

### **Street vendor turned employer**

Selling fruit at social grants distribution points and clinics seemed the end of the road for 39-year-old Banne Khoza, from Hazyview in Mpumalanga. With no fixed income, he also relied on occasional odd jobs to make ends meet. Khoza, who is a father of three, provided for his family with his meagre income as a vendor, until he joined an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) farming project.

Khoza says through hard work and the continuous assistance he received from the EPWP, he's turned his life around. "I'm now employing two people and help feed their families. There's no greater joy than knowing you made a difference in someone's life."

Though his life is better now, things didn't always come easily. "There were times when I could barely make ends meet, times when the project was not sustainable; but those days are gone."

Khoza also stresses that the support he received from the community was immense and touching. "When things went wrong, I knew I could depend on my community for support, be it financial or emotional. I must say that, without the support of the community, we could've been singing a different tune. I'm grateful. The main support came from EPWP. Even though at times the money was not enough, I will forever be grateful to them."

Despite the success he has achieved, Khoza says that he will only claim glory when he has realised his long-term dream. "I've always wanted to own a farm, employ people from the community and eradicate poverty in the neighbourhood. Until that happens, I will continue to work hard and pray that God answers my prayers."