



Young jack of all trades

Go-getter plays mentor to start-ups while pursuing his business ambition

XOLILE MTSHAZO

ALTHOUGH young entrepreneur Sechaba Selialia's mission is to grow his fashion business Scoody, the Geek Lab of Clothing, he is also passionate about helping other young start-ups realise their dreams.

The Scoody is a two-in-one piece of clothing, a half-scarf and half-hoodie. Its name is derived from halving the names scarf and hood.

Selialia (25) derives satisfaction from mentoring and guiding other young entrepreneurs aside from running his fashion brand, which has its head office in Braamfontein and the manufacturing factory in the Jozi CBD.

Selailai is honest about the struggles associated with being an entrepreneur and start-up owner, but is trying hard to make a difference by helping other entrepreneurs as part of his Allan Gray Fellow responsibilities.

"Although my calling is in finance, my passion and focus element is entrepreneurship, and as a Allan Gray Fellow, I

am tasked with equipping other fellows with the necessary entrepreneurship skills," says Selailai.

"I'm more than living the dream, I identify and support start-up businesses and enterprises. I believe we can socially impact through entrepreneurship."

Born and raised in Vereeniging, Selailai matriculated at Potchefstroom High School for Boys in 2008. He was immediately granted an Allan Gray Scholarship that funded his Bcom Honours in Financial Analysis and Portfolio Management at UCT.

Fashion has always been his passion. After graduating, he founded his first fashion house Normadic Couture. It specialised in what he says is "revolving, dynamic

and agile fashion".

But he has since temporarily deferred the whole project to dedicate his time on growing his beloved Scoody brand.

Since graduating in 2013, he has worked for Sanlam Glacier as a client consultant.

In 2014, he was roped by his funders, Allan Gray, to work for them, and last year, he was with Barclays Africa Investment, a position he quit after a few months to concentrate on Scoody.

He presently works at Edge Growth as a Business Analyst and serves on the Executive Committee of the Association of Allan Gray Fellows, heading up its Ventures portfolio.

The Allan Gray programme involves identifying gaps among the the entrepreneur trainees, taking them through the practicalities of owning a business and helping them with pitching for funding among other aspects.

Speaking on what his enterprise was raking in, Selailai says they are not yet profitable.

"We are new in the market, any new product takes time to get recognition. But because I have an emotive relationship with the brand and due to traction, I am satisfied that we are making inroads."

He describes the garment, which has become a much-sought-after Kaizer Chiefs fans' regalia item, following a deal he clinched with the Naturena, south of Joburb-based club last year, as "a unique, multi-functional piece of clothing with various usages".

Selailai says it is an item of the future, a fashionable accessory that people have not thought about but now want to have in their wardrobes.

"I saw a gap and identified an opportunity in the untapped potential of creating a brand around a fashion item," he says.



Sechaba Selialia's fashion brand has been adopted by the local football club Kaizer Chiefs.
Picture: Tshoko Kabasia

"In 2014, I registered the company, and a few months later, I registered the Scoody trade mark and brand, offered to and targeted at the young and cool, hip and happening generation."

The Scoody has distinct categories: there is the entry classic garment, which sells at R179; the sporty item, which retails at R249; and the flagship product, spotting the Chiefs logo and branding.

"I applied for a sub-licence and was granted by the Chiefs marketing

department, who approved me as a supplier to their three merchandise stores."

When asked what other clothing items they manufacture, Selailai says they are concentrating on the novelty item for now.

"Although we considered doing other clothing items from word go, we felt we would sell the Scoody short. We don't want to be jacks of all trade and masters of none by doing everything all at once."

■ mtshazox@sundayworld.co.za