

wake up

AND SMELL THE COFFEE

With unemployment rates skyrocketing, the registered non-profit organisation, Learn to Earn, is striving to overcome this challenge by equipping the unemployed with special skills and training, aiding them on the journey to becoming professional baristas

BY JENNY HANDLEY PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE TUCK

The aroma of fresh coffee is not the only welcome at the Ground UP Barista Academy; the passionate staff are also keen to greet you with a warm smile

as you arrive. "It's not just about a cup of coffee, it's about giving hope," says Barbara Lipp, Communications and Events Manager at Learn to Earn (LTE). Founded in 1989 and formalised by Roché van Wyk – current director – in 1995; they established the Barista Academy in 2014 where unemployed people are trained and developed for the burgeoning coffee industry. Their eight-week basic barista course covers the history of coffee, practical barista skills, customer service and life skills training.

"We see lives change as graduates set their goals and realise their dreams. We're restoring dignity and self-respect for unemployed people, setting them up for success. We run the basic barista course five times a year from our office in Claremont, with one trainer overseeing 12 people per session. We follow a "hand up – not a hand out" approach to our training, as such, all students are required to pay towards their course at LTE. By contributing a part of the fees,



TAFADZWA NDLUVU, A GROUND UP GRADUATE, HAS THE ART OF COFFEE MAKING DOWN PAT



students become active partners in their own development and have a greater sense of ownership in the changing of their circumstances. It costs R11 500 to train one person, of which the student contributes R400," explains Barbara.

The statistics show success, with a course completion rate of 80%. Slightly more than half of the students are male, and most students are between 21 and 30 years of age. Success is also illustrated with some inspiring stories from their graduates, like that of Tafadzwa Ndlovu, who started his training at the Ground UP Barista Academy in June 2016. "Tafadzwa is a kind and sincere person. Initially he was 'afraid' to steam milk or make coffee, but he conquered his fears and grew in confidence, taking on more challenges as the course progressed," Barbara says proudly. Tafadzwa was placed at

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The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa for his job shadowing. At the end of the course he was offered a position as a full-time barista at the hotel, and after three months he received the Employee of the Month award!

As a social enterprise, the Ground UP Barista Academy aims to be as visible and mobile as possible. "As a social enterprise, we are a self-supporting business that, as part of its core business activity, addresses a social issue and applies all profit back into furthering this cause," Barbara explains. "Ground UP Business operates our mobile coffee

units – three so far – with another two launching soon. During the week, the units are based at schools, and on the weekends at athletics days, water polo tournaments and concerts," Barbara notes.

How can you help? As the academy is fully equipped, thanks to generous sponsors, funding for training future students is highly valued. What's more, as a public benefit organisation (PBO), donations are eligible for a section 18A tax deduction. You can also purchase coffee from Ground UP, hire them to provide coffee at your next event or assist with placements. In the end, every bit helps to change the lives of the unemployed, from the Ground Up. 79 BELVEDERE ROAD, CLAREMONT, CAPE TOWN, 7708; 021-671-2230; LEARNTOEARN.ORG.ZA.



BARBARA LIPP, COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGER AT LEARN TO EARN, WITH STUDENTS FROM THE GROUND UP BARISTA ACADEMY



AT GROUND UP, STUDENTS RECEIVE HANDS-ON TRAINING IN VITAL COFFEE MAKING TECHNIQUES