One day in November 2013, 16-year-old Thabelang Linyoloha from Tholang village in Thaba Tseka, Lesotho, returned home excited. He had just earned 200 maluti ($20) from selling his products at an art exhibition showcasing his work and art produced by several other children.

Since the death of his father, Thabelang and his mother have been struggling financially to meet their needs. It has always been his desire to “grow up to assist my mother in raising my siblings.” Driven by this passion, Thabelang earned a space to attend a craft training conducted by local civil society organization Phelisanang Bophelong HIV Support Center (PB). Following the training, Thabelang worked hard to enhance his newly-acquired skills and produce hand crafts to sell. He has worked on materials including flower pots, fabric-painted tablecloths, and traditional Basotho hats and mats. Although the field was challenging for him, he persisted in pursuing his goal of earning money for his family and continued to produce art, decorating his home with his handiwork. This dedication and practice enhanced his creativity, and he gradually improved.

In collaboration with Lesotho’s Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, PB hosted an exhibition for five of the children in their program to display their products at the Ha Mahlong Resource Center on November 22, 2013. Thabelang’s products attracted attention at the exhibition. He stated, “The money I have made today might seem small, but it has motivated me a lot. If in one day I can make 200 maluti [$20], I believe if I work harder and perfect my skills, next time I will make a lot of money. I am thankful to PB for the training and to the organizers of today’s event; I am happy because now people in neighboring villages know about my products and they will come to me whenever they need them.” He shared, “As a result of the training I received from PB last year, crafts have become my passion.”

*All quotes translated from Sesotho

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