

Education in the Time of the Pandemic:

DataCamp Donates 2020/2021 Impact Report

August 1, 2020-August 30, 2021



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The Inspiration and Motivation Behind DataCamp Donates

Education is a Basic Human Right

When DataCamp wants to move in a new direction, we swiftly implement sweeping changes to benefit as many people as possible. In 2017, DataCamp's founders inspired us by creating DataCamp for Classrooms, a free way for colleges, universities, teachers, and students to access almost everything on DataCamp. It was a bold step to give up 10% of our revenue. But this decision was not motivated by our bottom line. Instead, it came from a sincere belief that education is a basic human right, as established by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, most countries worldwide don't offer all of these rights to all their citizens and residents. But that shouldn't stop the private sector from stepping up to fill those gaps. And if education is a human right, shouldn't that apply to education about any topic that could lead to a career? By that logic, we believe that quality data science education should be available to all teachers and students, regardless of whether they can afford it.

Bad Times Bring Out the Best In Us

By April 2020, 300,000 teachers and students worldwide had received at least six months of completely free data science education on DataCamp. At this time, the pandemic was in full effect. Over that spring and summer, we added another 50k individuals to that list, which was previously unheard of for the academic off-season.

As we saw our Classrooms numbers explode, we realized that the pandemic was creating an even stronger need for excellent data science education.

This need was not only confined to college students but adults everywhere from all different socioeconomic backgrounds. They needed a career change to survive.

We sought to create a life-changing opportunity for people stuck at home without work, hoping to get out of this pandemic in a better place than when it started.

We considered donating a large sum of money to NGOs to aid in the COVID-19 response, but we realized two things. One: donating an actual education is a much more accountable, transparent, and effective model than donating money. And second: so much philanthropic monies nonprofits were counting on had been understandably redirected to organizations specifically providing medical supplies and services to combat the spread of COVID. What about all the other problems our planet continues to struggle with—access to education being one of the most important?

That's how we came up with the basic idea that would turn into DataCamp Donates. We would give away DataCamp scholarships through nonprofit partner organizations.



Nathaniel Taylor-Leach Social Impact Manager

The Big Idea

Before the program even had a proper name, we started reaching out to nonprofits focused on training people in need and placing them into worthwhile new jobs. The basic pitch was:



DataCamp gives you free licenses to give to your community members interested in getting a job in data. You keep track of them and encourage them to keep learning on the platform. In turn, when your learners achieve success in any of its forms, let DataCamp know about it so we can amplify their success stories.

How many licenses would we give away? After a successful Free Week in May 2020 (in which all of our content was unlocked), we decided to sell yearly subscriptions for 50% off so we thought we could use that influx of interest to drive our commitment to DataCamp Donates. That's why we decided to match the 10,000 subscriptions we sold that week with 10,000 donated licenses.

Over the following year, the program became officially known as DataCamp Donates, and we solidified the application and onboarding processes for new partners. We are proud to have been able to collaborate with 99 organizations in the first 13-month period. Additionally, our employees and even job candidates started expressing feeling great about working for a company that is doing everything it can to help people get the career of their dreams in data.



LaunchCode Leveraged DataCamp Donates to Find Real People Real Jobs

One of the first DataCamp Donates partners is LaunchCode, a nonprofit offering free tech education and job placement opportunities, headquartered in St. Louis, MO.

"DataCamp fits directly into the mission we have here at LaunchCode—to provide free education for anyone looking to learn how to program regardless of what experience you have prior to taking a LaunchCode course," says John Woolbright, Community Engagement Manager at LaunchCode. "When we started our partnership, we had next to no support for people who wanted to learn Data Science in Kansas City. Since then, I have been able to transition our students from web development into data science to get a more broad learning experience."

The excitement generated by becoming a DataCamp Donates partner led to extremely high adoption and engagement levels. "Our students have truly enjoyed DataCamp and find that time spent with the software is exceptionally valuable," says John Woolbright.

DataCamp builds skills for job readiness

Some members of the LaunchCode community even landed jobs with skills gained from the DataCamp Donates partnership. Megan Cullins was in her ninth year working at an office furniture company when she first started learning with LaunchCode and DataCamp. She completed 50 DataCamp courses and accumulated 322,000 XP to expand her Python skills.

"After a couple of months of learning, I was confident enough to interview and eventually landed a job at a data analytics company! I didn't know any Python before this class, but because of DataCamp I was able to honestly tell an interviewer that I did have experience, which helped me get a job with their company."



I feel that my DataCamp subscription absolutely helped me get a job. After a couple of months of learning I was confident enough to interview, and eventually landed a job at a data analytics company! The lessons I learned through DataCamp are applied every day on my job, and I love it!"



Megan Cullins
LaunchCode learner

John wasn't surprised Megan was able to secure a position—it's the speed at which she and others achieved job readiness that was so impressive. "We started by rolling out 25 seats for Kansas City in September. Onboarding students was a breeze," he said. "By the end of the year, four of the top DataCamp learners got jobs in data science with no previous experience—after just three months of learning on DataCamp."

Closing the Skill Gap in Africa with Ingressive For Good

The story of DataCamp Donates' expansion into Africa exemplifies how the program thrives in active communities where there is a thirst for education, skills, and jobs, but a lack of all three (and money, in general). It also shows the tremendous impact that highly optimistic, passionate, and organized individuals and small teams can end up having on literally thousands of lives.

Data Science Nigeria (DSN) is an artificial intelligence nonprofit with a mission to train, mentor, and inspire Nigerian students to build skills in advanced analytics and data science. "We love DataCamp's mission of democratizing data science education," says Ezekiel Ogundepo, a data scientist at DSN. "That's why we gave licenses to our staff, our Al+ Community members, and to some outstanding participants in DSN Artificial Intelligence Bootcamp 2020."

Using DataCamp for maximum efficiency

The amount of training their employees, volunteers, and students are undertaking on DataCamp backs up how serious the organization is about raising Nigeria's profile in the global data science community. In their first year of access, they achieved an adoption score of 97%, resulting in 307 individuals completing over 1,150 courses and 178 Skill Assessments.

Toluwani Adegoke, a student at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, agrees: "I find it enjoyable. Working on DataCamp projects helped me improve my CV and my portfolio." What's keeping their members motivated and learning is DataCamp's wide variety of courses and activities that appeal to different learning styles. DSN learners regularly cited our guided and unguided <u>projects</u>, <u>Signal assessments</u>, and <u>mobile app</u> experience as their favorite features.

Learning at home is a priority during COVID-19, and we aim to provide the best learning experience to build data skills online. DSN learners have found that their gains from using DataCamp are impressive even when compared with the results of traditional in-person education.



Toluwani Adegoke
DSN learner &
undergraduate student

"DataCamp gives the feeling of being personally lectured by a world-class tutor," said Fortune Uwha. Our platform gives her the tools to assess, learn, and practice her data science skills—and also to apply them in the real world.

According to Ezekiel, "Evidence from the experience gathered so far shows that there is a significant difference (P-value < 0.05) that DataCamp is more effective when compared with in-person computer science education."

Real learning, real results

Many DSN learners reported that DataCamp helped them place higher in coding competitions, achieve accolades and build confidence, and stand out on their resumes.

The skills they acquired on DataCamp have helped them land internships, paid jobs, and even improve their current work situation. Fortune, a DSN learner currently looking for work, thanks DataCamp for her recent success: "Learning on DataCamp has helped me keep my programming skills up to date. It helps my brain stay sharp and in the business. This has helped me land a few freelance projects."



Fortune Uwha
Graduate of
Mathematics BSc,
Data Analyst

DataCamp's learn-by-doing methodology has helped many learners to apply and share their knowledge. Emmanuel Onwuegbusi used the natural language processing skills he learned on DataCamp to build an OCR system that extracts text from images and uses the GENSIM package to summarize the OCRed text. For Ezekiel, one of DSN's resident data scientists, the ongoing health crisis was the most pressing application. "We published an article in Data in Brief Journal about Nigerian economics and healthcare during the pandemic, using skills acquired on DataCamp."

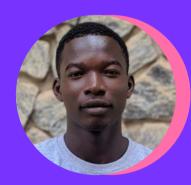
Precious Ebiendele, a student at the Federal University of Technology Akure, built a COVID-19 case tracker for all of Nigeria after taking only two data visualization courses on DataCamp.

He said, "For a new or aspiring data scientist, I would recommend DataCamp because of its simplicity and teaching method."



Precious Ebiendale
DSN Learner &
undergraduate student

Felix Ayoola, a student, graphic designer, and data enthusiast, was also one of the individuals to receive DataCamp for free through Data Science Nigeria. "The opportunity offered by DataCamp was too good to pass up," explains Felix, "so I forwarded the registration link to all the communities that I know of that share the vision of empowering young people to acquire digital skills." In countries like Nigeria, where the currency is weak and the Internet, sold by the megabyte, is quite expensive, having free access to DataCamp is a game changer for those looking to close their own skill and wage gaps.



Felix Ayoola
Deputy City Lead at
Data Science Nigeria
and Graphic Designer

Several of those organizations ended up becoming DataCamp Donates Partners, including one nonprofit that would change the course of our program forever: Ingressive For Good. Ingressive For Good (I4G) is a nonprofit organization with the mission to create and increase the earning power of African youth through tech training and resources for the growth of the African startup ecosystems. The nonprofit organization was created to address the glaring inequities that exist within African tech ecosystems through 3 core channels: Microscholarships, Technical Training, and Talent Placement.

Here's what I4G had to say about the first year of our partnership.



Sean Burrowes, Co-founder:

"I4G reached out to and secured a partnership with DataCamp to provide access to their platform for our community. The process has been great. I'm quite impressed with DataCamp's high level of involvement. The demand for DataCamp scholarships has outstripped even our most wild estimates. That's why we're so grateful that DataCamp upped its commitment from 1,500 licenses to 6,000. I hope other edtech companies take notice of your company's radical generosity and the seismic positive impact it's creating. Data is the new oil. This will allow us to position our community of African techies for the future of tech and the Fourth Industrial Revolution."



Haneefah Abdurrahmna Lekki, Program Coordinator:

"We can easily onboard members and track their learning rate. DataCamp Donates came at the right time for our community, considering many were out of jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A lot of our community members in the tech world needed to upgrade their skills or learn new skills entirely."



Blessing Abeng, Director of Communications:

"We share DataCamp's belief that everyone deserves access to high-quality education and data skill development for a more secure future. In particular, our goal is to enable young Africans in need with tech skills to help them impact and contribute to the development of Africa, socially and economically. Through our partnership with DataCamp, youths interested in tech now have access to specialized skill and career learning tracks curated by industry experts to help them grow their data skills and take the next big step toward a tech career. The partnership helped our community members skill up, and that has in its own way helped us increase the earning power of African youth."





Growing to 99 Partner Organizations in 1 Year

Baby Steps

Because no one was dedicated to this program full-time, it was essential to be able to set up new group accounts for nonprofits with ease.

Consequently, DataCamp Donates was built on the same tech as DataCamp for Classrooms, which allowed us to create and scale the program quickly.

Next was the search for our first partners. Our friends in our Support Team at BOLDR in the Philippines connected us to some of our first partners, like WiTech and Teach for the Philippines. We reached out across DataCamp for suggestions of potential nonprofit partners. By spreading our net widely and constantly improving our offering, we were able to start getting the attention of larger, more influential partners. When we officially announced the program with renowned partners like Per Scholas and Black Girls Code, outreach started to become easier. Nonprofit admins began to realize that no, this isn't too good to be true and followed up with us more often to take advantage of our offering.

As we started to engage more nonprofit organizations in interviews so we could both learn more about each other, we realized that solely relying on email and Zoom calls build this program was ultimately too inefficient to scale quickly.

Streamlining the Approval Process for All Parties

We designed an application form to speed up the approval process for all parties. It needed a home on the DataCamp website. The answer at the time was to design and implement a WYSIWYG site using Squarespace and nesting it within our domain (http://datacamp.com/donates).

Once we had the website and the application form up and running, the tide turned.

Now we had all types of nonprofit organizations reaching out to us to partner. There was also an intense interest from university student clubs in the MEA region. We rode a wave of word-of-mouth by listening to our partners on how to explain the program best and for whom it's intended. We codified the types of organizations we would work with while simultaneously targeting a broader spectrum of organizations:

- Professional development and job placement nonprofits
- Nonprofit data science and/or coding organizations serving historically disadvantaged communities
- Environmental, health, economic, and social science research nonprofits
- Student-run clubs/societies accredited to secondary or postsecondary schools

While most of our efforts and resources would always go to nonprofits dedicated to providing free training and job placement services to disadvantaged individuals, opening up our program to student organizations and nonprofit research centers was the best decision to increase the legitimacy, spread, and overall health of DataCamp Donates.



Outside of our smaller-scale partnerships with nonprofit scientific research organizations, we also made it crystal clear who were the types of disadvantaged individuals we want our partners to give free licenses to:

- unemployed or underemployed
- living below the national poverty line
- have lost work, wages, or loved ones to COVID-19
- refugees of war and/or environmental disaster
- people with and/or members of other historically disadvantaged communities
- students ages 16-26

These guidelines ensured our program was attracting the interest of suitable types of nonprofit organizations to ultimately get DataCamp in the hands of those who need it the most. But outreach didn't stop—we now shifted from pursuing American nonprofits to organizations in emerging countries, primarily in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, where the average income and job availability are lowest

Marketing and Partner Success

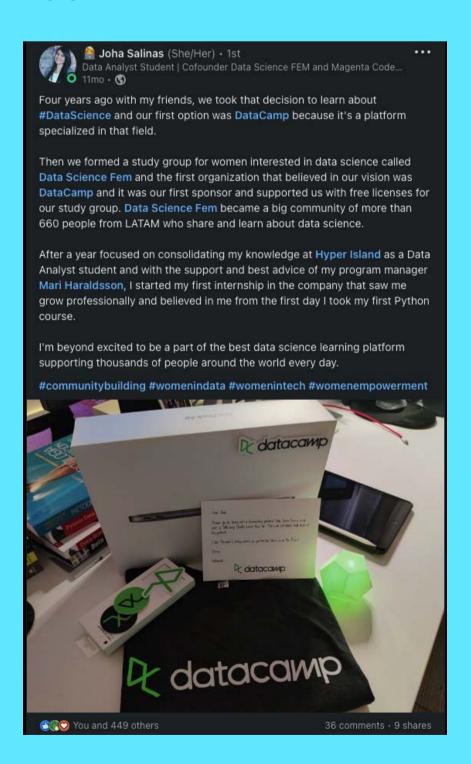
A few months after our partners joined the platform, we started reconnecting with them to learn about their successes and challenges. We quickly discovered that every nonprofit organization is unique and come with its own set of challenges that could stem from any number of factors such as governmental chaos, natural disasters, lack of staff, or lack of technical resources such as computer access.

Despite those mitigating factors, we worked with our DataCamp Donates admins and gave them tips and best practices for getting their learners to adopt and engage with the platform. We also started receiving our first success stories of people finding jobs and internships shortly after using DataCamp. The Squarespace website and our blog were the perfect ways to share these stories with the larger DataCamp community.



Joha Salinas, DataCamp Donates Intern & Evangelist

In July 2021, we expanded our efforts greatly by hiring Joha Salinas as a Data Analyst and Program Manager Intern. Originally from Colombia, Joha learned much of what she knows about data analysis on DataCamp initially. As the head of Data Science Fem, the Women in Data Science chapter in Medellín, Colombia, Joha originally partnered with DataCamp Donates to get the platform in the hands of aspiring data professionals all over Latin America with near-perfect adoption and engagement rates.



How did she do it? By making sure her team kept in regular contact with all of their learners. When people outside of Colombia inquired about getting free DataCamp access, she invited them to be Team Managers for their city or country and recruit new aspiring, unemployed, and underrepresented data professionals to join. The Team Manager would then be required to have regular meetings with their team and continually report back to Joha and her team at Data Science Fem. The result was a pay-it-forward system built on goodwill, accountability, and the flexible functionality of DataCamp's organization dashboard.

Having two people on the job part-time allowed us to be far more responsive to organizations' unique needs and set them up for success at the beginning of their 1-year subscriptions. Joha further legitimized the application and onboarding process, resulting in better engagement from DataCamp Donates admins (which then trickled down to their learners). She helped codify the set of requirements DataCamp Donates partners must meet in order to receive extra licenses and integrated it into the application itself. Joha refreshed our onboarding guides with the best practices she and other DataCamp Donates admins had discovered. She troubleshot individual organizations' unique problems and even collaborated on creating multiple Custom Tracks for our global partnership with Women in Data.

Most crucial of all, Joha's work of analyzing the data from the first year of DataCamp Donates accounts, we gained far better oversight on who, where, and how DCD learners are using DataCamp so we can continue to improve engagement where it's lacking. This report is the first time many of these insights have been made public.

Top-level
Quantitative
Insights Into
the First 13

Months

How did DataCamp Donates succeed? What lessons does that teach us for the future?

Between August 2020 and August 2021, DataCamp Donates Partners gave scholarships to 20,935 learners. Of those, 18,252 recipients started using DataCamp, and 12,232 completed at least one course, giving the program an adoption score of 68% in its first year. While these results are solid, we know they can be improved. Since we pinned down these metrics, we have decided there should be a stronger focus on actual adoption rather than the total amount of licenses donated. Rather than being laser-focused on growing the program's reach, we should endeavor to grow the program in the right ways. We should start partner organizations off with fewer licenses to ensure they are going to the neediest individuals first to ensure strong adoption.



DataCamp Donates
Partners gave free access
to 20,935 learners

Approved 99 applications out of 129 submissions. Being welcoming to new, smaller groups allowed us to be extremely bullish in our new year. Some of our biggest partners and connections have come directly from previous partnerships with very unassuming organizations. We will continue to strive to give every applicant the chance to contribute to our cause. A highly-engaged small group is just as valuable as a moderately-engaged huge group. Word of mouth can turn into a wildfire from any source, especially when branching into new parts of the world.



Approved **99 applications out of 129** submissions

73% of donations went to organizations in Africa and Asia. These continents have the greatest need for skilled tech workers, and there is otherwise a lack of accessible data science education for the poor.

<u>©</u>	36,828 courses completed	Q	8,744 projects completed
Ŀ	182.1k hours spent learning	<>	155.9M total XP earned

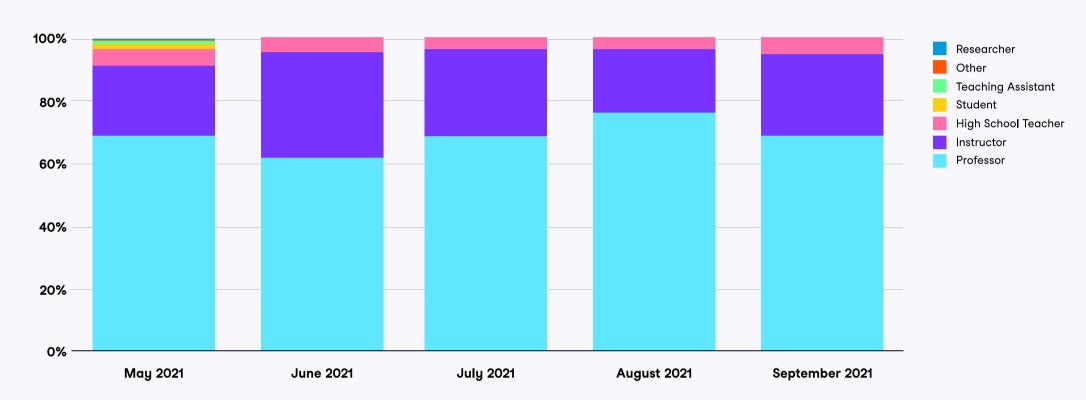
The mean time of course completions was **5.46** hours. With so many DCD learners for whom English is a second language, this is an exceptionally strong representation of how DataCamp is still pretty accessible to this group.

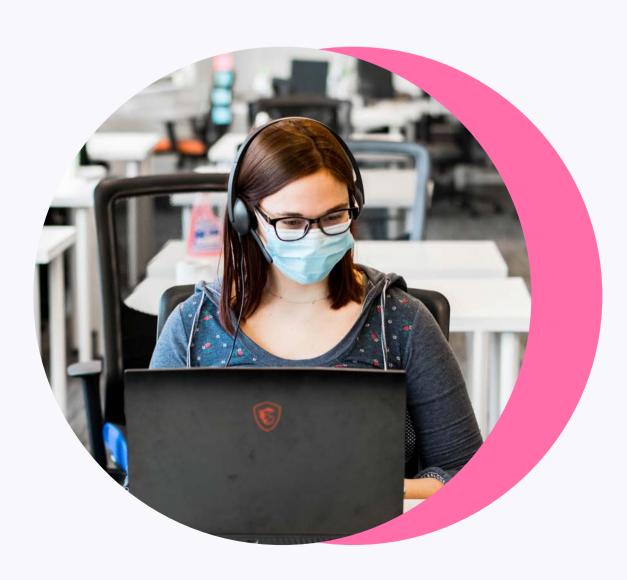
The dropout rate of DCD learners was a relatively low 26%. 1 out of 4 learners who accepted the invitation never started using DataCamp. This was expected to be higher when taking very large groups like Per Scholas and Ingressive for Good into consideration. They were able to give away thousands of licenses, but they didn't have the resources to properly oversee all of them.

¹Adoption score: All learners who took at least one course during the Year 1 of the DCD program / divided by learners who accepted the invitation and joined a DCD group

<u>DataCamp Classrooms</u> was expanded to high school teachers and students for the first time. In May 2021, we made US high school teachers eligible to get the same free access college professors had been enjoying for years. Remarkably, high school applications immediately accounted for 3% of all Classrooms applications and increased to 5% over the summer of 2021. This is especially impressive when you consider we soft-launched this feature at the very end of the US academic year.

Applications Submitted





PNAS Research Shows DataCamp Democratized Data Science Education During the Pandemic

Reducing the Learning Gap with DataCamp

Tln March 2021, PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America) recently **published an article** studying the effect of pandemic policies on DataCamp users and engagement. PNAS is a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal and is the second-most cited journal in the world. This article has since been cited by major news outlets such as Newsweek because of this core discovery:

"...Online learning platforms like
DataCamp can be an important tool
for facilitating upskilling among
workers in lower-skilled areas." —
PNAS March 16, 2021 118 (11)

The authors combined the socioeconomic features of the zip codes from US Census data with DataCamp usage. Zip codes also provided the link to data on pandemic severity and the timing of policies that closed nonessential businesses. The various timings at which pandemic policies were implemented created an unexpected and unique experimental design. This was effectively a randomized experiment at an individual level as individuals did not have control over when their locality closed nonessential businesses. This gave the authors a unique opportunity to establish a causal link between DataCamp users and engagement, business closures, and socioeconomic factors.

The authors' main finding was that DataCamp had a democratizing effect and that all socioeconomic groups increased in terms of new users and engagement with DataCamp.

Specifically, the authors found that nonessential business closures caused a 38% increase in new users and a 6% increase in engagement from existing users as measured by the number of completed exercises. The increases were proportional across various socioeconomic factors, including income, racial composition, percentage of college graduates, and the local economy; and engagement was higher for many minority groups.

Previous research suggested that online learning maintains or even strengthens socioeconomic barriers, so the authors' findings are striking, even surprising. But the weight of the evidence speaks for itself; this is the largest such experiment ever conducted on the relationship between online learning and socioeconomic factors, and one that is unlikely to be repeated.

Fulfilling Our Mission

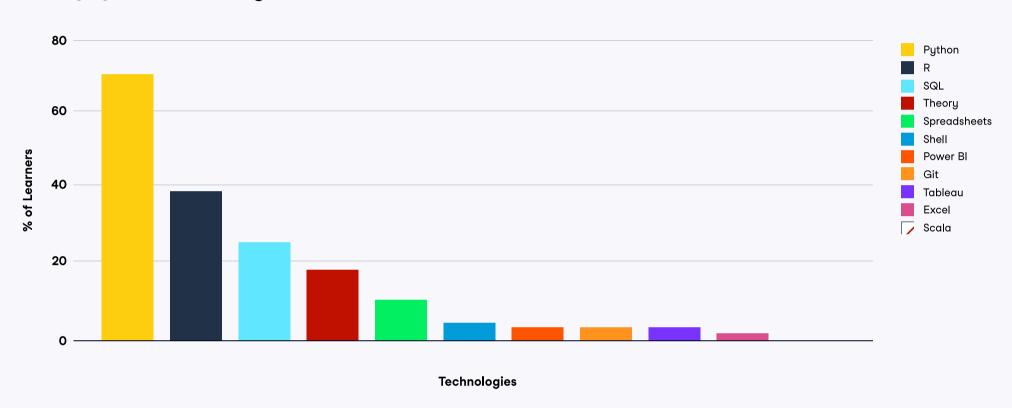
At DataCamp, our mission is to democratize data skills for everyone. This research, in no small part, proves that we are achieving our mission. There is now causal, peer-reviewed evidence that DataCamp can provide, as the articles' authors say, "an accessible and inclusive environment to learn new skills," and that DataCamp benefits learners from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

This has implications for our individual learners as well as businesses using DataCamp to develop their workforces. This research shows that our platform is accessible to learners from many different backgrounds and that, when given the time and opportunity to learn, DataCamp successfully attracts learners from across income, racial, educational, and occupational divides.

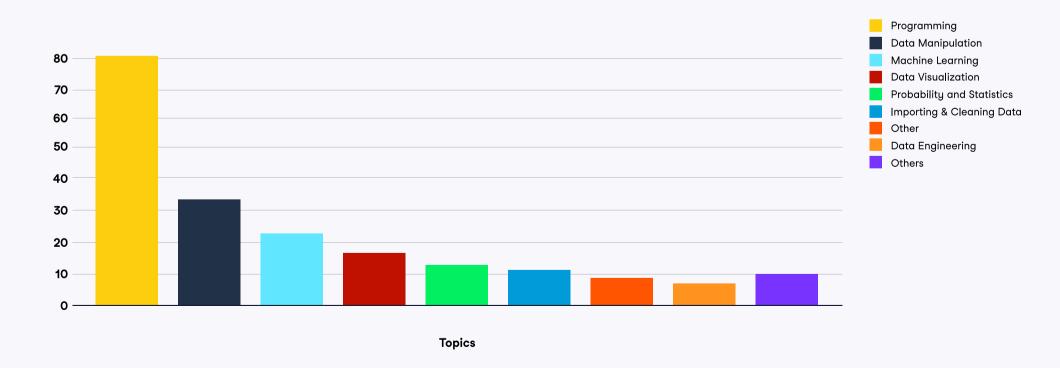
DataCamp Donates Content Insights

Here are some graphs that show the most popular content amongst DataCamp Donates learners.

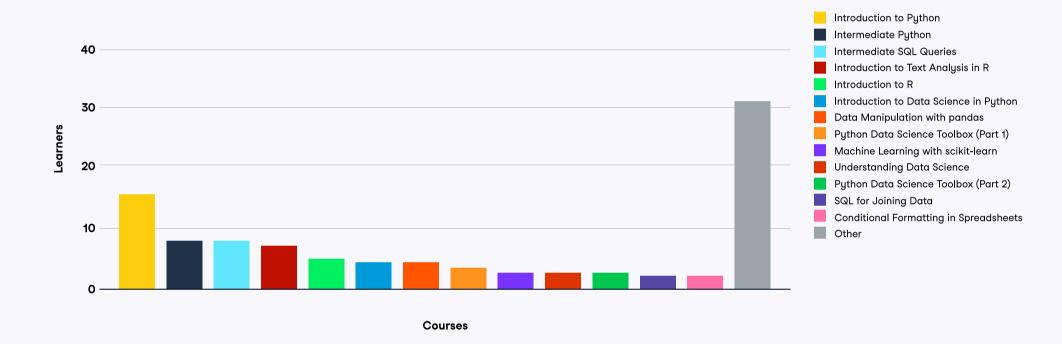
Most popular technologies



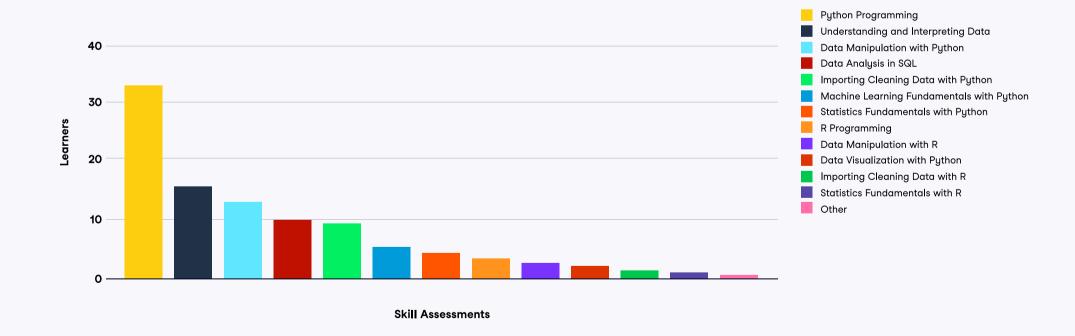
Most Popular Topics



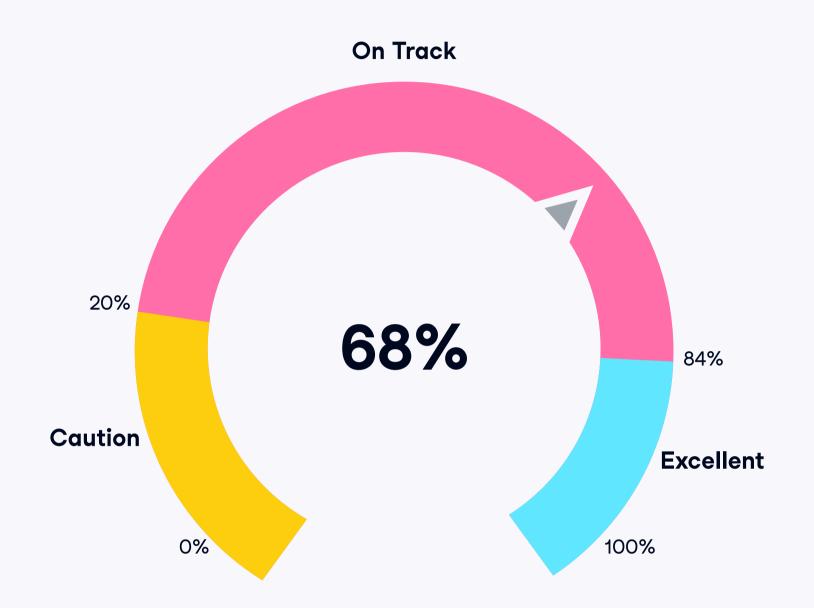
Most Popular Courses - Top 30

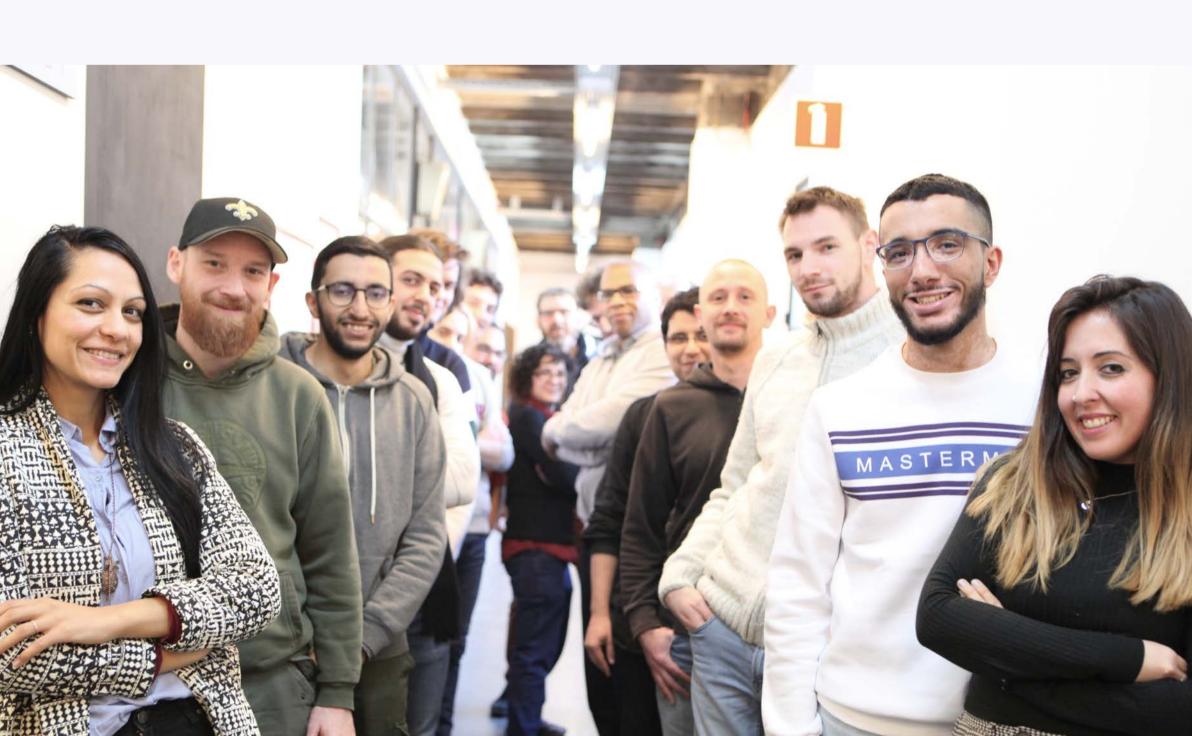


Most Popular Skill Assessments



Year 1 adoption





Overcoming Hardships to Inspire Others with Code for Nepal



Anshu Adhikari Code for Nepal

In November 2020, Anshu Adhikari lost her father suddenly to COVID-19. Her father, the sole breadwinner of the family, was only 49 but after being admitted to the hospital, within 5 days, he suddenly passed away. Now Anshu, her mother, and a 7-year-old live in Lalitpur with support from relatives. A day after cremating her father, Anshu had to appear for her final high school tests and complete high school.

Anshu, who has been volunteering with Code for Nepal for the last two years, realized her aspiration to be the first woman in the family to attend college so she can help her family and others who are underprivileged in Nepal and around the world. She wrote:

"In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a high school student, I realized it is necessary to reinforce the various learning opportunities that prioritize strengthening my data skills. I got access to **DataCamp** as a member of Code for Nepal, a non-profit organization working to increase digital literacy and data literacy in Nepal. As I worked to enhance the learning experiences of hundreds of others who were selected as Code for Nepal's **Data Fellows**, I was increasing my own knowledge of data science and familiarity with DataCamp.

The courses on DataCamp are developed to meet the expectations of learners at every level—I have found them very helpful.

I had no prior experience with programming languages. I knew a little bit of HTML and Q-basic that I had learned in middle school. As a total beginner at the start of my DataCamp journey, I discovered <u>Introduction to Python</u>, <u>Introduction to R</u>, and <u>Introduction to SQL</u> and they were the perfect place to start.

The next step in my journey was having to decide whether I wanted to start with an individual course or a track. The courses started with the basics: types, variables, basic calculations. Therefore, even as a beginner that has never written or read a single line of code, I was able to follow the material presented very easily.

When I finished my first course, I was very proud of myself. After all, I managed to accomplish a significant step towards eventually becoming a data expert. I discovered that everyone, no matter how confident or successful they appear, suffers from self-doubt and imposter syndrome. What matters is that you feel the fear and go ahead and do it anyhow. Simply adopt a learning attitude and keep an eye out for opportunities. When they present themselves, seize the opportunity without further delay. Also, I learned that individuals are willing to assist if I know how to ask and what I require."

Anshu has shown grit, bravery, and determination to help herself and others even in the face of insurmountable challenges. She currently attends University of Mary Washington pursuing a degree in Coputer Science.

DataCamp and Code for Nepal couldn't be more proud of her.



Looking ahead

DataCamp Donates pioneers a new type of academic scholarship. It's a future-facing model that leverages the power of a comprehensive edtech platform to benefit the displace, the impoverished, and all people for whom traditional higher education is not a feasible option. It complements our DataCamp Classrooms program perfectly by extending our mission-driven generosity to nonprofit organizations without whom millions of people would be without affordable paths to education and well-paying jobs.

The most important tasks ahead of us are to scale the program greatly while simultaneously improving our ability to get reliable, regular reporting from our partners to assess our impact accurately. We need to come to terms with the fact that being a DataCamp Donates admin adds a significant amount of work to nonprofit program managers. We know the best way to ensure their members continue learning throughout the year is to check up on them regularly. Therefore, it only stands to reason that the Social Impact team should do the same with our partners. Increasing communication efforts will also help us foster a sense of global community for all DataCamp Donates partners and learners by surfacing the real-world successes coming out of the program.

The best thing we can do to solidify the program's future success is to ensure all of our customers and clients know both about DataCamp Donates and DataCamp Classrooms. By making people feel good about buying DataCamp beyond the immediate benefits it provides, we can become more than just a company—DataCamp can help lead a movement to create a truly data-literate society.

Thank you for taking the time to read this retrospective report on the first year of DataCamp Donates. The next annual report is forthcoming and will summarize the growth of the program from September 2021 through December 2022.

