WeThinkCode_ to launch Durban campus

The WeThinkCode_ software programming training academy has announced it will be opening a campus in Durban this July, to complement the school's existing campuses in Johannesburg and Cape Town. This is part of an ambitious plan to double WeThinkCode_'s student intake to 600 this year.

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WeThinkCode_'s CEO Nyari Samushonga, explains, "We know that South Africa has a vast pool of untapped talent with the aptitude to be trained in technology. At the same time our youth unemployment is among the highest in the world.

"Like any successful business, WeThinkCode_ is evolving and continually improving its operating model and this includes making our programmes accessible to more people. Geography plays an important role here as many candidates are unable to access our existing campuses. Hence our decision to open in Durban, South Africa's third biggest metropole."

Investment

E Squared Investments has committed R9.2mn to establish the new campus. The capital will be paid out over three years and will go towards equipping the building, staff resourcing as well as costs towards establishing the new curriculum.

"As an impact investor whose mandate is to attack poverty and unemployment in South Africa, there are strong synergies between WeThinkCode's involvement in assisting disadvantaged young people and E Squared's social entrepreneurship initiative," said Cheryl Jacob, Head of Social Entrepreneurship at E Squared.

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Commenting on the drivers behind the Durban expansion, Samushonga says, "The Covid pandemic has accelerated the digitisation process in businesses and demand for these skills is increasing exponentially.

"The Durban metropole, particularly, has seen significant growth in business activity over the past few years. Hence our decision to open a campus there to satisfy this need.

"While much of our teaching is done online, we do have important teaching phases when our students need to come onto campus. In addition, there are two intern periods within the two-year course that need to be undertaken near our students homes. KZN youngsters wanting a start in software programming can now apply for a place on their doorstep," she adds.

WeThinkCode_'s two year software programming course is fully sponsored.

Girls, think code

Inclusiveness is central to the WeThinkCode_ ethos. "The academy is open for everyone. Specifically, we aim to increase the number of women programmers on our course each year. Our target is for women to exceed 40% of our 600-strong student contingent," Samushonga says.

Geographical expansion and the inclusion of more women are not the only evolutionary processes happening at WeThinkCode_.

"Although we currently enjoy a 98% employment rate of our graduates at average annual starting salaries of R240,000 a year, we are also refining our selection process to reduce the number of young people who drop out of the programme," Samushonga says.

"Finding candidates with the best aptitudes and attitudes is crucial and we are using a newly-developed approach to identify talent and uncover the required cognitive skills. In addition, we draw on the expertise of leading technologists for the design of our course material. These experts are continually updating the course as technologies change," she concludes.

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