

Ashley Uys – Entrepreneur and Life Saving Scientist

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21 Icons Season 3 – Episode 8: Ashley Uys



Ashley Uys is a visionary, entrepreneur, scientist and life-saver. Using his business sense and drive to succeed, Ashley founded his own company called Medical Diagnostech which develops easy to use Malaria testing kits through small samples, addressing the problem of malaria which kills around [half a million people yearly](#).

His idea being a product of innovative thinking believes the solution to Africas problems is in creating businesses, thinking out the box and pushing through.

“The only way I believe that we will compete with first world countries is through innovation. There is a lot of opportunity in Africa we came from a difficult era... we have the opportunity as South Africans to really spread our wings.”



Growing up in the Cape Flats, Ashley was surrounded by children using illegal methods to gain money instead of doing recreational activities. This motivated him to be an example to his siblings and to make a success of his life, so he studied, persevered, got a scholarship and managed to fund his own businesses through identifying a gap in the community.

Although Ashley has the opportunity to automate his production of the test kits, he prefers creating jobs – employing people to handle the production of the kits.

“As South Africans, we should carry this country forward, and the way to do that is through social impact – creating employment and jobs.”



As a result of his social contribution and entrepreneurial venture, Ashley has won multiple awards:

- 2013 – Listed as one of Forbes’s 30 Under 30: Africa’s Best Young Entrepreneurs in 2011
- 2013 – Endeavour Entrepreneur
- 2013 – Uys was named one of the 200 Young South Africans making a difference by Mail & Guardian
- 2013 – Innovation Prize for Africa (finalist)
- 2012 – South African Breweries (SAB) Innovation Award
- 2010 – Young entrepreneur of the year by Western Cape Business Opportunities Forum (WECBOF)
- 2010 – Johnnie Walker Strider Award 2010
- 2008 – SAB Kick Start Business of the Year
- Won the South African Breweries Innovation Award

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He is also Managing Director of OculusID.

Portrait – ‘Knowing and Not Knowing’



Walking along a white line on a dirt road, Ashley is depicted walking between opposites; fear and courage, information and unknown. Further acting as a representation of his journey, Ashley neglected the temptations for 'easy ways out' and focused on sound long-term goals – although the journey is not over he has reaped the benefits.

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