



# Digital inclusion: overcoming the growing digital skills divide

*Karen Boers*

*SEI webinar - 4 October 2021*



# Who am I?



**KAREN BOERS  
DIRK PEUSENS**



**BE CENTRAL**



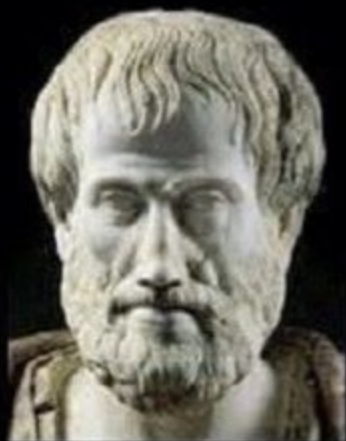
**startups.be**

**Networking  
& Drinks**





**2016: Brussels attacks create  
a shock wave across the country**



**"Poverty is the parent  
of revolution & crime."**

— Aristotle (384-322 BC)

**POVERTY  
IS THE WORST  
FORM OF  
VIOLENCE**

— MAHATMA GANDHI







Kids growing up in poverty have a much lower chance of obtaining a secondary school degree ([kinderrechtencoalitie.be](http://kinderrechtencoalitie.be))



There is no “us” vs. “them”



Chances of advancing depend on wealth, age, gender & culture

HOW CAN I  
HELP?

# Who we are.

BeCode is a **non-profit** organization

With the aim of bridging the **digital divide** in Belgium

By offering a **new way** of learning to **any** motivated individual.

# Why we exist.

**584,000** Unfilled vacancies in Belgium in **2030**.

**5,6%** Unemployment rate for 15-67 year-olds in **2019**.

Our mission is to **bridge** this gap.





# Our mission is to grow today's talented – and especially vulnerable – professionals into tomorrow's best developers



**Intensive**  
learning  
program (max  
7 months)

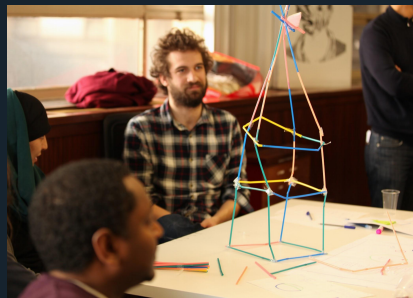


Learning to code and  
turn that into **a**  
**profession**

**Free of  
charge  
training**



**open to all**, with  
motivation as key  
driver for selection  
process



**Powered by**  
**Simplon**, a  
methodology  
based on  
innovative  
agile pedagogy



# BeCode Speed.



**15** ongoing trainings across **5** campuses.



## 4 Training & matchmaking programmes for job seekers



DevOps / SecOps



Junior web developer



Data AI Operator



SAP End User  
SAP Consultant

## Reskilling & upskilling formats for employees at risk

Cloud security  
fundamentals

AI fundamentals

Digital  
Fundamentals

Junior Developer

Python  
fundamentals

Citizen  
Developer

SAP Consultant

SAP End User

Digital Career  
Exploration

# Since 2017 we have been training more than 1.800 BeCoders across Belgium.



1868

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People trained / in  
training



50

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Staff members



5

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Campuses in Belgium

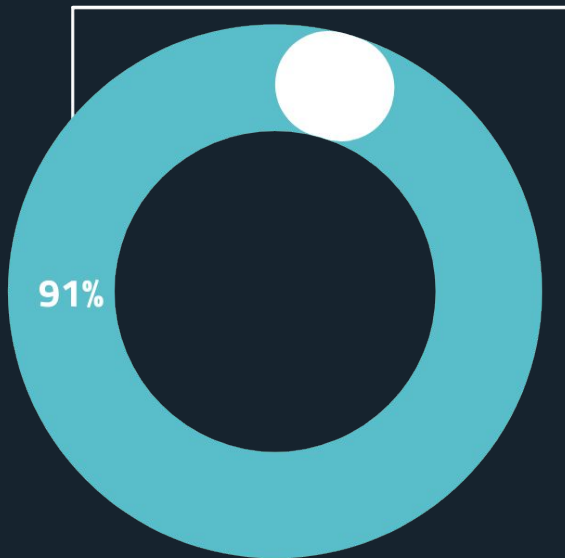


# Vast majority of participants are distant from the job market.

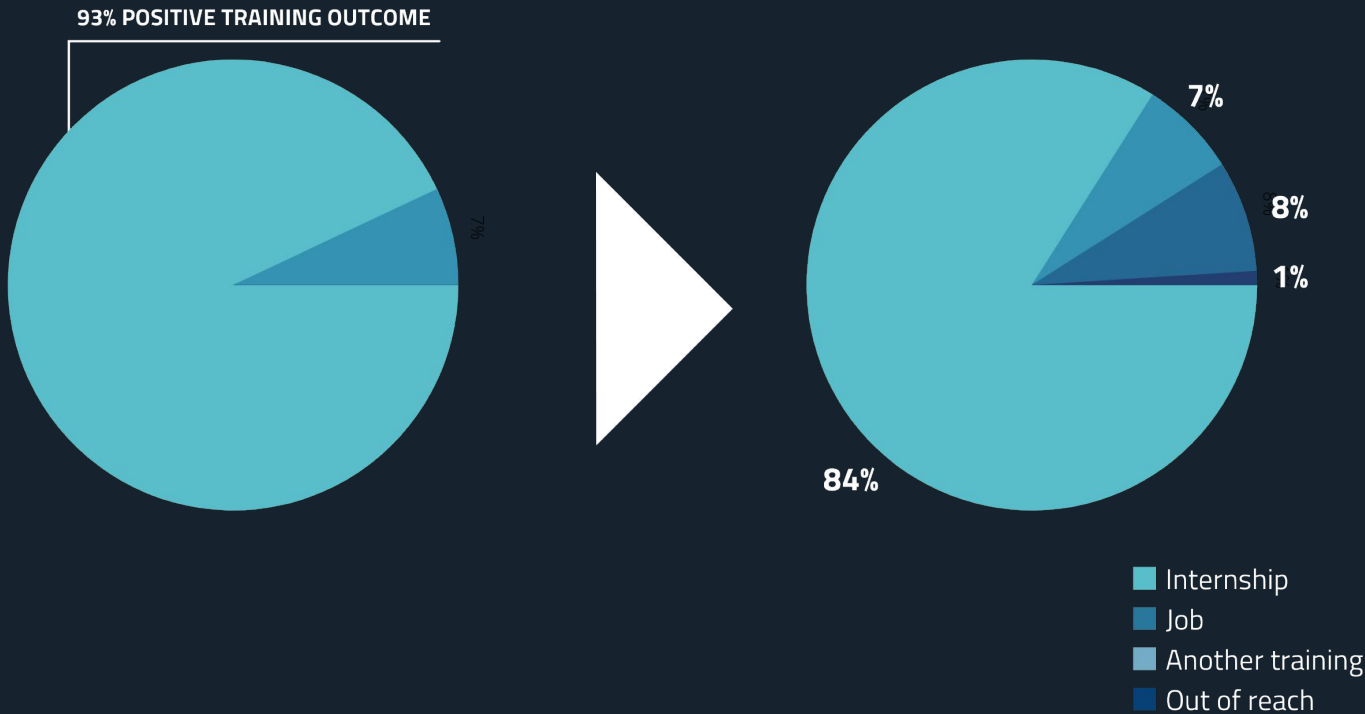
## What does 'distant from the job market' mean

- Either/or long-term unemployed
- And/or lower educated people
- And/or not male (women or other)
- And/or people born outside of OECD
- And/or people who are disabled

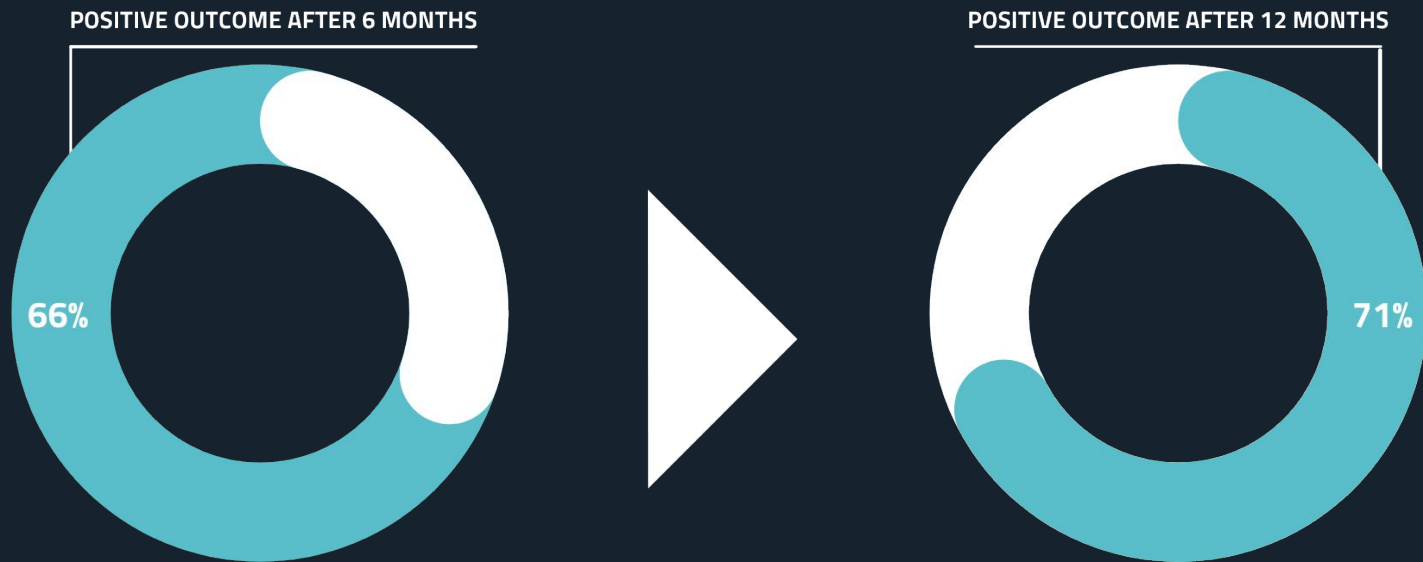
INDIVIDUALS THAT WERE DISTANT FROM THE  
JOB MARKET WHEN STARTING THE TRAINING



# Most BeCoders ended their training and completed an internship right after.



# After internship, positive outcome continues to grow.



*\* Positive outcome means being employed, being self-employed or having started advanced studies*



# In 2020, we launched a similar approach to help upskill / reskill teams of employees



**In-house trainings & Open Academy formats**

# BeCode's ingredients to success

**Innovative**  
recruitment  
strategies



Active Pedagogy

Intensive **Match Making**  
with companies



**Active**  
participation to  
Belgian Digital  
skills ecosystem





# They have hired BeCoders.



*"BeCode addresses today's digital skills gap in a truly innovative way. It provides exceptional training and work experience to motivated jobseekers of all ages and backgrounds.*

*When it comes to finding diverse people with the right mindset and digital skills of the future our clients need, Accenture could not have a better partner."*

Sam, Accenture



*" Nicole can work independently with enormous motivation and enthusiasm. It is a pleasure to work with her.*

*I am convinced that her skills and analytical thinking will be an added value in her next project. "*

Carole, DXC



*"Finding talented and motivated people is one of the most impactful decision to make in a startup.*

*The BeCode approach of skilling up intelligent and curious people was a great help in that process. We were involved in every step of the academy: the initial selection, shaping the curriculum, project assignments and internships. That way, we really go to know some of the candidates.*

*In the end, we were so impressed by their motivation that we made a job offer to two of the interns."*

Jos, FAKTION



# They have re/upskilled with BeCode.



# **Key learnings for a diverse & inclusive talent policy**



Address  
the fears &  
concerns

Identify  
potential



GRATIS  
GEEN DIPLOMA  
VEREIST

be</code>  
POWERED BY SIMPLON

PROGRAMMEREN?  
DAT KAN IEDEREEN!

[HTTPS://NL.BECODE.ORG](https://nl.becode.org)

You are the CSS of my HTML



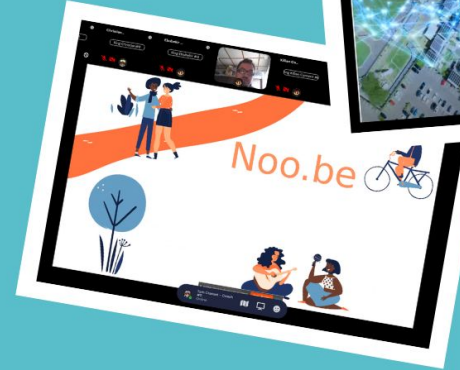
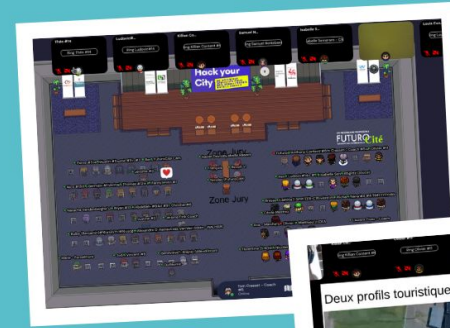
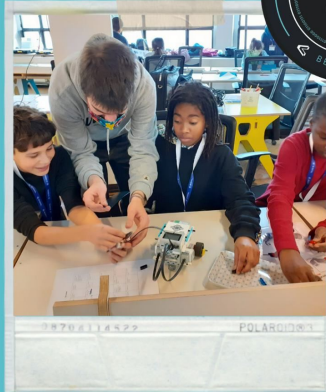
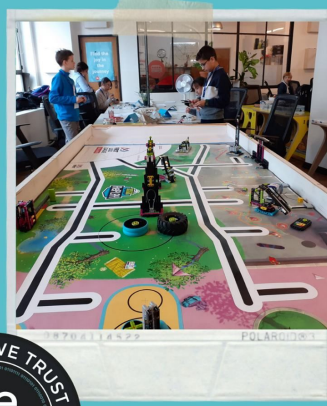
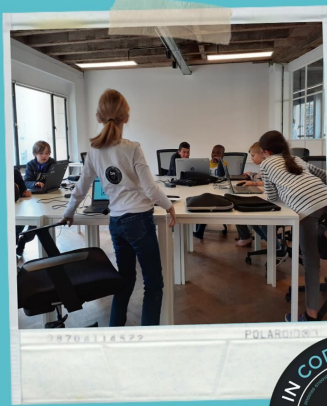
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Draw their attention: dare to stand out - but be authentic



HACK YOUR CITY 2021

Reaching the “hidden talent”: who has a trust relationship with the people you’re looking for?





## AI & DATA SCIENTIST



HEDIA  
BOUGI

"I'm Hedia and I'm 35 years old. I'm following BeCode's AI bootcamp to bridge the gap between my background in embedded software engineering and the newest technologies on the market. I now have hands-on experience with using machine learning algorithms for predictive analysis and feature importance, data visualization, natural language processing and computer vision. Most of all, I'm really passionate about obtaining rich insights from data which in turn might serve as a basis to formulate business advice. I'm currently looking for an internship as a data scientist or machine learning engineer. I'm looking forward to learning more about computer vision and reinforcement learning!"



IN THEIR CODE WE TRUST. SO DO YOU?



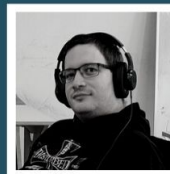
If you are hesitating  
to register, just take  
the plunge. You'll  
learn a lot during the  
training and you can  
go in many directions  
afterwards

Kayalin

WEB DEV JUNIOR BECODE ANTWERP



## WEB DEVELOPER



SÉBASTIEN  
MEUNIER

"When I was a teenager I always dreamt of working in IT. As I'm a geek and I'll always be one, I decided that it was time for a change and enrolled in BeCode's web development training. During the training, I especially loved working with JS frameworks such as Vue, Angular, and React. Now that the training is coming to an end, I'm looking for an internship place where I can be part of a big team and where I'll learn to cooperate on big projects, whether or not remotely."



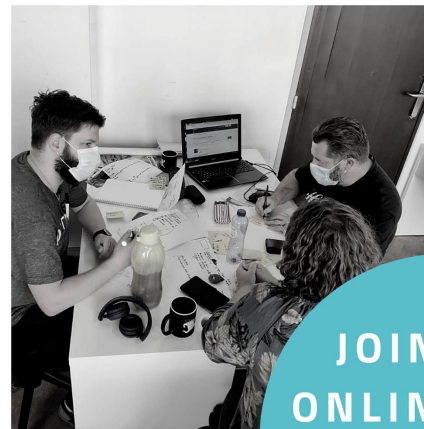
IN THEIR CODE WE TRUST. SO DO YOU?

The power of the "human interest story" - use testimonials from people they relate to...

**HACKEUSES**  
*Club*

FIND THE DIGITAL CAREER  
PATH OF YOUR DREAMS

**NEW**



**CLOUD SECURITY  
FUNDAMENTALS**

27TH OF JANUARY  
2 PM

**JOIN OUR  
ONLINE INFO  
SESSIONS**



**AI FUNDAMENTALS**

27TH OF JANUARY  
2 PM



Help them uncover “blind spots” and address fears: discovery & orientation to find the “WOW”

Men apply for a job when they meet **60%** of the qualifications.



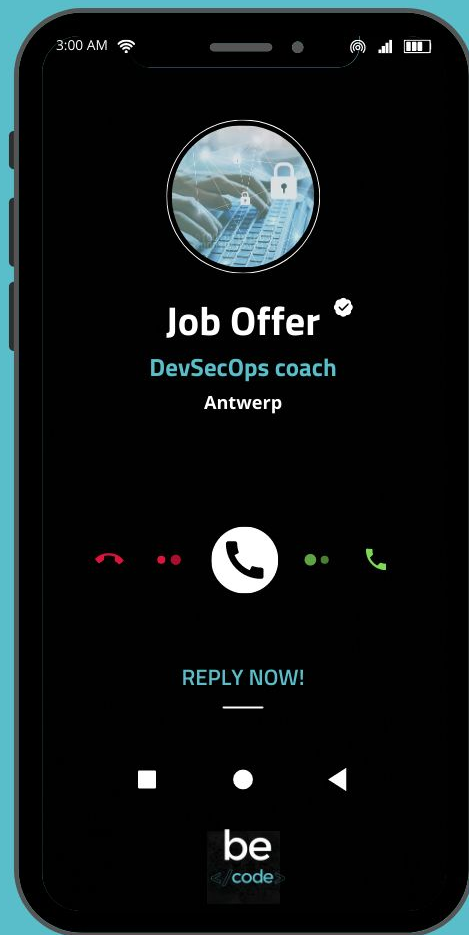
Women apply for a job when they meet **100%** of the qualifications.



The key to cross-cultural success is to develop an understanding of, and a deep respect for, cultural differences.

Hire for  
attitude  
& train for  
skills

Continuous  
development



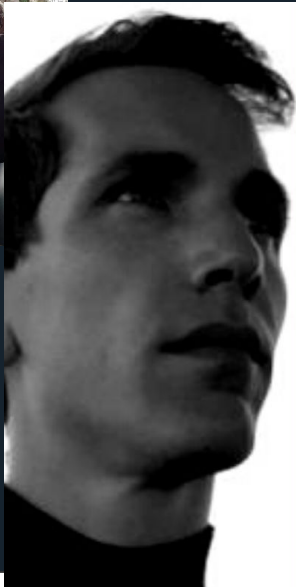
# KETMET

CoderDojoBOX

CoderDojo

be</code>

CULTUREGHEM



”

I thought that at 38, it was too late to start a new project, but I realized that nothing is impossible. BeCode gave me back a fighting spirit, the desire to learn and to challenge myself

Gaetan

WEB DEV JUNIOR BECODE LIÈGE



CURIOUS ABOUT HOW NLP CAN BOOST YOUR COMPANY'S COMPETITIVENESS & PRODUCTIVITY?

QUICKLY SURF TO OUR WEBSITE!

Lifelong learning is becoming the default - so stop looking for the rarities...



## CHANGE ENTHUSIAST

Flexible, solution mindset.



## COPYWRITER

Good at writing on a professional level.



## PUBLIC SPEAKER

Good at telling stories in front of an audience.



## CONTINUOUS LEARNER

Eager to learn, professional learner.



## RELIABLE

Trustworthy, committed, punctual.



# Valuing the SOFT SKILLS

## TEAM PLAYER

Helps, asks for help, takes its share of the collective load, give and takes constructive feedback.



## TEAM LEADER

Inspires, storyteller, decision-taker.



## TEAM MANAGER

Organizes the team to maximise its output.



## SOLUTION-ORIENTED

Focuses on solving problems, sometimes originally.



## CUSTOMER-ORIENTED

Focuses on customer's satisfaction.





Let's recognize talent when we see it



## Education partners



## Public partners



## Private partners



Partner with experts in each area - you cannot do this alone...

Don't be  
a "school"

Active  
learning







# Becode Pedagogical Framework

*Educate me, not by making me memorize facts, but by teaching me how to read between the lines, how to critically think, how to deeply understand. Educate me by respecting me. Educate me by treating me as a human. Educate me by showing me that you make mistakes just like I do. Educate me by showing me that i am not perfect, and neither are you....*

**BeCode** In Code We Trust

## Active learning methodologies

Learn by doing

*At BeCode, people learn by doing, by experimenting their skills on concrete projects, working individually or as part of a team.*



## The BeCode Rules

Rules to play hard. And safe.

*Nothing fancy, really: be on time, every day. Own your words. Embrace failure. Help each other. Contribute to solutions, not to problems. Stay away from drama. Be constructive. Communicate.*



## Differentiated Learning

Learner is the project

*The trainers interview each junior regularly to find out about their professional project and to provide a safe-zone to express difficulties, doubts, terrific ideas, or personal issues.*



## Pragmatism

As much interactions as possible with the local businesses.

*Our campuses are easy to reach, located near train stations and close to the local ecosystem of companies and startups*



## Meta Learning

Help yourself by helping others

*Learners are not considered as students but as collaborators working together to achieve the same goal*



## The Solution Mindset

Try Babies, not Cry Babies

*Problems mean opportunity. Enjoy being out of your comfort zone*



## The Daily Ingredients

Kindness + Mutual Help  
+ 100% individual Commitment.

*Learners are not considered as students but as collaborators working together to achieve the same goal*







# Ready to contribute? **SHARE - REFER - HIRE :-)**



Karen Boers  
CEO

[karen@becode.org](mailto:karen@becode.org)

Interested to learn?

<https://becode.org/learn/>

Interested to hire or train your teams?

<https://becode.org/business/>