

Bathurst Struggle Resulted in Collecting in Dumping Sites

By Sinalo Peyi

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In Bathurst Location, located in the Eastern Cape under Ndlambe Municipality, the community has been struggling with poverty caused by a lack of employment for years now. The community has been voting and electing leaders they trust will bring change to this small location, but the situation has not changed at all for them. People have resorted to picking up garbage to sell and use as a form of living, as they are struggling in many ways, and many are taking it as employment. Many people end up sick due to their way of living, as they are working in an unhealthy environment, sometimes with children helping them collect the garbage.

Many even find food for the day to feed themselves and their children, as it is mostly women and the youth who struggle with employment in this location. During school holidays, children join their parents and spend the whole day working and collecting garbage, feeding themselves with food they find there as well. The community has been living like this for years, considering this way of living as the only way to feed their families and employ themselves at the dumping site.

Isikhalo Women's Movement member and part of a small study club, Aviwe Mpupa, commented that this situation is also caused by the fact that people are not educated about the dangers of the environment they consider as a job for both adults and children. "I wish we could educate people about other ways of making money, even opening a business, without having to risk your health in the dumping site," Mpupa concluded.

Anesipho Tokwe, a woman residing in Bathurst who also works to clean up the location, explains her experience and what she sees every day when collecting garbage. "We see rotten food that is unhealthy for children and many people, who go there for the whole day and feed off the garbage," she commented. Tokwe concluded that she has seen the situation in the dumping site where both young and old work and gather garbage there as a source of employment and a way to live, but one can never try to stop them if they cannot offer anything better.

The community wants to be employed, not study or find other ways to get money like starting a business. Isikhalo has offered workshops and clubs to teach people ways of living, like starting up a business or a garden, and how to read and write, but the community seems more interested in making quick money, no matter the risks.

The Movement then went around the community asking how they could better help, and most people said they wanted employment and nothing else. Isikhalo has offered to collect gloves and face masks to reduce health complications that may be caused by the dumping site, to give to people to use when collecting.

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