

## **E<sup>2</sup> Elevator: Accelerating entrepreneurial success for small businesses**

Four small businesses in the agricultural, hair care, automotive and food sectors are taking part in E<sup>2</sup>'s latest Accelerator Programme, the E<sup>2</sup> Elevator - a high-intensity four-month programme with targeted interventions to address four key strategic areas in each business.



Sipho Pilime, Associate Programme Officer at E<sup>2</sup>

### **Accelerating entrepreneurial success**

“The E<sup>2</sup> Elevator aims to rapidly scale-up entrepreneurial ventures founded by Allan Gray Fellows,” explains Sipho Pilime, associate programme officer at E<sup>2</sup>. “It is a structured programme that provides content workshops, the impartation of critical skills and targeted support from highly-skilled business mentors, industry leaders, influencers and experts.”

As part of the programme, E<sup>2</sup> also provides initial seed funding support to these early-stage business ventures to help them create optimal business and operating models, as well as develop solid business cases that prepare and assist them to be ready and eligible to apply for follow-on funding to scale-up their operations. This they can do upon conclusion of the programme. E<sup>2</sup> is an active investor present throughout their candidates' entrepreneurial journey, as their latest group of fellow entrepreneurs confirm.

### **Oh My Cake!**



Oh My Cake co-founders Naseeha Hassen and Camilla Hyson

Naseeha Hassen, co-founder and confectionist perfectionist at the custom cake and macaron studio Oh My Cake! which is 50% black female-owned, says: “E<sup>2</sup> and the Allan Gray Fellowship have helped me start my business by giving me and my team far more than just funding: they have given us moral support, resources and constant motivation. Without them, it would have taken me far longer to achieve my goals and dreams.” Oh My Cake! has grown from a home-based one-woman operation into a team of eight, with an upmarket artisanal confectionery operating from the Cedar Square mall in Fourways.

## Mabu Tribe



Tlholo Mabelane, Founder of Mabu Tribe

Tlholo Mabelane, founder of Mabu Tribe, a 100% black female-owned African hair products company, agrees. “E<sup>2</sup> gives us a wealth of support,” she says. “It has helped me with accountability, support and resources. The team is always there, cheering us on and encouraging us. They keep me in check of my dreams and goals – and help me get closer to my dreams.”

“The essence of MabuTribe is the celebration of African identity. We want to empower Africans with crowns of coils and curls to enjoy their hair,” explains Mabelane.

## AgriMash



Thato Muleya (Chairman of AgriMash) with Thato Mahosi (Managing Director of AgriMash)

AgriMash Industries is a 100% black youth-owned business trading in vegetables in the Northern soil rich Limpopo Province. Their products are supplied to various supermarkets, fresh produce markets and small businesses. “E<sup>2</sup> has helped us develop a thorough understanding of many aspects of running a business: Finance, strategy, sustainability – and lots more,” says Thato Mahosi, one of three co-owners and directors of AgriMash.

Driven by a commitment to eradicating poverty in their community through sustainable agriculture, the three have grown their business from humble beginnings and today supply fresh produce to major retailers in Limpopo. “We wish to invest more in fixed assets to solidify the business, in turn, increasing our production exponentially during the E<sup>2</sup> programme and beyond,” concludes Mahosi.



Nkateko Kaytee Mathebula, Founder of Kaytee Automotive Company

## Kaytee Automotive Company

“I am going to change the world – and E<sup>2</sup> is helping me do this,” says a passionate Nkateko Kaytee Mathebula, founder of Kaytee Automotive Company, a Gauteng-based company specialising in high-quality parts and after-sales service for medium to large local commercial fleets.

“E<sup>2</sup> has given me immense support outside of the funding arena. I had been working in the business alone for a really long time and the support they have given me was unexpected - and frankly a bit scary! They have pushed me to dream bigger, they have helped me focus on getting the detail right so that I can add value to suppliers and customers and are continually supporting me in what I dream about - instead of pushing someone else’s dream on me. The relationship is genuinely about seeing me reach my own goals.”

## Financing for future prosperity

Besides their support to early-stage entrepreneurial ventures of Allan Gray Fellows, E<sup>2</sup> also supports impactful social enterprises focusing on five sectors: agriculture, education, energy, health, youth.

“Together with the Allan Gray Foundation and the Allan Gray Association of Fellows, we have some of the brightest minds in the country,” says Pilime. “We enable Allan Gray Fellows and social entrepreneurs to build and scale high-impact organisations which will create jobs, attack poverty and contribute to economic and social transformation in South Africa.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>