

## Free coding programme welcomes first learners

In a bid to tackle the soaring IT skills gap and youth unemployment rate in South Africa, WeThinkCode\_, a peer-to-peer tech institution, providing free education in computer programming, officially welcomed the first 100 learners to participate in its Coding Bootcamp, in Johannesburg on Tuesday, 26 January.



22,000 young people from all backgrounds, between the ages of 17 and 35, applied and more than 7,000 completed the online tests. 100 successful candidates were then selected to participate in the Coding Bootcamp.

These young people will now be required to undergo a four week intensive training programme, where they will be challenged to solve programming problems, for seven days a week.

This is the first of three Coding Bootcamps planned for 2016. WeThinkCode\_ aims to attract at least 200 more young people to participate in its February and March Bootcamps this year.

Once the Bootcamps have been completed, 120 of the most promising students will get an opportunity to enrol in a two-year course that will help them to become world-class software engineers, which will start in May 2016. The students will be given a basic allowance per month and will study free of charge, given that WeThinkCode\_ partners with various companies to sponsor the training and ensure a sustainable business model.

Furthermore, the students will be secured a four month internship programme per year with a corporate sponsor, who will

have the option to employ them full-time upon graduation.



## Innovating tech education

Arlene Mulder, co-founder of We Think Code\_, says: "We are very excited about our first Coding Bootcamp intake. Innovation in tech education has been neglected in recent years. WeThinkCode\_ brings a revolutionary model that is proven to produce outstanding software engineers with a problem solving mindset. We are not just training coders, but the digital problem solvers of the future."

Marcel Klaassen, head of growth at FNB Business adds, "WeThinkCode\_ is an innovative learning concept that challenges the traditional way of teaching IT. We need more initiatives of this nature to help the increasing number of unemployed youth and secure the economic future of our country,"

"This initiative has been introduced at a critical time when students from across South Africa are struggling to afford tertiary education. As one of the founding sponsors, we are honoured to part of such a great initiative," continues Klaassen.

WeThinkCode\_ is calling on more youth across South Africa to apply and get an opportunity to attend one of the bootcamps. Youth that are interested can sign-up at [www.wethinkcode.co.za](http://www.wethinkcode.co.za). Registration for the February Bootcamp closes on 20 February and registrations for the March Bootcamp closes on 20 March 2016.

"We are extremely grateful for the support we've received from our corporate sponsors, who provide not only financial assistance to our students, but also work experience and a clear path to employment," concludes Mulder.

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