

Rising out of unemployment

Issued by [The Social Employment Fund](#)

27 Sep 2023

In the small town of Modimolle, situated in the heart of South Africa's Limpopo province, the life of 30-year-old Lavern Phala embodies resilience, transformation and empowerment. Lavern's journey, marked by unwavering determination, showcases the profound impact of the Social Employment Fund (SEF) project on her life and her community.



An opportunity through Seriti Institute

Modimolle is renowned for its vibrant citrus fruit farming and thriving tourism activities centered around game reserves. Phala, a mother of three, found her life deeply rooted in this close-knit community. Her story took a remarkable turn in July 2022 when she became a participant in the SEF project through social enterprise, Seriti Institute, a transformative initiative designed to provide employment opportunities and training to uplift individuals and communities.

Learning skills and entrepreneurship

Through the SEF project, Phala was introduced to waste management and recycling, skills that would prove useful in her journey. She attended enterprise development training, gaining valuable insights into entrepreneurship and business development. Her newfound knowledge sparked her ambition and she began her path of establishing a home food garden, cultivating nutritious produce.

Phala's passion for baking, previously hidden, became a focus of her entrepreneurial aspirations. Encouraged by the SEF team, she embarked on a journey to turn her love for baking into a sustainable business. The stipend provided by SEF played a pivotal role in enabling her to enrol in a short baking course, acquire essential baking equipment and invest in a four-plate gas stove.

Baking her way to success

Phala's dedication paid off as she honed her baking skills, quickly gaining recognition within her community. She began

supplying baked goods to fellow SEF participants and community members. Her typical day now involves baking scones and pastries to satisfy her colleagues' appetites at work and creating customised cakes for special occasions, adding a sweet touch to life's celebrations.

Beyond baking, Phala and her family embraced environmental responsibility by collecting and recycling cans, generating an additional income of approximately R500 per month. This financial stability has enabled them to buy better food supplies, ensuring a healthier diet. Concerns about their next meal have become a thing of the past.

With their increased income, the family invested in expanding their home, adding two additional rooms, significantly improving their quality of life. Phala envisions further expansion of her baking business in the near future, a testament to her unwavering determination and entrepreneurial spirit.





The SEF lifeline

Phala reflects on a challenging period when her husband, the family's sole breadwinner, fell ill, leaving them without income. During this trying time, the SEF stipend proved to be a lifeline, helping them navigate financial hardship. In her own words, Lavern states: "I think that the programme is doing wonders for the community and has brought along a wealth of opportunities to those fortunate enough to be a part of the programme. It is up to participants to grab this with both hands."

The future looks sweet

Phala's journey is not only a story of personal triumph but also a testament to the transformative potential of community-driven initiatives like the Social Employment Fund. Her inspiring narrative reminds us that, with dedication, opportunity, and support, individuals can overcome challenges, build better lives, and make lasting contributions to their communities.

What is the SEF?

As part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES), the SEF provides temporary work for previously unemployed people, during which time they learn valuable skills and earn a stipend. Unlike financial assistance in the form of a social grant, a stipend is paid in exchange for work participation, contributing to specific programmes while acquiring skills.

By providing basic employment, a temporary work contract, a reporting structure, a team to call your own – participants gain confidence and belief in their own abilities, both of which are foundations for a better future. They are also taught

basic work readiness skills such as teamwork, conflict resolution and self-awareness, supplemented by more technical and practical skills.

To date, at least 65,000 work opportunities have been created by the SEF across the country. These participants are largely youth (32 being the average age) with the workforce being 70% female. The 35 Social Implementing Partners (SIPs) carefully design work programmes which match community needs with those of individuals, to learn valuable skills as a pathway to finding ways out of unemployment.

▫ **Education and employment, it starts with a story** 30 Jan 2024

▫ **Unite to end gender-based violence** 11 Dec 2023

▫ **Putting informal settlements on the map** 24 Nov 2023

▫ **Employment, empowerment, entrepreneurship** 13 Nov 2023

▫ **Dreams can come true** 2 Nov 2023

[The Social Employment Fund](#)



The Social Employment Fund is providing 55,000 temporary jobs in areas like health, education, nutrition and food security. These jobs skill marginalised individuals in workplace preparation and foster entrepreneurship.

[Profile](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#) | [Facebook](#) | [RSS Feed](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>