Aaron Skonnard, Pluralsight’s CEO and co-founder, and Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, discuss cash assistance and education programs with Venezuelan refugees in Colombia.

Photo: NRC Colombia
“There’s no quick fix. There’s no silver bullet. Lasting solutions require systemic change that comes from deep partnerships, hard work and sharp focus.”

AARON SKONNARD, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF PLURALSIGHT

CHAPTER ONE

Progress is Not Linear

Lindsey Kneuven
Chief Impact Officer, Pluralsight
Executive Director, Pluralsight One
Yet their journey was far from over. Maria had to prove her identity, obtain formal refugee status and establish a path to healthcare, education, shelter and economic stability for herself and her family. This is an overwhelming endeavor in the best of times, let alone in the midst of the biggest refugee crisis in the Americas.

Thankfully, Maria and her children were received in Colombia by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), a leading humanitarian organization directly serving more than nine million people in 33 countries around the world each year. Together they began the long, hard journey of recovery—beginning with legal services, cash assistance, youth education programs and shelter. Maria and her children now live on the side of a steep hill where thousands of refugees from Venezuela and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are rebuilding their lives. The structures in her settlement area are hand-built, often impermanent homes with sunlight slipping through holes in the walls. There is little relief from the heat, and residents of the settlement build their beds up off the ground to avoid the risk of flooding and mudslides.

In March 2020, I had the privilege of visiting Maria in her home during a site visit with Pluralsight CEO and co-founder, Aaron Skonnard and his wife Monica, our partners at the NRC and their Secretary General, Jan Egeland. The purpose of our trip was to learn about the complex dynamics and realities of conflict response and community rebuilding directly from humanitarians and the individuals fleeing from conflict.

Maria’s experience as a refugee is one of overlapping needs and challenges as well as personal goals and hopes. Fleeing the conflict in Venezuela was but one battle. Maria is also living with cancer while independently supporting her children. To access the medical system and establish oncology care in Colombia, Maria first had to prove her legal refugee status. At the same time, she needed to attend to pressing daily needs: buying food, educating her children, securing safe lodging and transportation, and obtaining access to information. No single solution can address all of her needs, but a continuum of interconnected services can forge a stable path, step by step.

Like many nonprofits and NGOs around the world, NRC has been building a strategy for digital transformation oriented around their commitment to humanitarian response and long-term community development. They are developing a new tech-enabled model for humanitarians while simultaneously integrating technology into their programs, so they can respond to the magnitude and velocity of need. Through NRC, refugees can access information via a custom app on their phone, or call to speak with a lawyer to receive legal assistance as they navigate the government systems. With empathy and novel uses of technology, the NRC is helping refugees like Maria and her family move forward.

When Maria and her children walked across the Simón Bolívar Bridge, they joined the ranks of 30,000 Venezuelan refugees seeking safety and opportunity in Colombia.
But overnight, their job became much more difficult. As COVID-19 spread quickly around the world, countries everywhere announced sweeping restrictions and began to close borders to contain the virus. Between the time we lifted off in Bogotá and touched down in Salt Lake, the U.S. had announced extensive restrictions to stem the tide of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rest of the world had changed in an instant.

As schools closed and offices shuttered their doors around the world, the Simón Bolívar Bridge was made impassable. Venezuela and Colombia moved to restrict movement in an effort to contain the virus and prevent their already sparse and under-resourced hospitals from becoming overloaded. Just like health and education systems changed in an instant, so did humanitarian aid, disaster response and social services. For the 30,000 men, women and children crossing the Simón Bolívar Bridge each day, the risk posed by armed conflict was suddenly compounded by a global pandemic. Around the world, 80 million refugees and displaced people were suddenly exponentially more vulnerable. Over 91 percent of school-aged children around the world had their learning disrupted in a matter of weeks. The decades of progress we have collectively made toward a more equitable, peaceful and abundant future was suddenly at risk of grave backwards momentum.

The year 2020 has provided a stark reminder that progress isn’t linear. Circumstances change. Needs evolve. While our mission is clear and constant, our methods and goals must be flexible to meet the challenges our world throws at us.

Pluralsight One has a community of over 700 customers across 22 countries. We invest in a strategic set of partners who are experts in their work and positioned to achieve systems change: Norwegian Refugee Council, Code.org, Malala Fund, Computer Science Teachers Association and Year Up. We remain committed to the successes of our customers and partners as they respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

All of our partners have had to shift their strategies in 2020 as the pandemic has disproportionately impacted the people they serve and laid bare the structural inequalities they face. Likewise, we have shifted how we support our partners by providing additional nimble capital and granting additional tech strategy support and skills development resources for their staff and beneficiaries.

This year, on its 20th anniversary, Year Up was one of many nonprofits facing significant challenges due to the pandemic. Year Up’s biggest challenge was supporting its students after transitioning to a fully virtual program. These young adults needed additional resources to succeed in launching their careers, as well as learning and mentorship opportunities that could be accessed remotely. Year Up required funding for devices, connectivity and health measures. Pluralsight One awarded Year Up an unrestricted cash grant that helped to lessen the impact of these emergency response measures. We were also able to mobilize our technology skills platform to prevent disruptions to learning for Year Up’s 4,500 students across the United States.

The challenges of the pandemic have only re-emphasized the need for Pluralsight One’s mission of democratizing tech skills. We’re committed to our partners and customers as they adapt, innovate and implement their programs to serve those experiencing vulnerability and economic shocks around the world.
Even as the pandemic has thrown into jeopardy the security and basic needs of so many, the need for love, learning, self-esteem and self-actualization remain constant.

In last year’s Impact book, I referenced how Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs could be more clearly understood as a continuum rather than as a pyramid. In the pyramid, it’s assumed that we only move “up” as we achieve each set of needs. Maslow himself changed his thinking over time, discovering how all the needs he mentions are inter-connected and often present simultaneously.

Even as the pandemic has thrown into jeopardy the security and basic needs of so many, the need for love, learning, self-esteem and self-actualization doesn’t disappear. Maria in Colombia doesn’t have the luxury of waiting for one need to be met before aiming for her next goal. Her needs and desires happen simultaneously and interdependently. Our challenge is to view the overlapping, interdependent needs created by displacement, economic shocks and other forms of vulnerability and to continue to address them in all their complexity. Tech skills create agency in the face of these multifaceted challenges.

This is glaringly apparent when you consider the new model of education. Lifelong learning and relevant skills are imperative to prevent inequities and to enable students to build knowledge while education systems repair and adapt. Tech skills enable economic resilience for those who are unemployed or underemployed as a result of COVID-19, for those working to create opportunity where it doesn’t readily exist and in contexts where the future of work is rapidly changing. And tech skills enable a new method of humanitarian aid and social services that can provide resources and care while working to keep everyone safe from the spread of the virus.

We know that progress in 2020 will look different from what we thought, but we remain committed to our moonshot of democratizing tech skills around the world and to tackling global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has made our mission more urgent and essential than ever before.
January
Aaron Skonnard announces the Silicone Slopes Computer Science Fund’s first grant to support inclusive teaching practices.

February
Pluralsight One’s advocacy efforts successfully result in Utah’s Legislature allocating $7.2 million in ongoing funding to teacher professional development to advance computer science learning outcomes statewide.

March
Pluralsight One conducts a site visit to NRC’s field operations in Colombia with Aaron and Monica Skonnard and Jan Egeland, Secretary General of NRC.

COVID-19 shutdowns spread across the world, adversely affecting our partners.

April
Pluralsight One builds and expands free tech skills development resources for students and teachers globally.

Pluralsight One commits over $1 million in COVID-19 emergency response grants in support of partners and regional emergency response efforts.

May
Pluralsight One partners to achieve the digital transformation of Year Up’s national programming and enable 4,500 students to learn through Pluralsight.

June
Pluralsight One issues its social justice response and provide over $200,000 in funding to galvanize additional support and momentum to combat systemic intolerance and racial oppression.

July
Pluralsight One launches a statewide product grant to the Utah State Board of Education in support of 10,000 K-12 educators and staff.

August
Pluralsight One joins UNESCO’s Global Education Coalition and Global Skills Academy in support of their goal to provide learning opportunities to one million youth experiencing disruptions to their learning due to COVID by summer of 2021.

October
Pluralsight One hosts sessions during Pluralsight LIVE focused on equitable computer science education strategies, girls’ education during crisis and tech-enabled humanitarian aid.

2020 Highlights

PLURALSIGHT ONE’S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission First. Actions we take each day move us closer to achieving our mission. Impact is our driving force.

Impact-Driven. We know change takes time and are committed to long-term results. We prioritize outcomes over outputs.

Strive for Moonshots. We’re committed to strategy, innovation and bold bets.

Continuous Learning. We are committed to growth and progress.

Customer-Centric. We are unrelenting in creating a world-class experience. We listen to our global community to discover what value looks like, and we obsess over creating best-in-class solutions.

Data-Driven. We regularly measure the effectiveness of our investments. We only work with partners who do the same.

First Principles. We reason from first principles by identifying assumptions, asking powerful questions and using data-driven analysis.

System-Change Approach. We immerse ourselves in research to understand intractable, complex problems, and we are committed to addressing their root causes, not treating their symptoms.

Open-Minded. We amplify the voices of those we wish to support, and we create solutions together. We lead with humility and listen intently, leaving assumptions and ego at the door.
“Their parents may have been herdsman, but many young refugees want to be computer engineers. That’s where Pluralsight is helping them to take this transformational step.”

JAN EGELEND, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
Our mission to democratize technology skills requires systems change.

Pluralsight One is committed to systems change. Systems change is the practice of understanding and addressing the root causes of intractable social problems, rather than treating symptoms. We believe that our technology, human capital and funding can change and shift the networks of cause and effect, resulting in permanent and fundamental change. While COVID-19 has disrupted every industry, including the social sector, it has also disrupted the education, health and economic systems.

More than 130 million girls were out of school before COVID-19 struck. Now, our partners at Malala Fund anticipate that an additional 20 million girls might never return to school due to the economic shocks and after-effects of the pandemic. Education systems around the world have suffered failures and are grappling with long-term recovery. UNESCO reports that over 91 percent of school-aged children around the world are facing disruptions to their learning due to COVID-19. A new future of education is emerging alongside a new future of work.

These disruptions are acute, urgent and seismic. Needs have changed overnight. Nonprofits and schools are being forced to digitize their operations and programs in the blink of an eye. Our vision for progress has to evolve to reflect today’s reality.

For example, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) moved to protect their 15,000+ global staff members and implement new measures to protect highly vulnerable refugee communities from exposure to the virus. This exacerbated an already fragile situation for the millions of refugees around the world. In response to NRC’s urgent needs, Pluralsight One stepped in to provide immediate financial and technical assistance. We provided flexible capital so NRC could build call centers, develop new ways of protecting their in-country staff and provide life-saving support to those fleeing conflict or living in crowded refugee camps.

1 https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

O U R S T R A T E G Y ——

Uplift the social and K-12 education sectors by equipping them with the technology skills they and the communities they support need.

Unleash compassion and innovation by mobilizing the hearts and minds of the Pluralsight community.

Invest in catalytic solutions by funding solutions and programs that scale.
Year Up also faced a rapidly changing situation as students transitioned to remote learning. Pluralsight One issued an emergency grant and helped Year Up complete a digital transformation of their programmatic model in a matter of weeks. Together, we are supporting 4,500 youth with ongoing skill development to help them adapt to the rapidly changing future of work and compete for meaningful-wage jobs.

In the state of Utah, as in the rest of the world, students, families, and teachers were faced with disruptions to schooling and the difficult transition to remote learning. For the past two years, we have been working in pursuit of our vision that every student across the state will have the opportunity to learn computer science by 2022. We funded the development of a four-year state Master Plan, secured over $7.2 million in annual state funding toward teacher professional development and made major strides toward that vision. In March, the path to our vision was dramatically disrupted by the loss of state education funding and the move to virtual learning. To protect the progress we had collectively made and introduce resources that would help during this time, we partnered with state leaders, educators and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to build a statewide product grant designed to support the tech skills development of K-12 staff and educators. Our product grant of more than $38 million covers 42 school districts as well as charter schools across the state of Utah.

The goal of expanding computer science education extends to our partnership with Code.org, an organization renowned for their work to integrate computer science education as a foundational literacy. Pluralsight One has partnered with Code.org to engage more girls and underrepresented minorities in quality computer science education. Pluralsight One’s partnership with Code.org includes a multi-year cash investment, a free, customized Pluralsight One product for students, state and national advocacy, and efforts to engage the Pluralsight community in support of Code.org’s goals through targeted skills-based volunteering. Our work together focuses on enabling Code.org to grow their resources for teachers and students, continue to develop curricula across K-12, expand their efforts to retrain America’s K-12 teachers to teach computer science, scale impact through their network of regional partners, and debunk misconceptions about computer science through their annual Hour of Code campaign.

We also invest in Code.org’s international expansion to translate and localize the entire Code.org learning platform, curriculum, videos and tools into 20+ languages; develop and support offline and smartphone access for schools without internet-connected computers, and expand their network of global partners to drive teacher training and implementation in local schools.

Strengthening the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of CS education is also central to the work of the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA). The organization runs 93 chapters across the U.S. and Canada, matching educators to free and discounted resources, both online and off. CSTA works to ensure that “every computer science teacher has a home.” In addition to an emergency grant that has helped the CSTA create free digital teaching resources for teachers throughout the pandemic, Pluralsight One provides essential funding to programs like CSTA’s annual Equity Fellowship. This unique program funds a selection of diverse teachers to build and replicate models for promoting computer science inclusion, equity, and access.

Finally, Pluralsight One is proud to serve as a steadfast partner to Malala Fund. Through contributions of product and funding, we are working together to ensure that girls’ education experts and activists have the resources they need to ensure every girl has the opportunity to learn and lead. Recognized internationally as a leader in girls’ education and advocacy, Malala Fund is now facing a growing challenge to girls’ rights. We are honored to support their work and the work of their Education Champions around the world as they mobilize to protect the millions of girls whose rights are in jeopardy and overcome the mounting barriers to girls’ education.
2020 HIGHLIGHTS —

Customers

700+
Nonprofit and K-12 Customers

22
Countries

38K+
Learners

“We want to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn the skills that will help them move into careers that fulfill their potential.”

LINDSEY KNEUVEN, CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER, PLURALSIGHT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PLURALSIGHT ONE

The refugee crisis in Colombia is compounded by hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) living in makeshift shelters due to armed conflict. Photo: Milena Ayala for NBC.
COVID-19 Emergency Grants

Pluralsight One granted $1.25 million to support our partners and bolster regional COVID-19 emergency responses in the communities where we live and work, including:

- $250,000 cash grant to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to enable the development and deployment of digital and tech-enabled field-based solutions to support their global COVID-19 response
- $300,000 cash grant to Malala Fund over two years to support the work of five Champions across Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan, who are developing and implementing tech-enabled solutions to girls’ education
- $250,000 cash grant to the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) to support teachers with digital teaching and learning resources to preserve computer science education in K-12 schools nationwide
- $250,000 cash grant to Year Up to ensure program continuity for current students as well as support youths’ urgent health and financial needs
- $200,000 cash grants to four regional COVID-19 Emergency Funds where our team members live and work across Utah, Boston, Ireland and internationally through the United Nations and World Health Organization.

Social Justice Grants

To demonstrate Pluralsight’s unbending commitment to social justice and anti-racism, Pluralsight One committed a $200,000 matching grant to galvanize support and momentum for:

- Year Up in support of education and employment outcomes for their Black students who have been deeply impacted by the compound effects of COVID-19 and deepening racial injustice
- Southern Poverty Law Center to fight hate and bigotry while seeking justice for all through litigation, education and advocacy
- Equal Justice Initiative to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the U.S. through criminal justice reform, challenging racial and economic injustice, advancing public education and protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society
- Color of Change to build voter engagement, support research, lead victim response efforts through large-scale, community-led grassroots campaigns.

“In a crisis like COVID-19, girls and young women are the first to be removed from school and the last to return. We need to ensure that girls’ education is not ignored, and that we do not lose focus of this cause.”

MALALA YOUSAFZAI, FOUNDER OF MALALA FUND, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE RECIPIENT
Volunteerism

Pluralsight One was founded upon the vision that together, united around a shared mission, we are One. Volunteerism is encouraged and championed throughout the Pluralsight community. We work hard to match the skills of our incredible team members to the needs of our partners and customers in a way that is fulfilling and mutually beneficial. In previous years our staff members have volunteered to create interactive data visualizations for the State of Utah and onsite strategy sessions for The Other Side Academy to assist in their digital transformation.

This year, despite the hardships and challenges of our work-from-home world, Pluralsight team members continued to demonstrate their commitment to volunteerism. We paired our subject matter experts with Pluralsight One’s partners to meet immediate technology needs and help our partners realize their visions for impact. Our team members volunteered hundreds of hours to be guest speakers, mentors and classroom specialists to support teachers and students with online learning. They served as career coaches and academic advisors for Year Up students as these incredible youth sought a path to sustainable livelihoods. And still more of our team members have taken on deep, committed pro bono volunteer roles with our partners to help them solve problems, develop their tech infrastructure, and build new solutions that will propel them forward.

One such example is our incredible team of Salesforce experts who have volunteered their time to build a payment processing solution for Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The NRC has been developing donation solutions that create more efficient and informative experiences for donors. Their intention in designing a new solution was to increase contributions from individual donors so that NRC can respond to the needs of displaced persons around the world more quickly and completely. This integration is the first of its kind in Norway, and it has enabled NRC to meet a critical fundraising need while also creating a technology solution that can be shared with other nonprofits in the region.

Pluralsight team members demonstrate their commitment to our mission and their passion for human-centered design in their day-to-day work, and especially in their volunteer engagements with Pluralsight One partners. We are deeply grateful for the depth of their contributions and for the passion, collaborative spirit and determination that they bring to the work.

“Being able to collaborate with such a talented team at Pluralsight has been an awesome experience and given us the opportunity to expand competencies within the Norwegian Refugee Council. The Pluralsight team have created a custom integration between the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Salesforce instance and the Norwegian mobile payment provider, VIPPS.”

BRAGE STØRKERSEN, ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE ADVISER, NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

“Volunteerism is encouraged and championed throughout the Pluralsight community. We work hard to match the skills of our incredible team members to the needs of our partners and customers in a way that is fulfilling and mutually beneficial.”

GARRETT SOUTHWORTH, SENIOR SALESFORCE ADMINISTRATOR BASED IN UTAH, PLURALSIGHT
Pluralsight One Reach

Key
- Pluralsight One Customers
- Impact of Investments
- Pluralsight Volunteerism
Increasing access to technology skills is critical for nonprofits to achieve their missions and for educators to prepare their students for the future of work. We offer nonprofits, K-12 educators and the communities they support access to our platform at steeply discounted rates to help them keep up with developments in technology, gain in-demand skills to power their work, and ensure that the individuals they serve can create the future they envision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pluralsight One Products</th>
<th>Organizations can check eligibility and unlock discounted pricing at pluralsightone.org/product. Students and teachers can learn more at pluralsightone.org/product/education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spark</strong></td>
<td>Nonprofits and K-12 moving their people, teams and organizations through a digital transformation journey. Spark provides the foundation for organizations to evaluate their technical capabilities and identify next steps for their development. 50+ courses focused on fundamental technology skills like data, software development, IT operations, cloud and security. Spark also includes advanced analytics that allows individuals and organizations to benchmark skill proficiency and measure progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elevate</strong></td>
<td>Technical professionals at nonprofits and K-12 entities. Elevate fills knowledge gaps by connecting professionals with tech skills development resources, so they can deliver on their organization’s mission and build and execute tech strategies. More than 6,500 courses covering intermediate and advanced technology skills. Elevate also includes skills assessments, channels, basic analytics, Role IQ and more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amplify</strong></td>
<td>Staff at nonprofits and K-12 entities, and the communities they serve. Amplify supports the tech skills development of entire organizations and can also serve as the tech skills curriculum for the communities these organizations serve. Everything included in Elevate plus advanced analytics, custom Role IQ, Q&amp;A and more.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Pluralsight One for Students**

High school students as well as students enrolled in Code.org’s Computer Science Principles or AP Computer Science Principles courses. Pluralsight One for Students offering is free to qualifying students through their teachers. 500+ hours of courses in software development, IT operations and more that have been mapped to Code.org curriculum and to national computer science standards. Pluralsight One for Students also includes powerful skill assessments and learning paths to help students achieve their goals and prepare for the workforce.

**Pluralsight One for Teachers**

CSTA+ members Pluralsight One for Teachers is free to eligible CSTA+ members. Building upon Code.org’s beginner to intermediate content, Pluralsight One for Students provides supplemental content for students to apply what they’re learning and develop the skill sets they need to pursue advanced studies and careers. Pluralsight One for Teachers prepares educators for national computer science certification exams, and supports them as they bring their new learning into the classroom. 100+ hours of courses aligned to national computer science certification exams, and deeply discounted access to Pluralsight’s full platform.
“We cannot let the pandemic squash the momentum behind CS Education at a time when technology is growing more essential to our daily lives.”

JAKE BASKIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER THREE

Stories of Impact
NRC has introduced the use of solar-powered tablets that help children and youth learn languages through folk tales. Ismahan and Fardosa are some of the learners who will be using a digital platform to enhance their language skills.

Photo: Fatuma Abdullahi for NRC
Wars don’t stop for a pandemic.

In Kharef camp in Amran, Yemen, an NRC staff teaches displaced children how to wash their hands properly with soap to protect themselves from Covid-19. Photo: Ibrahim Al-Salmi for NRC
The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organization working to protect displaced and vulnerable persons experiencing crises. The group carries out its mission across 33 countries, meeting immediate humanitarian needs and fostering stable, durable solutions to prevent further displacement.

In 2019, NRC assisted more than nine million people in several crucial areas: food security, water and sanitation improvements, shelter, counseling and legal assistance, education, and issues related to camp management.

When COVID-19 abruptly forced millions to work from home, organizations of all types were tasked with a significant challenge: how would they keep workers safe, connected and able to perform their jobs outside the office? International relief agencies like NRC needed to devise a strategy to protect their thousands of team members living and working in conflict-affected countries around the world while also developing immediate plans to protect the health and safety of the millions of already vulnerable individuals they serve.

Pluralsight One’s partnership with NRC has always focused on the digital transformation of their global operations and programming. With the onset of COVID-19, we issued additional funding to enable NRC to respond to urgent digital transformation needs. NRC introduced call centers that enabled humanitarian staff to provide constant information, resources, legal assistance and mental health support to those in need.

In addition, Pluralsight One has partnered with NRC to support the tech skills development of headquarters and in-country staff as they adapt and develop new ways to apply technology to the crisis response.

Moving forward, Pluralsight One will continue to support NRC’s herculean efforts to integrate technology into their operations as well as their education and livelihoods programming, while doing so with humanitarian principles at the core. We also continue to work together to strengthen crucial, behind-the-scenes infrastructure like data and security. In parallel, we are also working with NRC’s education teams to identify communities in need of tech skills development, where learning can boost economic resilience and create pathways to opportunity.

NRC’s programs include food security, water sanitation and hygiene, information counseling and legal assistance (ICLA), education and camp management.

NRC assisted more than nine million displaced people in 2019

The five largest beneficiaries of NRC’s work are Yemen, South Sudan, DR Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia.

Pluralsight One invested $1 million over three years

Pluralsight One provided 8,000+ licenses to NRC and is providing tech strategy support
COVID-19 has shifted the education paradigm.
Technology powers the world, but most schools don’t teach it. The Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) is a teacher-led nonprofit organization that works to integrate computer science into the core of education, so all students have the opportunity to learn the skills needed to unlock opportunity. Nationally and internationally, CSTA focuses on empowering, engaging, and advocating for K-12 computer science (CS) teachers and educators.

Through its 93 chapters located across the U.S. and Canada and global membership base, the organization provides a valuable and supportive community for educators as well as educational opportunities, events, and access to free and discounted resources to help them adapt their teaching and prepare students for the future.

Pluralsight One’s partnership with CSTA focuses on supporting teacher professional development needs around computer science. To that end, we have built a customized library of tech skills development content for teachers that helps them prepare for national exams and gain the technical knowledge needed to bring concepts to life for their students. Pluralsight One recognizes the power of a national educator community. Supportive communities are all the more critical in our current reality while students, teachers and parents grapple with remote and hybrid learning, school closures and vastly different teaching and learning resources. Together with CSTA, Pluralsight One is working on improving equality of opportunity and inclusion in computer science (CS) for students across the nation.

For two years running, we have funded CSTA’s National Equity Fellowship, which supports ingenious solutions that teachers have developed that have proven to increase diversity and inclusion in CS.

Pluralsight One also funds CSTA’s work in support of English language learners (ELL). CSTA partners with local educators to recruit, engage and support ELL learners in CS learning opportunities.

In response to the pandemic, Pluralsight One has also increased access to the content we have curated for teachers, giving educators free access to an expansive resource library of content. More than 800 teachers have engaged with these resources just since March, a great testament to the investment teachers are making to develop new skills and cultivate the knowledge that their students need to succeed.

Teachers today are facing challenges I never could have imagined in my classroom. In the age of remote and hybrid education, teachers have assumed responsibility for addressing new layers of inequity brought on by the digital divide — on top of the challenges they already face to broaden participation in CS. Now more than ever is the time to invest in creating inclusive learning environments that actively counter systemic inequities in the field.

J A K E B A S K I N, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
The pandemic is compounding inequality in education.
Pluralsight One is working toward a vision that every student will have the opportunity to learn computer science across its home state of Utah. This is an ambitious vision because computer science remains marginalized throughout education despite becoming an increasingly foundational element of preparing students to succeed in the workforce.

Since its inception in 2017, Pluralsight One has been working to fundamentally alter the landscape of K-12 computer science by funding the development of a four-year statewide Master Plan, partnering with state leaders to build and adopt K-12 state CS standards and developing products to support student and teacher learning outcomes. In an effort to uplift the state’s investment in computer science education and teacher readiness, Pluralsight One launched a $38.95 million product grant covering 42 school districts as well as charter schools across Utah, supporting 10,000+ staff, IT professionals and teachers with the tech skills development resources they need to evolve teaching practices and better equip students for the future of work. Pluralsight One also supports the statewide partnership with tech strategy support, content curation, and more.

COVID-19 has introduced new challenges, needs and dynamics that were not accounted for in the CS Master Plan. Pluralsight One is working alongside the Utah State Board of Education and other critical stakeholders to evolve the plan, preserve momentum and fight the mounting inequities that result from school closures and that increase barriers to CS education for girls and underrepresented minorities.

Pluralsight One has expanded support and learning opportunities for educators who have a touchpoint with computer science outside their central roles. Guidance counselors, principals, and English, math, science, history and art teachers are going above and beyond to teach CS because they understand the value of tech skills. The challenges to inclusive computer science education cannot be underestimated. We celebrate the educators and administrators who are investing in these skills so they can ensure their instruction reflects the future of work and prepares their students with the skills needed to be creators, leaders and innovators.

Pluralsight One played a pivotal role in the development of the Silicon Slopes Computer Science Fund, the first-ever Field of Interest Fund in the country dedicated to computer science. The Fund was built in partnership with the Community Foundation of Utah and seeded with $4 million in contributions from Pluralsight’s CEO, Aaron Skonnard, and other local technology leaders. Since COVID-19 hit, the Fund has invested in a virtual summit to support teacher professional development with digital teaching strategies, has covered the cost of AP CS exams for students on free and reduced lunch programs, and more.

In addition to educators, parents in Utah can access free Pluralsight One resources for their students, allowing them to supplement learning at home. Many districts have eliminated computer science from their curricula as a cost-saving measure, and Pluralsight One resources have been able to fill in this gap for many students.

Utah is fortunate to have great computer science expertise within our state. Our partnership with the technology sector is intended to improve teaching and learning, leading to expanded career opportunities for our students in the future.

SYDNEE DICKSON, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

— Partnered with the Utah Board of Education to develop K-12 CS standards that were adopted statewide

— Successfully advocated for over $7.2 million in state funding dedicated to CS teacher professional development

— Funded the development of the Utah State Computer Science Master Plan which was adopted by the State as the four-year CS strategy, establishing Utah as the twelfth state in the nation with a CS master plan

— Pluralsight One issued a five-year, $38.95 million product grant supplemented by technology strategy development, content curation, and access to 10,000 Pluralsight Skills licenses for Utah’s K-12 staff, teachers, IT professionals, administrators, and guidance counselors.
The opportunity divide is widening.
Year Up works to close the Opportunity Divide by empowering young adults to gain the skills, experience and support needed to reach their potential through careers and higher education. The organization serves 18 markets across the U.S., offering an intensive training program for young adults aged 18-26. Participants engage in technical and professional skill development and internships at top companies, and receive wrap-around support. The Year Up approach focuses on students’ professional and personal development to help them reach economic self-sufficiency.

When schools and businesses across the country began to operate remotely in the early days of the COVID-19 response, Year Up had to act quickly. All the students going through the program had to start learning & working remotely. Many students lacked reliable internet access or felt uncomfortable sharing their home lives in settings like Zoom. On top of this mass vulnerability, many companies that students had been matched with for internships had to postpone their programs or ask interns to work remotely. With so many businesses closing their offices, there were now limited options for these students to carry out their internship duties.

Pluralsight One stepped in with an emergency grant and worked with Year Up for weeks to digitally transform the organization. Pluralsight One helped Year Up move more than 4,500 students and staff to the platform, so learning, skill-building and career development could continue despite COVID-19 restrictions. The platform allowed Year Up staff and corporate partners to observe the work students were putting in to learn relevant skills, which enabled many employers to reinstate pathways to employment.

In addition to large-scale product investments and an emergency cash grant to support Year Up’s COVID-19 response, Pluralsight One issued a second grant in support of education and employment outcomes for their Black students, who have been deeply impacted by the compound effects of COVID-19 and deepening racial injustice. These funds allowed the organization to support students in their pursuit of personal, academic and professional goals despite the barriers created by the pandemic.

Pluralsight One has also helped Year Up make the most of their digital transformation by overseeing virtual mentorship opportunities and providing academic advice through Zoom. Recently, Pluralsight One hosted a virtual speaker series for a cohort of 30 young adults who were able to stay engaged in the program and, ultimately, regain the internships they had lost.

Opportunity Youth are facing tremendous challenges right now as they balance multiple obligations in furthering their education and careers. However, these young adults have all of the talent and ambition required. By working together with Pluralsight One, Year Up can better support them in pursuit of their dreams through targeted training pathways and opportunities to gain in-demand certifications.

GERALD CHERTAVIAN, FOUNDER & CEO, YEAR UP

— Year Up has served over 29,000 young adults and provided internships for 250 corporate partners.
— Within four months of completing the program, 90 percent of Year Up graduates are employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education.
— The average starting annual salary of Year Up graduates is $42,000.
— Pluralsight One invested $250,000 in Year Up to ensure program continuity for current participants as well as resources to support youths’ urgent health and financial needs.
— As an immediate demonstration of our commitment to social justice, Pluralsight One invested an additional $50,000 in Year Up in support of education and employment outcomes for their Black students, who have been deeply impacted by the compound effects of COVID-19 and deepening racial injustice.
— Pluralsight One provided immediate tech strategy support and content curation to support Year Up’s digital transformation for their national staff, program participants and alumni.
Teaching is hard. Teaching computer science is even harder.
Code.org believes every student should have the opportunity to learn computer science, and that this learning is just as important as required K-12 coursework. The organization creates and provides computer science courses for students, teacher training, and global events like the internationally renowned Hour of Code. Code.org is a computer science advocacy and skill development leader.

Pluralsight One issued $600,000 to Code.org before the pandemic hit. Over the past several months, one area of focus has been expanding the access for high school students to Pluralsight One’s free content library. Pluralsight One has also prioritized advocacy, working to prevent backward momentum on computer science legislation and state funding successes. Much of Pluralsight One’s work with Code.org has focused on expanding computer science education access to girls and underrepresented minority communities.

High school students can take advantage of free access to Pluralsight One’s content library for students that maps to Code.org curriculum and national CS education standards. Topics of study include IT ops, software development, design/creative, and product management.

Pluralsight One is also funding Code.org’s global expansion through the development of offline and mobile capabilities, translation and localization support. Today, the Code.org learning platform, curriculum resources, videos, and tools can be used in over 20 languages. These resources have met a massive need for students and teachers experiencing school closures and disruptions during the pandemic. Together, more work is underway to scale the reach and accessibility of Code.org’s vast content and resource library.

Pluralsight One continues to partner with Code.org to integrate CS into every student’s learning journey. We continue to advocate for inclusive, high-quality CS education with state leaders across the country in pursuit of a future for education that reflects the needs and realities of our world.

“While we’re encouraged by the increasing diversity we’ve seen in our computer science classrooms over the years, we know that our work is far from complete. Access to computer science is key to addressing the equity issues in society, yet only 47% of our nation’s high schools teach this foundational subject.”

JACKIE SMALLS, CHIEF PROGRAMS OFFICER AT CODE.ORG

— 2.18 million girls have reached basic coding proficiency on Code.org’s platform.
— 53,877 young women were enrolled in AP CS Principles.
— 127,215 students from underrepresented groups enrolled in CS Discoveries in 2020.

Pluralsight One has invested $1.5 million over three years to support Code.org’s strategy, growth and impact with a special emphasis on including girls and underrepresented minorities in tech.

Pluralsight One has curated courses with 500+ hours of content that is aligned with national standards and available to Code.org high school students for free.
Girls are the first to be removed from school and the last to return.
Malala Fund was founded by Malala Yousafzai, the beloved Pakistani activist for girls’ education and the world’s youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Malala Fund works to ensure that every girl can realize her right to 12 years of free, safe, quality education. The team fiercely advocates for a future where every girl has the opportunity to learn and lead.

Many barriers stand in the way of this vision: poverty, war and gender discrimination are common factors, challenges Malala Fund works to overcome daily. Operating across countries with the highest barriers to girls’ education in the world, Malala Fund invests in a network of local leaders — through their Education Champion Network — who are driving solutions to barriers to girls’ education in their communities.

Pluralsight One has invested $300,000 in Malala Fund to support the work of five Malala Fund Champions across Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan in 2020 and 2021. These Champions are local educators and activists who implement projects and participate in advocacy campaigns to change the policies and practices that prevent girls from going to school in their communities. These funds have also helped to support girls whose learning has been disrupted in the wake of COVID-19.

When Pakistan’s schools abruptly closed early in 2020, Pluralsight One’s investment in Pakistan allowed Champion Haroon Yasin to quickly scale his organization’s digital learning app, Taleemabad to support more than 350,000 students. Haroon’s organization, Orenda, also partnered with Pakistan National TV to broadcast educational programming through national TV and radio broadcast, reaching a staggering 8.5 million students. This initiative directly benefits children who are not reached by the formal education system, are permanently out of school, and/or live in rural and impoverished Pakistani communities.

In early 2020, as the world reeled from the many devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Malala Fund grew concerned that the pandemic would disproportionately affect girls’ access to education. After modeling the effects of the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Malala Fund estimated that 20 million girls around the world will lose access to education permanently1. This is in addition to the 130 million girls globally who are already out of school. Malala Fund is advocating for governments and international institutions to invest in education and help mitigate the effects of the pandemic so that all girls can learn.


Technology is a key tool in ensuring that students do not miss out on their education.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI, FOUNDER OF MALALA FUND, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE RECIPIENT

Lalash Fazal-Ur-Rahman, a Pakistani educator trained in molecular biology and biotechnology, is a Malala Fund Education Champion. Photo: Malala Fund

Malala Fund is focused on accelerating progress so all girls can access 12 years of free, safe, quality education.

Malala Fund works in countries where many girls miss out on secondary education, including Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Malala Fund provides support, applied learning and networking opportunities for 57 Education Champions in eight countries with the highest barriers to girls’ education.

Pluralsight One is providing full tech skills development support to Malala Fund’s staff, in-country team members and Education Champion Network.

Pluralsight One supports five Malala Fund Education Champions who are applying technology to expand and improve girls’ education in India, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
“To build durable solutions that last, we have to create alongside those who are impacted and adapt to meet needs as they evolve.”

AARON SKONNARD, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF PLURALSIGHT

CHAPTER FOUR

A Lesson in Empathy
The year 2020 has presented unprecedented obstacles. When confronted with vulnerability, deprivation and loss, it's a natural human response to turn inward, to focus our attention on protecting ourselves and those closest to us. But it’s essential that we also turn outward to meet the needs of others.

Before COVID-19 struck, my wife Monica and I traveled to Colombia to learn about the work of our partners at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). What we experienced overwhelmed us. Every day, 30,000 Venezuelan refugees cross the Simón Bolívar Bridge to Colombia to escape the hardships and conflict they face in their own country. And this was before the pandemic struck and compounded the situation.

The Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Jan Egeland, joined us on our trip and walked us through the steps that the NRC takes to help displaced Venezuelans adjust to life in Colombia:

“They are met by our people, and they are getting the first shower in three weeks. They get drinking water. They get some emergency relief... Later on, we help those who settle in Colombia get children into school. We train youth so that they can get a livelihood. We also provide legal aid, so that they can get out of dependency. They can get the papers for their situation, so that they can build a better life in Colombia.”

Meeting the needs of refugees requires a wide array of interconnected services. The NRC is pioneering the use of technology to deliver assistance more quickly and effectively.

Even before the pandemic, NRC was developing touch-screen kiosks to scale their legal assistance programs for Venezuelan refugees, enabling individuals to register with the Colombian government, gather critical information about their situation and access vital services within minutes of crossing the border. This revolutionized the intake process for hundreds of thousands of people. When COVID-19 struck, NRC built on the success of these tech-enabled humanitarian services, adding mobile apps and virtual call centers to enable more displaced people to access this critical information while maintaining health practices to prevent transmission of the virus.

When people are forced to flee their homes in search of safety, they need immediate support, but they also need a path to resilience and agency. They need an income, safe and stable homes, education for their children, and lasting connectivity to the resources and information that will eventually lead to self-sufficiency. That’s why NRC’s global network of 15,000+ staff members in 33 countries works tirelessly to provide assistance to more than nine million refugees around the world. Our Pluralsight One partners and customers are all addressing urgent community needs. I am grateful for the creativity, tenacity and heroism demonstrated by these exceptional organizations in the face of COVID-19.

The pandemic has proven to be an accelerant for increasing vulnerability and for technological innovation. From systems that allow for contactless deliveries to the constantly evolving infrastructure for virtual learning, new and developing technologies are critical tools to prevent harm, risk and mounting inequalities during the pandemic, and, in some cases, making our world a more interconnected and frictionless place.

We believe that equal access to technology skills across the globe will help to build paths out of poverty, vulnerability and reliance.

We’ve all experienced hardship in different ways as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. It’s essential that we take this opportunity to increase our awareness of the challenges that others in our communities are facing and have faced for so long. Empathy is a powerful tool to help us rebuild communities and build a more inclusive and equitable future. For far too many, the precarity caused by the pandemic is a daily reality that is now compounded and exaggerated. May we really connect with these feelings of fragility, uncertainty and fear to understand one another’s experiences, remove barriers and collaborate to build a more abundant future for everyone.

As Lindsey wrote in the opening chapter of this report, progress isn’t always up and to the right. It’s a series of victories and setbacks, of plowing ahead and changing course. But it requires unwavering commitment, the kind we’ve witnessed from our incredible partners throughout this challenging year. Their stories of impact, highlighted throughout these pages, continue to inspire us at Pluralsight One. They are the real heroes of 2020.

Together, we are One.
Adau, David and Elias have all completed online training courses at NRC’s youth center in Nyumanzi refugee settlement in Uganda. Photo: Ingrid Prestetun for NRC
Pluralsight One Fund is a corporate advised fund at Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity registered in the United States, EIN# 20-5205488.