

Providing skills and employment from the Ground Up

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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Skills development and job creation not-for-profit Learn to Earn South Africa has been offering “a hand up, not a hand out” to the unemployed in underprivileged communities for almost 30 years. With campuses in Khayelitsha, Hermanus and Claremont, the initiative provides a number of skills development courses - from basic computer and office training, to hospitality, sewing and woodwork.



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We chatted with Barbara Lipp, communications manager for Learn to Earn, about the newest addition to the NPO's development programme – Ground Up.

Tell us about Ground Up and how it all started?

In 2014, Learn to Earn (LtE) celebrated 25 years of serving the unemployed through skills training while facilitating the restoration of dignity and self-respect. To commemorate our past achievements, in which we average a 79% success rate of unemployed persons become economically active, we marked the occasion by launching a new training initiative.

Coffee is one of the most traded commodities in the world and is one of the fastest growing sectors in the South African economy. With this in mind LtE established the Ground Up Barista Academy, where unemployed people are trained and developed for the burgeoning coffee industry. All training is done in line with LtE's approach to holistic human development – social, economic, emotional and spiritual.

Ground Up is made of the training division, Ground Up Barista Academy and then an income generating division, Ground Up Mobile.

What does the training include and what are the entry requirements for applicants?

The Ground Up Barista course is an 8-week course partnering with unemployed people, training them to become an entry level barista - changing lives from the Ground Up.

Entry Requirements: Grade 10 and a desire to work in the hospitality industry (which could include long hours and possible shift work).

Modules covered include:

- Understanding of coffee (theory)
- Background of coffee
- Understanding your equipment
- Speciality beverages
- Basic Espresso
- Milk foaming techniques
- Maintaining and cleaning equipment
- Practical coffee making experience – job shadowing
- Espresso bar set-up and management (practical)

We also offer an additional Life Skills programme, which includes a job readiness module. Our human scale development approach to social, emotional and spiritual development through the supplementary training provided over the course, results in employable, work ready graduates with greatly improved self-confidence, dignity and self-respect.

■ ***With the training programme being largely subsidised – where does most of your funding come from and how can businesses get involved?***

Our funding comes from a variety of sources including Corporate CSI programmes, trusts and foundations along with various individual supporters, both local and foreign, who contribute financially on a regular or adhoc basis. We were recently awarded a matching grant by the Rotary Foundation – in partnership with Tavistock Rotary Club and the Rotary Club of Wynberg.

In the last quarter of 2016, we raised R75,000 through a crowd funding campaign. This funding was allocated towards capital expenditure for Ground Up Mobile, which provides economic opportunity to graduates with entrepreneurial potential.

■ ***What employment assistance or opportunities does the programme offer to graduates?***

Due to the high demand for baristas, we have been able to place a number of our recently qualified Barista graduates in employment opportunities. Placement is not guaranteed, and is reliant on industry demand at the time, along with the graduate's desire to work and attitude towards work.

Our trading division, Ground Up Mobile, runs a three year entrepreneurial programme for graduates with entrepreneurial potential.

■ ***Share with us some of your success stories...***

Thomas Jacobs completed the fourth Ground Up Academy Barista course of 2016. From the beginning of the course he showed the potential to be a successful barista, thriving in the group training environment and popular amongst not only amongst his peers, but also the staff at the Academy offices. He had a teachable attitude, a coachable spirit and was always willing to learn. He took on constructive criticism and used that to work harder and improve.

Although the barista skills of pulling espresso shots and milk texturing did not always come naturally to him, he persevered and worked hard, which paid off. He demonstrated tremendous growth while on the course both practically but most importantly personally. By the end of the course he oozed self-confidence.

Thomas's potential was not only noticed by Ground Up, when he was awarded the Top Student award for the course, but also by the management team at his job shadowing placement. All his hard work earned him a permanent position as a barista at Knead Palmyra Junction, Claremont. Thomas has been working there since October 2016 and is enjoying his



Thomas Jacobs, Ground Up barista graduate

Tafadzwa Ndlovu started his training at the Ground Up Barista Academy in June 2016. Tafadzwa showed great commitment to the course, always the first to be in class and was very attentive. He took the course seriously, always open to learning and engage with new course content, grasping the work very quickly and putting in extra effort after hours.

Tafadzwa is one of the kindest, sweetest, most helpful students we've had to date on the course. His humility and sincerity are just two of his strongest qualities; he was always willing to help everyone, and go over and above what is required of him. For someone who at the beginning of the course was 'afraid' to steam milk or make coffee, he conquered his fears and grew in confidence, and did not shy away from taking on challenges.

Tafadzwa was placed at the 12 Apostles Hotel & Spa for his job shadowing component. Due to his new coffee knowledge and wonderful people skills, at the end of the course he was offered a permanent position as a full time barista at the hotel. In December (after 3 months of working full time), Tafadzwa was awarded the employee of the month award! When he visited us to share the good news, he was brimming with excitement and acknowledged that without the help of the Ground Up Barista Academy and the course

funders, his life would not have changed in the significant way it had.

Ground Up Baristas are serving Hope in a Cup at:

12 Apostles Hotel & Spa, The Cape Grace, Seattle Coffee Co, The Creamery, Bean There, Knead, Melissa's Coffee Shop, Primi Piatti, Paul's Homemade Ice cream along with various Woolworth's Café's, Mugg & Bean's and corporate in-house solutions.

■ **What's at the top of your wish list for Ground Up?**

Funding to train more people, 4 x bar fridges, 2 x 300L fridges for milk, and generators (specs can be provided).

Funding Barista training and donating equipment can earn you SED points and tax deductibility; funding Enterprise Development can go towards your BBBEE scorecard.

Learn to Earn Development Enterprise (Pty) Ltd is a 100% Black-owned, 33% black women-owned Level 1 BBBEE company and can assist your business to contribute towards your revised BBBEE scorecard (Enterprise & Supplier Development as well as Preferential Procurement) requirements.

■ **Where do you see Ground Up in five years?**

Ground Up Barista Training Academy's situated in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng with at least 10 mobile coffee trailers operated by graduates of our enterprise development programme.

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

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