

Small businesses make a big difference

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The economic disruption and lockdown restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have delivered devastating blows to South Africa's already ailing economy. Millions of jobs have already been lost and bankruptcies and closures of businesses continue unabated despite government interventions.



The False Bay TVET College Centre for Entrepreneurship/Rapid Incubator (CfE) is attempting to stymie the trend by supporting young companies to stay afloat and be ready for the post-pandemic economy. A partnership between the CfE and the Western Cape Government SMME Boost Fund, supported by an additional 16 affiliated organisations, is assisting over 350 businesses through a range of interventions.

The main funder for the intervention, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT), has invested over R2 million to bolster SMMEs' resilience to the pandemic. Twenty businesses were supported through a structured incubation support programme (training, mentorship and coaching, personal development) for startups from ideation to establishment; and business mentorship and bespoke interventions for existing businesses.

New startups were supported through structured learning while those with manufacturing capability had access to an engineering and woodwork 'mini factory' equipped with machinery, tools and production support for the development and manufacture of new products.

Mr Joshua Wolmarans, Director of Enterprise Development at DEDAT, has congratulated False Bay TVET College and the CfE for managing to pivot to an online platform in response to the impact of Covid-19.

"Based on the monitoring and evaluation sessions conducted by the Department, we received positive feedback [from participating businesses] on the implementation of the programme. The need for partnerships between ecosystem stakeholders is critical.



Joshua Wolmarans

“This programme is about unleashing ideas, thinking innovatively and creatively, enabling learners to identify opportunities, taking risks, solving problems, building connections and learning from both failures and successes,” says Mr Wolmarans.

In her feedback, beneficiary Ronel Prinsloo commended the CfE team for being dynamic and providing coaching, guidance and clarity in a focused approach: “This is because knowledge transfer is very important to me. I am building my business so that others can live. I am working on a sewing business, a fruit and nut business and support to my husband’s panelbeating business.”

The access to resources generated in the programme has yielded the following results:

- 20 businesses were supported to continue operating.
- 40 jobs were created.
- An income of R6 million was collectively generated.

For more information about the False Bay TVET College Centre for Entrepreneurship/Rapid Incubator, please contact Centre Manager Steve Reid at:

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