

ECDC invests R12m in Eastern Cape fast food entrepreneur

Despite owning 11 fast food outlets in four towns in the Eastern Cape, Sicelo Mntonga still regards himself as an emerging entrepreneur.



In his string of franchise stores the new baby on the block is the Debonairs Pizza store situated at the newly opened Idutywa Mall in Idutywa. He started the store with a R2-million loan he received from the Eastern Cape Development Cooperation (ECDC). The outlet started operations in December 2016 and employs 21 people.

ECDC has invested more than R12-million into Mntonga's ventures over the years. Today, he employs more than 350 people across the four towns.

The Mthatha-based businessman boasts a wealthy resume as a restaurateur spanning 13 years, which has seen him operating stores in Idutywa, Mthatha and Butterworth while a fourth store is in Kokstad in the province of KwaZulu Natal. His franchises include Debonairs Pizza, Wimpy, Steers and Mugg & Bean - all under Famous Brands.

Of the eight Debonairs Pizza restaurants, five are in Mthatha and one in Dutywa, one in Butterworth and one Kokstad. All the three Wimpy stores are in Mthatha and so is the Mugg & Bean restaurant. He has one Steers outlet, based in Butterworth.

Mntonga had assisted many to become entrepreneurs by offering them partnerships in his business ventures without upfront capital. "Most of our people could make good entrepreneurs or business people, but funding is a barrier in their lives. My passion is to work with people, to develop people, afford entrepreneurship opportunities to our people and improve their lives. This was my passion from the beginning and I am happy that many people are benefiting."

Funding underserved areas

ECDC head of development finance and business support Tandeka Rozani says the Corporation's support for Mntonga's ventures is in line with its commitment to extending its reach to deserving entrepreneurs in all corners of the province.

"This is particularly true for those entrepreneurs based in underserved and largely rural areas. ECDCs loan instruments are targeted to reach entrepreneurs in areas such as where Mntonga's businesses are located. Loan funding helps businesses in these areas to grow, stimulates local economic activity as well as facilitating job creation," says Rozani.

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