

Anyone can start a small business

By Justice Mohale

Are you sitting at home worrying because you don't have a job? Why not use the opportunities created by government and improve your lives!

Many people who were unemployed in the past are now able to put bread on the table thanks to funding for small businesses through government's economic programmes.

■ Funding

It does not matter where a person lives in South Africa, he or she can start a small business such as dress-making, hairdressing, photography or crafts by applying for funding from government.

Take the example of the group of women from Kamden, in the North West Province.

■ Self-employed

Six years ago, they were unemployed and today, thanks to the Maekaelelo Sewing Project of the

Department of Arts and Culture, they are self-employed. They used the money to start the Maekaelelo Sewing Project, which enables them to feed their families.

■ Determination

Maekaelelo, a Setswana word for "determination" was established in 2001. Government initially contributed R250 000 towards the project. Two years later they put in an additional R325 000.

When the leader of Maekaelelo, Lydia Mangate, 47, talked to

project received showed that the slogan of *Vuk'uzenzele* (Let's make it happen) could truly improve people's lives.

■ Government training

The Rethabile Community Development Sewing Project was started by four unemployed women. They received R85 000 from the North West Department of Social Development to start their project.

The money they received from government was used to buy five sewing machines and material. The department also helped to train members of the project in business management.

Fikile Sefunda, 32, just joined the project from Mpumalanga. She proudly displayed the school shirts she made.

"We are making school uniforms for five schools in our area," she said. "We don't make a lot of money, but at least we are able to feed our families," Sefunda said.



Members of the Maekaelelo sewing project proudly displaying their work

Vuk'uzenzele in February, she said, "This kind of help is really empowering women in the rural areas."

Mangate said the support the

For more information on support for self-help programmes call 1020