

Food garden brings hope, health to senior citizens

Josephine Mpofu started Supa Dimama Senior Centre in 2008, after seeing the struggles of elderly people who often went hungry and spent all day alone with no company or stimulation in an impoverished area of Ivory Park, Midrand.

A widow with almost nothing to her name, Mpofu was inspired by the example of her own grandmother, who took care of her. She initially acquired two sponsors and set out to help provide nutritious meals, exercise and activities to ease the plight of senior citizens and young mothers.

My passion is to make my grannies happy and take care of them, so that they live well and won't have to struggle. We must give them love and support because they struggled to give us freedom.

- Josephine Mpofu, Supa Dimama Senior Centre founder

Despite financial challenges, Mpofu also managed to keep a daycare centre going. In 2017 Supa Dimama received a big boost when it partnered with the Shoprite Group following a Mandela Day initiative by its Gauteng division.

The Group's implementation partner, Food and Trees for Africa, held a series of workshops in which participants were shown how to plant and work the soil more efficiently, greatly increasing the centre's productivity and sustainability. Equipment, seedlings, other materials and trees were also provided, and a JoJo water tank proved to be a real boon.

Today the centre has 87 beneficiaries on its books, and Mpofu runs it with the help of four volunteers and a sports coach. Breakfast and lunch is provided daily with vegetables like spinach, beetroot, cabbage, potatoes and onions supplementing the menu.

Medication is dispensed at the centre and it also provides a counselling service. Shoprite's support has also enabled volunteers to visit those unable to make it to the centre on their own steam.

"Shoprite helped my grannies a lot because they showed us how to plough and how to work the land better, so that our garden is now much more sustainable. We are also very grateful for the JoJo water tank they installed at our garden."

- Josephine Mpofu, Supa Dimama Senior Centre founder