

Nkhono Matumo Shares Her Story

Nkhono (*grandmother*) Matumo is using what she learned in Help Lesotho’s Grandmother Support Program to educate and influence a huge number of people. She is a mother to four adult children, grandmother to fifteen grandchildren, and great-grandmother to four great-grandchildren! Moreover, she is a pillar in her community because she is always welcoming to others. She has between three and twelve children staying with her at any given time, and she uses every opportunity to talk to them about safe sex. She says she now understands that nothing will change in Lesotho if children never learn their rights and their options. She wants her grandchildren and great-grandchildren to make healthy decisions and not have babies at early ages.

When the program first started in 2019, Nkhono Matumo was curious but doubtful that it would be worth her time. After attending two sessions, she changed her mind and realized how helpful the program would be to her and her large family.

“Undergoing this training at Help Lesotho has helped me grow and opened my eyes to a whole new world I would not have otherwise achieved. I was taught about respect, regardless of one’s age. As a family woman whom many look up to for guidance and care, I learned of how to be a symbol of hope within my community, but most importantly be exemplary to individual lives with those left behind by their parents, whilst loving them unconditionally like one of our own”.

Nkhono Matumo felt that learning about wills was extremely valuable to her and her husband, not only in terms of the document itself, but more importantly regarding discussions of equity and fairness. Land rights are very important in Lesotho, and families have a responsibility to use their wills to ensure that all children—regardless of gender—benefit.



When asked about the impact COVID-19 has had, Nkhono Matumo says it has been a wake-up call about how quickly things can change. She is more committed to food preservation now that she has experienced a lockdown. With the seeds and fruit tree seedlings she received through the program, she will take extra care to grow fruits and vegetables that can be a food source throughout the whole year.

Nkhono Matumo adds, *“I just wish the program should never cease to change the lives of other grandmothers. Thank you for choosing me to have this wonderful experience.”*



Nkhono Matanki Shares Her Story

During a break from a day of heavy rain, Nkhono Matanki proudly posed for a photo in front of her small rondavel home. She said she doesn't mind the rain because it means the crops will finally grow. She was happy to see the grass turn a more vibrant shade of green right before her eyes.

At 76-years-old, Nkhono Matanki has trouble with her legs, but she does not let her pain and discomfort get her down. She has too many people counting on her and she does not want anyone's pity!

Nkhono Matanki cares for her 34-year-old son who has serious disabilities. He will require care for the rest of his life. She is also caring for one granddaughter who is nearly finished her high school education. Nkhono Matanki was married at 18-years-old and says that her late husband was good to her throughout their marriage. They were blessed with five children, but sadly three of them have already passed away.

Nkhono Matanki supports her family through the old-age pension and sales of her home-brew beer. COVID-19 has impacted her sales and she says this year has been very challenging with reduced income and higher food prices.



Throughout her attendance at the Help Lesotho Grandmother Days, Nkhono Matanki has grown in several ways. She never missed a single day of training and was often the first to arrive and last to leave! She could always be counted on to ask questions and share her opinion on whatever matter was being discussed.

"I am so grateful to be part of this program. The food package, seeds, and support with life issues have helped so much. We were provided with COVID-19 information— this new disease for which we were all feeling so confused over. We talked about COVID-19 every session so as to help us remember the new information. The topic that I find myself appreciating the most is communication with grandchildren, especially when it comes to them having healthy relationships. I tell others that the Help Lesotho trainings felt like they were bringing together the life pieces so we remember to value ourselves and be more supportive towards others."



Learn more about Help Lesotho's Grandmother Support Program at helplesotho.org.