

# Accelerating Our Movement

2021 edX Impact Report



## Welcome learners, educators, and friends,

In 2012, we started an education movement in pursuit of a world where every learner can access education, without the barriers of cost or location. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unexpected challenges this year, but it also opened up new opportunities for us to come together and support one another.

**As online education became not just optional, but essential, edX became the movement for the moment — and we seized the chance to give our community a place to grow. With our network, we forged ahead together and brought the transformative power of education to those who needed it.**

As we look back at the past year, we're thankful for the global network of contributors who helped us support our learners in every way we could. Join me as we explore how together we united our global community of learners, addressed urgent needs in higher education, and helped businesses foster resilience and employability.



**Anant Agarwal**  
**edX Founder and CEO**

# The edX story: From Experiment to Global Movement

Our first experiment began in 2012. While the internet was enabling innovation at scale across a vast array of industries, higher education was reaching only a tiny fraction of the world's curious minds. One afternoon in an MIT lab, Professor Anant Agarwal and his colleagues from MIT and Harvard sketched out a long shot experiment: a platform that would offer their courses online, open to any person up to the challenge, for free. In February of 2012, Professor Agarwal's MIT Circuits and Electronics course was launched. 155,000 learners from 162 countries signed up in the next few days, and edX.org was born with support from our founding partners Harvard and MIT.

## Our first experiment

2012

Professor Agarwal's MIT Circuits and Electronics Course launched on edX.org. More than 155,000 learners from 162 countries enrolled.

## RDX is established

2014

edX launched RDX, the Research Data Exchange, to advance learning science. To date more than 120+ peer-reviewed papers have been published.

## MicroMasters programs launch

2016

Piloted by MIT and launched in September 2016, these groundbreaking stackable credentials expanded access to graduate-level education.

## edX pioneers MicroBachelors

2020

The first-ever credit-backed, stackable online credential launches, giving learners a pathway to earn a full bachelor's degree.

## Open edX is released

2013

The edX platform was released as open source software. Today, Open edX powers more than 2,400 learning sites worldwide.

## MOOCs to earn college credit

2015

The Global Freshman Academy from Arizona State University pioneered college credit for MOOCs on edX.

## Master's degrees on edX

2017

Georgia Tech's Master of Science in Analytics paves the way for master's degrees on edX; today there are over 13.

**To date, there have been  
110+ million enrollments in  
courses on edX**

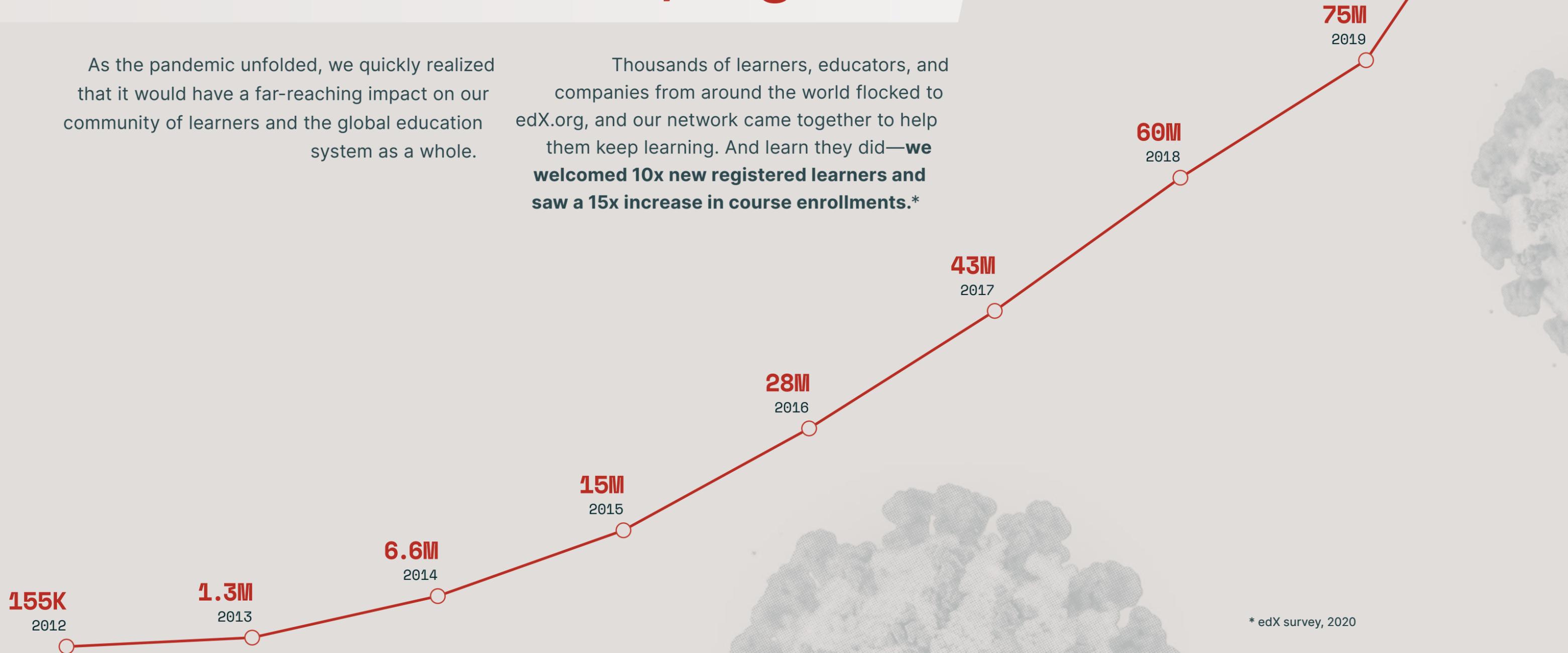
# A Moment to Move Forward, Together

As the pandemic unfolded, we quickly realized that it would have a far-reaching impact on our community of learners and the global education system as a whole.

Thousands of learners, educators, and companies from around the world flocked to edX.org, and our network came together to help them keep learning. And learn they did—we welcomed 10x new registered learners and saw a 15x increase in course enrollments.\*

# 110M

ENROLLMENTS → 2020

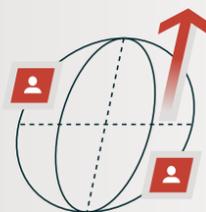


\* edX survey, 2020

# Our COVID Response

Read about how we:

United our **global community**



PAGE 6

Accelerated the future of **higher education**



PAGE 8

Helped **companies and employees** come out stronger



PAGE 11

Everything edX and our partners have been building over the past eight years prepared us for this moment to support our students and the global education system.

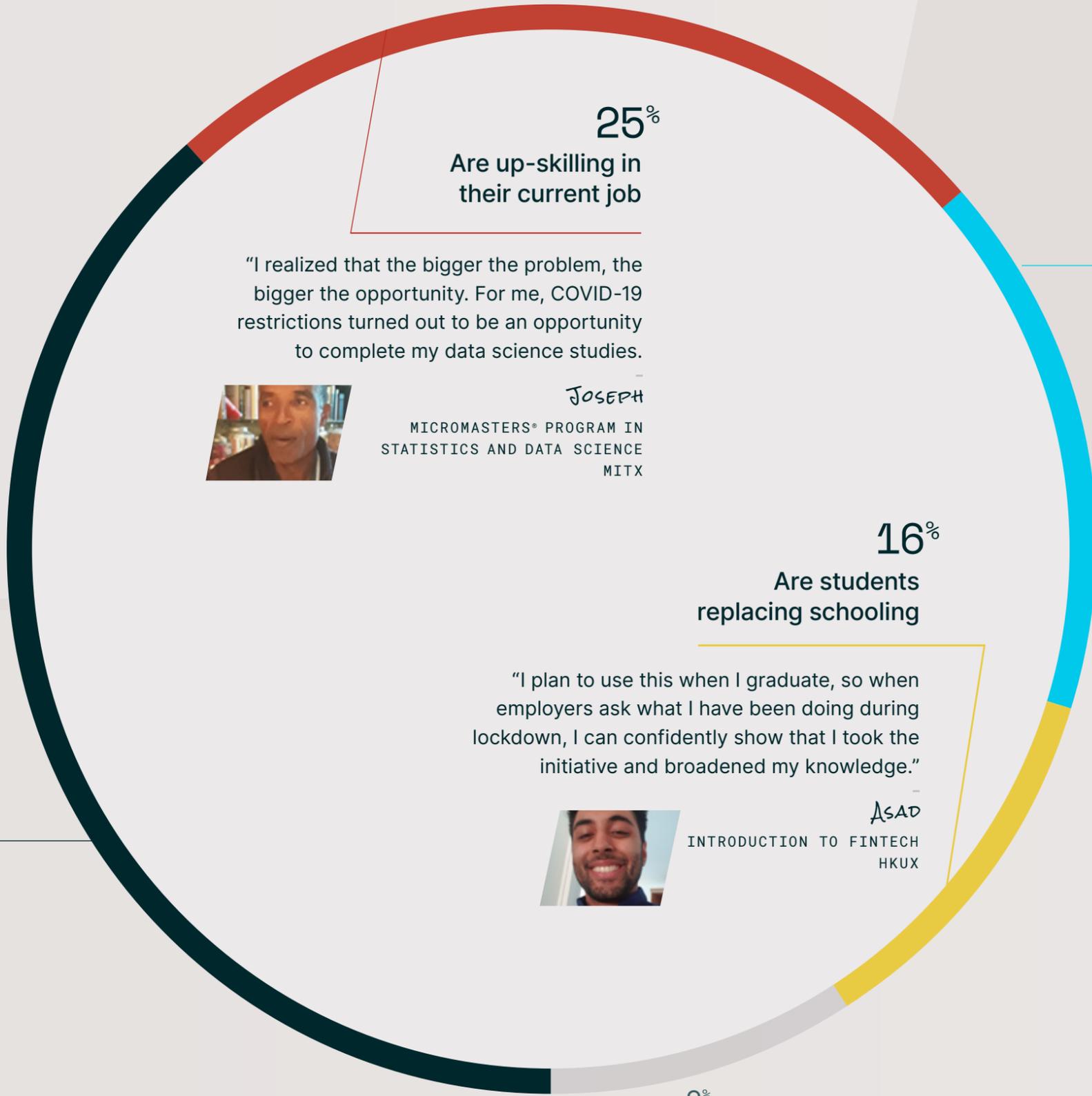
ANANT AGARWAL, FOUNDER AND CEO OF EDX





# Connecting Every Learner to an Opportunity

The spread of COVID-19 across the globe impacted every one of us. But as the world rapidly changed, our commitment to our global community didn't. Learners came to us with new and urgent needs, and we united our network to support them, stay connected, and move forward, together.



**38%**  
Have more time and want to learn something new

"It was an amazing experience to learn alongside students from all over the world. The silver lining in COVID-19."

*MAY*  
WRITING COURSES  
BERKELEYX



**25%**  
Are up-skilling in their current job

"I realized that the bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity. For me, COVID-19 restrictions turned out to be an opportunity to complete my data science studies."

*JOSEPH*  
MICROMASTERS® PROGRAM IN  
STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCE  
MITX



**16%**  
Are students replacing schooling

"I plan to use this when I graduate, so when employers ask what I have been doing during lockdown, I can confidently show that I took the initiative and broadened my knowledge."

*ASAD*  
INTRODUCTION TO FINTECH  
HKUX

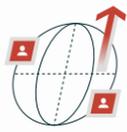


**11%**  
Are newly unemployed or furloughed

"The mental space that this course has afforded me has allowed me to broaden my horizons and think about opportunities I hadn't considered before."

*MAGGIE*  
JUSTICE  
HARVARDX





## We Created Courses For The Moment

As the world went remote, we teamed up with our partners to deliver high impact content in urgent topics, including online learning strategies, remote team building, mechanical ventilation, and more.



EDX  
How To Learn Online



HUMORX  
Remotely Humorous: Build Joyful and Resilient Virtual Teams with Humor



HARVARDX  
Mechanical Ventilation for COVID-19

Designed for medical professionals fighting COVID-19, this course saw close to **300,000** enrollments.

## And Collaborated On Initiatives For The Future

The challenges of COVID-19 further emphasize the need for a world where every learner can access education. In pursuit of our mission, we teamed up with like-minded organizations to amplify our impact:

### Global Leadership Board

We convened a group of respected leaders in business, technology, government, and philanthropy that will serve as advisors to edX and move our mission forward.

### \$10M Scholarship Fund

Starting with a \$1M gift from the Macquarie Group Foundation, the Access for All scholarship campaign will drastically increase access to life-changing education.

### UNESCO Global Education Coalition

edX joined this coalition, to protect the right to education as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to schools and universities.

# 15,000

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED WITHIN HOURS OF LAUNCHING

Working on the front lines of this pandemic at Massachusetts General Hospital, I see everyday how critical it is for all medical professionals to be trained in the use of a mechanical ventilator. I'm hopeful that this succinct course will provide my colleagues around the world with the essential information they need to make an impact immediately.



DR. SUSAN WILCOX  
INSTRUCTOR, MECHANICAL VENTILATION FOR COVID-19



# The Turning Point for Higher Education

When universities worldwide had to close their campuses, they had to pivot to offer education online. edX set out to help universities address this new reality of fully remote teaching and learning—a move many had not planned for.

## COVID-19 spreads to the world

Universities were forced to shut down and transition to online learning in a matter of days.

## Moving fast

The task of pivoting to fully remote teaching and learning was an insurmountable task for many on their own. With the help of edX, they united to keep their students learning.

## Our rapid and united response

We launched an early version of edX Online Campus to provide edX partner institutions with free access to courses and programs.

Through edX Online Campus, Dartmouth was able to gain full access to edX's entire catalog of online courses from other top universities and companies in the edX partner network. This allowed Dartmouth to provide students, partners, and community members access to these courses as well as to their own online courses and content.

MIKE GOUDZWAARD  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF LEARNING INNOVATION  
DARTMOUTH CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
LEARNING, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



Dartmouth

Knowing that the pandemic was far from over, our team came together to accelerate the development of edX Online Campus. →





University of Iceland

Dartmouth College

San Jose City College

Universitat Politècnica  
de València

IIT Bombay

## edX Online Campus

Solving the Global Need  
for Digital Learning

When the pandemic created a global education crisis, edX stepped up with a new offering: edX Online Campus. This solution, which includes a free option, enables universities to maintain learning continuity, expand their online programs with ready-made courses, and support faculty and students with more digital content and learning opportunities.

Serving 465  
institutions from  
72 countries  
around the world

400K+

COURSE  
ENROLLMENTS

130K

STUDENTS

### National University of Singapore

The National University of Singapore leveraged all aspects of edX to drive evolution. In addition to launching their own content, **they've utilized the edX platform across campus in two major ways:**

- 1 The Design Your Own Module initiative allows students to choose what, how, and from whom, to learn. Since launch, 1000+ students have completed edX courses both inside and outside of their disciplines.
- 2 A flipped classroom approach has enabled faculty in several departments, including programming and data science, to augment their curriculum with content from edX.

The interesting thing for us is that we saw COVID, as disastrous as it was, as an extinction event. So like the dinosaurs, if we're not going to evolve, we will be destroyed by this meteorite. So we said let's evolve.



ERLE LIM  
ASSOCIATE PROVOST AT THE NUS



# Realizing the Future: Blended Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic rapidly accelerated the future of education, establishing a new model for education delivery. The traditional higher education experience won't continue as we knew it. Although there will always be a place for in-person learning, the pandemic has illustrated that online learning must be a key pillar of every university's strategy. In this new normal of blended learning, no school has to do everything on its own. Rather, the entire education community can come together to make education affordable and accessible for all.

In-Person

Online

Fall 2019  
All In-Person

Spring 2020  
All Online

Spring 2021  
All Online

Fall 2021  
Mostly In-Person

Fall 2025  
Blended

⚠️  
No going back to  
the old normal

⌚  
And a few years pass

Aug 2019

Mar 2020

Mar 2021

August 2021

Aug 2025

Before COVID

COVID Era

New Normal

Helped companies and employees come out stronger



edX For Business:

# Opportunity Amidst Uncertainty

The future of work is rapidly evolving, and the pandemic expedited the need for employees to gain resilient, future-proof skills. edX For Business enables companies to offer learning pathways with real career outcomes to their employees, helping to ensure that they could come out of the pandemic stronger than before.

## edX For Business by the Numbers

1000+ 100,000+

COMPANIES

EMPLOYEES LEARNING ON EDX

300,000+

ENROLLMENTS

### CASE STUDY

## How Postmates Quickly Scaled Learning for Frontline Workers

Postmates chose edX For Business to offer educational opportunities to its Fleet, and was able to quickly scale the rollout to aid frontline workers displaced by the COVID-19 crisis.

“The impacts of this pandemic are not going anywhere, so we’re thinking of opportunities that are scalable and sustainable. Part of that is really highlighting our partnership with edX,” Rachel Kamen, the Community Engagement Leader at Postmates, said. “In response to the pandemic, having edX in place remained the perfect opportunity for our Fleet. Now more than ever, with it being 100% virtual, it was really easy to ramp up and roll out our recruitment.”



RACHEL KAMEN  
SENIOR COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

To date, 96% of Postmates’ Fleet members registered for edX are enrolled in courses across computer science and coding, project management, entrepreneurship and business, language, nutrition, arts and culture, and more.



Postmates



# Leading the Way to the Future of Work

Together with foundations, corporations, and academic institutions, we're working to identify the key skills of the future and ensure everyone has access to the education they need to build them.

## This Year We Led Conversations



### MicroBachelors Skills Advisory Council

The MicroBachelors Program Skills Advisory Council is a groundbreaking group of foundations, corporations and academic institutions that work together to address the demands of the future workplace.



### Corporate Advisory Board

Our Corporate Advisory Board helps us map our educational content to today's (and tomorrow's) business-critical skills, build a platform with features designed for the needs of corporate learning professionals, and pass on valuable industry insights to our customer base.

## And Joined Forces With Like-Minded Organizations

### SkillUp

We partnered with the SkillUp Coalition to help people re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible and with a stronger skill set than before.



### Markle Foundation

We joined the Rework America Alliance, a nationwide collaboration to enable unemployed and low wage workers to emerge from this crisis stronger.



### Bendable

edX courses are available through the Bendable initiative, which is dedicated to creating and fostering lifelong learning opportunities to the communities in which it operates.



Technologies such as AI are increasingly changing the workforce, so the nature of education will have to evolve accordingly. To give people the right skills and credentials for in-demand positions, and to meet employees where they are, stakeholders now need to offer a spectrum of resources for online and in-person instruction, as well as immersive, experiential learning. edX programs are innovative as they can play a valuable role in these offerings.



GUILLERMO MIRANDA  
VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD OF  
IBM CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Technology is completely reshaping education, work, business, and our global workforce. Working together with edX, we are creating new skills maps and pathways that anticipate and shape the changing nature of work and ensure that people across the globe can access the education they need to succeed.



SAADIA ZAHIDI  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR THE NEW ECONOMY AND SOCIETY  
WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM



# Our Movement Today

Since we first opened the classroom to the world in 2012, we've helped millions of learners unlock their potential with the power of education. When online education became the movement for the moment in the wake of COVID-19, we seized the opportunity to help even more learners find a path forward through uncertainty.

And we're not stopping here—we'll continue to grow our movement until every learner can access quality education.

# 85K

LEARNERS ENGAGED IN COURSE CONTENT PER DAY

# 39M

HOURS OF VIDEO CONSUMED

# 35M

REGISTERED LEARNERS

# 110M

ENROLLMENTS



I almost felt as if I were more a part of the [edX] classroom's community than even some of the in-person classes I took at college.



ARJUN



The benefits, the prices, the universities, and the courses that edX offers is the best online place to be right now.



EFI



There is a community there, with people from different nationalities, ages, and points of view.



YOUSSOUF

# Powered By Our Global Network

Everything we do is powered by a global network of contributors who believe in the transformative power of education. Together with the majority of top-ranked universities and industry-leading companies brought together onto one online learning platform, we bring quality education to learners at every stage of their lives.



AGATA



It has made me more open minded, not only about the future of education, but in general about how we think about what we already know. The instructors were all so inspiring and easy to follow.



# 2.1M

VERIFIED COURSE  
CERTIFICATES ISSUED

# 149

CREDIT  
PATHWAYS

# 162

PARTNERS

# 15K

INSTRUCTORS



Inspired by our work with edX, Curtin University has adopted an 'online first' model for new course development, which allows us to think innovatively about how to deliver the best learning experiences. It also accelerates the blended model for on-campus teaching, improving outcomes for educators and students alike.



PROFESSOR JILL DOWNIE  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC  
CURTIN UNIVERSITY



I got a great study opportunity from a best university and expert professors in their fields. I could not get that opportunity in my country.



ITA



We have made it a point from day one to ensure that the academic rigor of our Master's degree on edX is held to the historic standards that everyone has come to expect from The University of Texas at Austin. In many cases these are the same faculty teaching comparable degree material to our on-campus courses, but tailored to the needs of this group of online students.



KATE CALDER  
CHAIR OF UT AUSTIN'S DEPARTMENT OF  
STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCES



### A sincere thank you to:

Our 162 global partners, whose collaboration and partnership made this impact possible

#### The edX Board of Directors

**Alan M. Garber**

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**Anant Agarwal**

CEO, edX and Professor  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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# Looking Forward, Together

Join our mission to increase access to quality education worldwide by supporting edX through donations, corporate collaborations, and partnerships.

#### Our supporters, including:

American Student Assistance

Laura and John Arnold Foundation

Sergey Brin Family Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

William, Jeff, and Jennifer Gross Family Foundation

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Steven B. Klinsky

Lumina Foundation

Macquarie Group Foundation

The Massiah Foundation

Schmidt Futures

SunTrust Foundation

SunTrust to Truist Foundation

Walmart

Jeremy M. and Joyce E. Wertheimer Foundation

Yidan Prize Foundation

## Donate

Your contribution supports quality education for everyone, everywhere and helps fund financial assistance for learners. Visit [edX.org/donate](https://edX.org/donate).

## edX for Business

Businesses interested in preparing their workforces with 21st century skills can visit [business.edX.org](https://business.edX.org).

## edX for Education

Higher education institutions interested in unlocking the potential of every learner with our online learning solutions can visit [campus.edX.org](https://campus.edX.org).

## Partnerships

Universities and corporations interested in partnering with edX can reach out to [partnerships.edX.org](https://partnerships.edX.org).

## Foundations and CSR Initiatives

Philanthropic organizations interested in supporting edX can reach out to [foundations@edX.org](mailto:foundations@edX.org).



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