING



Stronger beginnings. Confid

PELINE PROGRAMME



FIRST 1000 DAYS TO THE END OF GRADE 3

Children and children with targeted literacy support from birth to Grade 3 can achieve literacy outcomes and reading for meaning by the end of Grade 3

FOUNDATION PHASE



GRADE R

Getting into
Literacy

Language
Literacy
Development
and fine
skills
Preparation
for 3rd
Grade
Literacy
Outcomes



GRADE 1

Project Read

- Structured literacy intervention
- Building letter-sound knowledge
- Individual learner support



GRADE 2

Reading Clubs

- Reading for enjoyment
- Access to good quality stories
- Vocabulary enrichment
- Reading comprehension



GRADES 1-3

After-School
Programme

- Literacy and numeracy support
- Life skills
- Creative activities
- On-site project

4th OUTCOME

ACHIEVING BY THE END OF GRADE 3

Independent readers. Bright futures



AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORT

Our After-School programme saw a huge change in 2025. Instead of having 20 learners per week, we changed to working with a grade per day of 20 learners each. In this way we could see more learners and serve the broader community. While in the past we mostly had learners from our two closest schools, there were now also learners from schools such as Victoria Primary, Graeme College, Oatlands Prep, PJ Olivier, St Mary's and Good Shepherd Primary.

The start of 2025 saw the following numbers enrolled for the After-School Support programme:

Grade R – 12
Grade 1 – 20
Grade 2 – 22
Grade 3 – 23

Areas focused on were Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Gross and Fine Motor Activities, and Cognitive Skills. Learners were introduced to skills on how to improve their reading, and how they could use everyday items such as playing cards, Lego blocks, etc to help with their numeracy. We also had a very successful



Numeracy workshop for the parents to show them ways in which they could support their children's number skills, and parents each received a resource pack from the South African Numeracy Chair project to take home

The Grade 1 learners had a 4-week life skills programme with Prof Lindy Wilbraham and eight Psychology Honours students from Rhodes University. They targeted bullying and how the children can address and manage these situations. The Grade 2 learners had the privilege of working with the Klingswood Interact club, who came every fortnight and played games to develop fine- and gross-motor skills. Our highlight with the Grade 3s was an educational outing to the Amakhala Game Reserve.

After the mid-year break we decided to open the programme for 2 days to the Grade 3 learners in order to give them additional literacy support, because we had experienced quite a large drop-out rate amongst the Grade Rs.

Our end-of-year assessments showed that there had been improvement academically with the learners, but there was also an improvement socially - the children could interact with learners from different schools and that was a huge plus.

At year-end, each learner received a resource pack with Bookdash books, Na'libali newspaper supplements, a storybook, a reading bunny and some stationery.

FUN FACT

At the November 2025 prize-giving event of George Dickerson Primary, 50% of Diploma recipients in Grade 1 - 3 (those in the top 3 of the class) were from the Lebone After-School Programme.

OTHER INITIATIVES

books. SDA Primary School emerged as the winners, but all participating teams received book prizes of some kind.

Classroom Libraries

The Lebone Centre's Classroom Library Programme continued last year with the training and equipping of 4 classroom libraries (Grade R – Grade 3) at Grahamstown Primary School.

Hearing Screening

Funding from the Cacadu Development Agency enabled the Lebone Centre to purchase a hearing screening device from HearX in 2025. This allowed the Lebone Centre to screen over 250 children attending the Little Red Dragon preschool and partner schools in Makhanda. Ten children were referred to their local clinics or the audiologist at Settlers Hospital for further investigations.

Phendulani Literary Quiz

For the second year running, the Lebone Centre organised the Makhanda version of the Phendulani Literary Quiz, a nation-wide initiative for Grade 5 and 6 learners from no or low-fee paying schools.

Five schools participated (St Mary's, George Dickerson, Good Shepherd, Ntaba Maria and SDA Primary School), with one team of 6 participants each. The quiz took place in September as part of Literacy Month celebrations, and Kingswood Junior School played host to the event.

The teams were each issued with 12 books to read, and all questions were based on those



KEY PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Awarenet: coordination of Social Employment Fund Participants

Biblionef and Book Dash: Book donations to children and families

Dept of Health: Clinic activations

Dlalanathi: Playmat project

Education Circle of Unity: Working to make Makhanda a centre of educational excellence

Kingswood College: Chapel, Printing Dept, Finance Office, Interact, Junior School, Grounds and Maintenance, Kitchen

Legal Resources Centre: Right to Read Campaign

Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA): National and provincial networking

Makhanda Literacy Collective: Working together for literacy in Makhanda

Mikhulu Trust: Booksharing resources.

Nal'ibali: World Read Aloud Day and Reading Clubs

Phendulani Literary Quiz: Grade 7 Good Shepherd, SDA Primary, Ntaba Maria, St Mary's, George Dickerson

Primary schools: Foundation Phase literacy support at CM Vellem, George Dickerson, Grahamstown Primary, Ntaba Maria, St Mary's, Tanti Primary

Rhodes University: VC's Education Initiative, Community Engagement Office, Education, Journalism, Psychology, South African Numeracy Chair

Stellenbosch University: Child Language Development Node

Ubunye Foundation: #EBM Sensory Blankets

Wordworks: Little Stars and Project Read

OUR 2025 IMPACT

IN NUMBERS



Number of Children Reached

Early Childhood Development:

488

Foundation Phase Support:

570

Hearing Screening:

232

Advocacy and Literacy Awareness:

645



Resources and Books

Books distributed across various projects:

2799

Nal'ibali supplements distributed:

2000

Take-Home Resources for Parents and Children

2190



Number of People Trained

ECD Practitioners

25

Rhodes Students

154

Social Employment Fund participants

15

Parents

1286

Clinic Attendees

1200

Foundation Phase Teachers

11





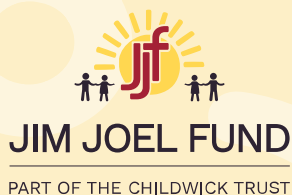
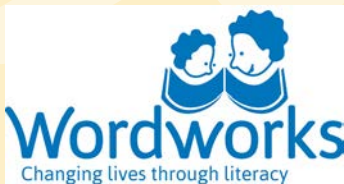
THANK YOU!

Funders

- ☐ AESSEAL Charitable Trust (Phendulani)
- ☐ AVBOB
- ☐ Cacadu Development Agency
- ☐ Carara Agro EC
- ☐ Department of Basic Education
- ☐ Eastern Cape Educational Trust
- ☐ HCI Foundation
- ☐ Hobson and Co/Frontier Bonsmara
- ☐ Jim Joel Fund
- ☐ Kingswood College
- ☐ Kingswood College Chapel
- ☐ Kingswood College Clothing Exchange
- ☐ Masana wa Afrika
- ☐ MEH Sulter and Sons
- ☐ OK Club
- ☐ Richard Gush
- ☐ Rhodes University
- ☐ SOLON Foundation
- ☐ The Learning Trust (Social Employment Fund)
- ☐ Van der Meer Family
- ☐ WordWorks

Friends of Lebone Centre

- ☐ Amy Newcombe
- ☐ Ann Iglauer and Friends
- ☐ Anneliese Maritz
- ☐ Caron May
- ☐ Damant Lodge Knitters
- ☐ EC Fit and Go
- ☐ Erin Taggart
- ☐ Estelle Bindeman
- ☐ Frankoleen Roberts
- ☐ Graeme College
- ☐ Holly Elliott
- ☐ Joanna Du Toit
- ☐ Kayleigh van Staden
- ☐ Keryn Chitsike
- ☐ Kingswood College Interact Club
- ☐ Kingswood Jun Parents Assoc
- ☐ Lesley Frost
- ☐ Maddie and MacKenzie Poultney
- ☐ Michelle Cloete
- ☐ Project Read Volunteers:
Cameron McConnachie
Cynthia Jackson
Faith Coetzee
Jennifer Hodgskiss
Kristin MacLachlan
Vinolia Welcome
- ☐ Rotary Anns
- ☐ Settlers Park Knitting Club
- ☐ The Wyvern
- ☐ Tim Dold and PG Glass
- ☐ Tony Timm
- ☐ Wishing Bean





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