



Transforming Lives: 15 returnees and vulnerable youth start the new chapter of their lives

February 22 2021: IOM has been implementing a Regional Projects funded by UK-Aid titled ‘*Humanitarian response to vulnerable and stranded migrants in Southern Africa region*’ as part of the COVID-19 response. The countries which are implementing are South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho. IOM Lesotho has been working closely with Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), DISCOSEC (District COVID-19 Secretariat) and District Disaster Management Team (DDMT) to identify vulnerable returnees and their family members, as well as other extreme vulnerable youth in Mochale’s Hoek, Quthing and Qacha’s Nek districts to provide skills training in an effort to restore their livelihood.



On February 22 2021, 15 youth from Qacha’s Nek District have graduated from the skills training at College Cooperative formulation and Entrepreneurship Business Services (CCEBS) in Mafeteng district. They have acquired skills to manufacture hand sanitizers, body lotion, petroleum jelly, dried soup, beverage, dish washer and other items. The product is organic and made of the locally available materials such as rose hip and aloe vera.

In his remarks, **Director of CCEBS, Mr. Ramoorosi**, explained about the importance of becoming ‘producer and become entrepreneurs (create job themselves)’ rather than ‘waiting for somebody to employ them.’ Director encouraged the students to be creative and bold as they became entrepreneurs.



Head of Office IOM Lesotho, Ms Eriko Nishimura stated that IOM’s one of the key mandates is to ensure vulnerable migrants could be exposed to life changing opportunities and expressed her sincere appreciation to the UK Aid as donor and CCEBS as a committed partner.

On Behalf of the United Kingdom High Commission in Lesotho, Ms. Lineo Tsikoane thanked IOM for the efforts to improve the lives of Basotho. When talking to the students, she said; “*we hope you will be exemplary and that this training has truly improved your lives*” she quoted a famous proverb which says “*give a man fish, you will feed him for a day, teach a man how to fish and you will feed him for a lifetime.*”

Student representative thanked IOM for the support which she said has truly impacted on their lives. She said that they considered this training to be an honor and a great privilege. She reflected on how some of them had previously crossed the border to South Africa often through unofficial channels in search of work. She said that this effort had brought them together and that because their group is from Qachas Nek, they were intent on forming a society that would help them market and sell their products.

This event was supported by a generous support from UK Aid. For further information, please contact IOM Lesotho (tmolefi@iom.int).