ardúfoundation

Newsletter | **October 2026**

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The Ardú social upliftment **foundation.**

Building dignity, developing skills and creating opportunity

Dear **Friends and Supporters,**

At Ardú, our purpose is to help communities build a stronger future through practical support, skills development and sustainable sources of income. Our projects bring this purpose to life by supporting people today while creating opportunities for greater independence tomorrow.

In this edition, we bring you the latest progress from iThemba TT and Chintsa, introduce our new early childhood development partner, share one facilitator's story of recovery and purpose, celebrate an intern's achievement and invite you to become involved.

iThemba TT: **Supporting dignity and personal growth**

The iThemba TT waste reclaimers' depot continues to make progress in helping people regain dignity, confidence and a sense of belonging.

Waste reclaimers perform valuable work by collecting recyclable materials and earning a living through their own efforts. Through iThemba TT, this work is supported by opportunities for counselling and life skills development, helping participants address personal challenges and take positive steps forward.

Our aim extends beyond immediate assistance. We want people to feel respected, recognise their own abilities and have access to support that helps them build more stable lives. Thank you to everyone contributing to this ongoing work.





Mpho's story: **Walking in purpose**

Mpho Dlisheqo was raised by his late grandmother in Thuli Fakude (formerly Leandra), Mpumalanga. Addiction took hold in his early high school years, and by Grade 10 he had dropped out of school and joined a gang.

But his conscience kept speaking. He went back to school, finished matric and found work at Sasol. Then his addiction escalated, and he lost that job and many after it. After nearly losing his life in a stabbing, he left for Pretoria, where he knew no one, to start again.

Recovery did not come in a straight line. A stranger's kindness in 2023 helped him get clean and find work, but visits home led to a relapse, and by 2025 he was back on the streets of Pretoria. Volunteers at Street Church in Sunnyside referred him to the U-turn recovery programme at the Lighthouse service centre. He walked in on 2 June 2025 and has not used since.

Today Mpho works with Ardú as a programme facilitator, sharing his experience to inspire others and help communities tackle the issues he knows first-hand. He has been clean for over 15 months, the longest period of his life.

> **"I am walking in purpose. Because of the Ardú Foundation, its heart and vision, I am able to wake up with a purpose and walk around with a defined pursuit."**
>
> MPHO DITSHEGO

Thank you, Mpho, for trusting us with your story.

Chintsa: **Our community centre is taking shape**

Construction of the Chintsa community centre is under way. We anticipate completion by December 2026, provided the weather allows work to progress as planned.

The centre is an important part of our commitment to creating spaces where community members can access support, connect with one another and take part in opportunities for learning and development.

As the building takes shape, so does our vision of a community with stronger resources and greater opportunities close to home.

Chintsa Community Bakery: **Bread with a purpose**

We are delighted to announce that the Chintsa Community Bakery has been registered and is scheduled to begin baking on 1 November 2026.

The bakery represents an important step towards Ardú's goal of developing viable community enterprises that create employment, transfer skills and help sustain social upliftment.

Our intention is to grow demand among local households, shops and other community customers, matching production to orders as the business develops. Each purchase will help support a local enterprise and the people gaining skills through it.



We are especially pleased that Zanele Nivati, an experienced baker from the Chintsa community, has agreed to manage the bakery. Her baking experience and local knowledge will be invaluable as we establish the business and train its first interns.

The bakery will initially focus on three products: standard white, standard brown and sourdough loaves. Starting with a small, manageable range will allow the team to concentrate on consistent quality, reliable production and building customer relationships.

Practical training **with continuity**

Three intern bakers will initially assist Zanele. The internship programme will operate in six-month cycles, with two new interns joining at each changeover. One intern will remain for a full year, giving Zanele a competent assistant while incoming trainees learn the work.

This approach combines opportunities for new participants with continuity in the bakery. The planned training will include practical baking skills, food hygiene, teamwork, timekeeping and the routines required to run a small business.

Our ambition is for the bakery to become a dependable local business where good bread, useful skills and community opportunity grow together.

Chintsa and Mooiplaas: **A stronger start for young children**

We are proud to announce a new partnership with PEN, a Pretoria-based NGO, to bring quality early childhood development (ECD) to the Mooiplaas and Chintsa area in the Great Kei Local Municipality. Ardú will fund the establishment of an ECD Support Centre that will work with the owners and staff of approximately *20 informal* daycares.

Around 90% of a child's brain develops before the age of five.

Yet millions of South African children spend these years in informal daycares without proper safety, nutrition or education, and start school already behind. It is a gap that rarely closes.

ABOUT PEN

We share the vision of PEN's Young Children programme: a South Africa where every child can thrive through access to quality ECD. PEN establishes ECD Support Centres in vulnerable communities and works alongside daycare owners and the practitioners they employ, turning informal "babysitting" spaces into quality early learning centres.

PEN coaches visit each daycare every week for individual, on-site support. Practitioners meet at the Support Centre weekly to plan lessons based on the National Curriculum, and daycares receive regular training, access to a toy library and help meeting the Department of Basic Education's standards. Daycares also earn points for participation and growth, which they can spend on resources at PEN's incentive shop.

In 2025, PEN's **8** Support Centres reached **242** daycares, **1,231** staff and **11,807** children.Across its programme, **89%** of children show significant progress in their readiness for school.

What happens **next**

Preliminary work has already begun. The first visits to local daycares fell during the Eastern Cape's wettest week in years, and as the team explained what PEN and Ardú can offer, daycare owners shared just how much they need the help.

Maria Nienaber (PEN Young Children Team Leader) and Thandaza Zwezwe (Project Manager) will lead the work on the ground: connecting with the community, establishing the Support Centre, and recruiting and training two PEN staff members from within the community. **We aim to have the Support Centre up and running from January 2027.**

Congratulations to **Molenge Batu Enyanga**

We warmly congratulate Molenge Batu Enyanga, one of our interns, on his excellent results in the first section of his short-term insurance skills course.

His achievement reflects commitment and hard work. We are proud of his progress and wish him continued success as he completes the next stage of his studies.

How you can **get involved**

We encourage every reader of this newsletter to contact me to discuss how you, your family or your workplace can assist.

01.

Donate clothing

Clean, wearable clothing can make a practical difference to someone facing difficult circumstances. We welcome clothing in good condition, including everyday wear, warm garments, shoes and suitable clothing for work or interviews.

Please wash items before donating and keep shoes in pairs. Clothing that you no longer use may help someone feel more comfortable, confident and prepared for an opportunity.

02.

Donate used white office paper for recycling

Your workplace's used white office paper can become a useful recycling resource. We invite offices and businesses to set aside suitable paper and contact us to discuss collection or delivery arrangements.

Please keep paper dry and separate from food waste and other rubbish. Remove plastic sleeves and bindings where possible. Any confidential documents must be handled according to your organisation's information security procedures before donation.

A simple paper collection point in your office can turn an everyday waste stream into practical support for our recycling initiative.

03.

Donate working office equipment

We are seeking working office equipment to support our skills development programme. Useful items include computers, laptops, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers and office furniture such as desks and chairs.

Equipment should be in working order and supplied with the necessary power cables or chargers. Please remove all personal and business information from computers before donating them.

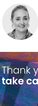
These donations can help participants practise computer skills, prepare CVs, complete learning activities and develop confidence for the workplace.

Thank you for being **part of the work**

Whether you donate useful items, introduce us to a business, support the bakery or share your expertise, your involvement can help create lasting opportunities.

Please contact me to find out how you can get involved or to arrange a donation.

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Warm regards,

Sandra Mc Ilwrath
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Ardú Social Upliftment Foundation

Thank you and **take care.**

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