

Just one Pula a Day

Sesupo Rantsimako (Botswana Gazette – May 2012)

Francistown: Only a year after its establishment the Homeless and Poor People's Federation is seeing the fruits of its labor. The federation's core principle is to promote community self-reliance and sustainability, while also encouraging the government to work with the poor and improve their circumstances.

Having learnt the idea from Zambia, one of Francistown's social workers behind the concept Goitsemaang Maano, said that the federation has helped many of its members improve their lives.

Maano said that key to their work is to help the poor save the little money that they had on a daily basis over a period of time. "This concept is meant to save the little the poor can afford daily to address the challenges that they have, and the federation gives the poor the platform to develop themselves while getting government to work collectively with beneficiaries."

The members have managed to increase their daily savings to over P18, 000. With the money some of the members managed to pay their long outstanding council levy, buy residential plots and pay children's school fees. Bedu Thapiso, one of the federation leaders, expressed delight at what they had managed to achieve in a short period. She explained that she was one of the people who were initially hesitant to join the organization. She stated,

"This social worker approached us while we were at work in Ipelegeng to promote this concept but most of us were not interested because we thought we were being made fun of. We thought that saving P1 a day was a waste of time. Maano never gave up and convinced us and we formed the federation"

"Today we are happy as we can see that the idea is working especially for most of us who are unemployed, with the savings of just P1 everyone has been able to achieve their plans. If we can convince more people to join and create a large following then we may be able to build houses for the homeless in the future."