

Supporting local tourism SMMEs during lockdown

With the Covid-19 pandemic having hit the tourism and hospitality industries with so much devastation, businesses are crying out for help. Cape Town Tourism CEO, Enver Duminy, along with Alderman James Vos, recently set out to visit three small business owners in Cape Town to see how they are doing during these trying times.

The three business owners, Theo Makhapela of African Authentic Experience, Mpho Mopai of Tees and Gees and Nolukhanyo Cele of Seven Colours Eatery, are all the latest recipients of Cape Town Tourism's Board Development Fund.

The fund was started by Cape Town Tourism, the city's destination marketing agency, as an annual fund to boost tourism-related businesses in the city. For all the recipients, the money from the Fund has truly helped them as they try to navigate their businesses through a Covid-19 world.



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These businesses were the 2019 winners of the annual Cape Town Tourism Board Development Fund (BDF), which is there to support small, medium and micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the tourism sector.

Brett Hendricks, CTT Chairperson explains: "The CTT Board decided more than five years ago to forfeit their collective board remuneration and to share it with deserving SMMEs in tourism. Worthy recipients are not only given a cash-injection for their business, but also receive specialised mentorship and marketing support from the CTT management team.

Enhancing opportunities

"Over the years, as leaders in our own businesses we have also opened up our extensive tourism networks and resources to further enhance opportunities for growth. Basically, it's a program that gives valuable financial support and invaluable access to leaders within tourism for a few select yet innovative SMMEs who demonstrate clear vision for their business, but also understand the importance of the 'hustle' to make it in business."

“ We are passionate about tourism and have no doubt that we will be able to once again provide our visitors with the bespoke community tours we built our business on. ”

Alderman Vos says: "We are committed to supporting 'tourismpreneurs' as the tourism industry sustains thousands of jobs in this city. Through our strategic business partners we are able to grow and develop new products within the industry, thereby ensuring that my directorate remains the growth directorate in the City.

"Through our Business Hub, which is an Enterprise Development initiative, we offer a one-stop-shop approach with various departments working transversally to facilitate business support within the City. We offer SMMEs and entrepreneurs all the tools they need to start and grow their business and these tools are accessible from a single point."

Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism, adds: "The success of our programme is based on a simple understanding of the challenges of SMMEs and creating a simple platform of giving back with purpose. We only select two or three businesses every year to receive this award. And via a 'Dragon's Den' interview process, we choose and announce winners at our Annual General Meeting.

"Each winner can receive up to R50,000 in cash and more than R200,000 in non-financial support. Our current and previous board members mentor, open their networks and resources to further aid in uplifting these business owners who in turn inspire their employees and support their local communities in the process."

Easing Covid-19 impact

The impact of the pandemic on tourism businesses has been huge.

The owner of African Authentic Experience, a tour operator enterprise, Theo Makapela says: "We are doing what we can to keep our business going. We are using the time to do a lot of social work within the communities that we tour.

"We are educating the people from our community, Khayelitsha, about this coronavirus, while providing essentials, helping with soup kitchens and distributing food parcels to those who need it. We are passionate about tourism and have no doubt that we will be able to once again provide our visitors with the bespoke community tours we built our business on."



Tees and Gees specialises in the manufacturing, printing and retailing of T-shirts that promote Africa in a positive light. Mpho Maphai has added masks to their range while also focusing on pop-up stores in various locations to help meet sales targets. "I am grateful to Cape Town Tourism and the City of Cape Town for their ongoing support during this time. This hasn't been easy for us, but we have realised that being innovative and responsive is key if we want to survive this."

Nolukhanyo Dube-Cele, owner of Seven Colours Eatery, a catering company specialising in South African-inspired cuisine, planned to invest the funds into marketing her business and had planned to buy more equipment until Covid-19 hit. "I've needed to rethink my offering seeing as events are no longer happening. I quickly needed to start trading from home and now I offer a bespoke service of providing cooked meals for dinner which we deliver to our clients' homes. This still gives me the opportunity to cook the food I love and build my client base in a safe way."

Helping future leaders

"As the City we have been working closely with Cape Town Tourism, our official destination marketing and management organisation, in trying our best to contain the negative impact of lockdown on the local economy and saving jobs that we have been steadily growing across Cape Town. Our main focus is how best to move from crisis into recovery by adjusting our plans to be ready for a re-imagined tourism landscape and ensure that as a city, we are ready to welcome visitors back and assure them that Cape Town is a safe and healthy destination.

"We acknowledge and applaud the Cape Town Tourism board for this positive programme, which is not just seen as a cash-handout to entrepreneurs but creates lasting value by giving real access to seasoned and successful captains of industry who share their extensive knowledge and resources with these future tourism leaders," concludes Alderman Vos.

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