omprakash

We facilitate relationships, dialogue & learning between social change agents around the world.

SPOILER: not a flashy solution, not a widget to end poverty, not a buzzwordy facade, not a neocolonial impulse, not a voluntourist trap.
He is Omprakash.

In 2004, he inspired us to believe that positive social change begins with simple human relationships.

Since 2004, we have been dedicated to building mutually beneficial & educational relationships between grassroots social impact organizations —a.k.a. our Partners— and volunteers, donors & classrooms around the world who can learn from & support their work.

Our network by the numbers:

- **44** COUNTRIES
- **167** INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS
- **24,261** PEOPLE
- **$12,629,538.02** DISTRIBUTED SINCE 2005
The Challenge:

'Voluntourism' is a multi-billion dollar industry, but it is ethically- and pedagogically-bankrupt, shaped by distorted incentives, ethnocentric assumptions, and limited emphasis on substantive learning, reflection, and dialogue.
Annually, **voluntourism** is 1.6 million people spending $2 billion USD

NPR 2014

Analogous activities often not factored into those numbers:

- Gap Years
- Service-Learning
- Volunteering Abroad
- Int'l Service Trips
A Broken Industry

In the dominant paradigm, middlemen sell expensive 'placements' or chaperoned tours — an inefficient & disempowering way of matching needs with assets. An overemphasis is placed on 'making a difference' & 'changing the world.'

Misaligned Stakeholders

Students, universities, and parents struggle to gain or enable 'global experiences' in a way that is ethical, affordable & academically robust. And social change organizations in the 'Global South' struggle to retain their autonomy and mission coherence.
Omprakash redefines this industry through a variety of channels that engage all of those stakeholders:

Our network of curated Partners in 40+ countries are real social change orgs doing real social change work in their communities.

Omprakash EdGE is our state-of-the-art, mobile-ready online learning platform for custom curricula, mentorship & critical dialogue.

Global Dialogue is a professional forum for global dev and social change stakeholders. The Blog is an open mic for voices across the network.

Crowdfunding via Omprakash allows our Partners and EdGE volunteers to raise money and raise consciousness among a global donor base.
Prayamas strongly believes that success is ultimately about connection, not perfection. Omprakash has helped us to connect and amplify our VOICES to various friends and supporters.
— Amlan

Profile of an Omprakash Partner:

**Prayamas**
Kolkata, India

- Founded: 1996
- Joined Omprakash: 2012
- Average Daily Cost: $22.50
- Raised through Omprakash: $105,138
- EdGE volunteers hosted since 2013: 4

**Mission:**
To organise and develop the children of slum areas as empowered change agents by forming groups and sustainable advocacy on health education, environment and livelihood within their community.

**Amlan Ganguly**
Prayamas Founder & Director
In 2012, we launched EdGE to provide robust training, mentorship, and critical consciousness to those wanting to serve across gaps of culture & power within the Omprakash network of international Partner organizations.

Today, EdGE fulfills this vision and much more as an award-winning and highly customizable online learning platform for over a dozen programs working within and beyond the Omprakash network.
The EdGE online platform supports student learning before, during, and after their international experiences. Universities and other providers can customize EdGE for their own student cohorts, or individuals can enroll directly in a public Omprakash EdGE cohort.

Hello Annie! Your EdGE Overview:

- Unit 12 Response | due 4 days ago
- Unit 13 Response | due in 3 days

Recently, you've been @mentioned by:
- @RebeccaJustillen | a month ago View
- @KatieHiebert | 2 months ago View
- @JanWymer | 2 months ago View
- @KatieHiebert | 2 months ago View

Your mentor Jan has commented on your:
- Unit 10 Response | View
- Unit 9 Response | View
- Unit 7 Response | View

Dialogue is everything. Keep it alive!

Cohort Activity:

- Alex Knott
  - 2 hours ago
  - Unit 12 Comment | View...
- Yandy Varela
  - 36 hours ago
  - Unit 10 Observation | View...
- Alex Knott
  - a day ago
  - Unit 9 Comment | View...
- Alex Knott
  - a day ago
  - Unit 12 Comment | View...
- Rebecca Justillen
  - a day ago
  - Unit 9 Comment | View...
- Alex Knott
  - a day ago

Observations
- You: 24 | Avg: 3

Comments
- You: 16 | Avg: 17

Responses
- You: 9 | Avg: 10

Blogs/ROPs
- You: 0 | Avg: 0

Logistics
- 58% Stay on top of your logistics >>

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
EdGE students choose a mentor from within the Omprakash team to receive ongoing feedback and support before, during and after their field position. Our mentorship team is comprised of a diverse group of young professionals with a vast array of experience in fields related to int’l development.
We have 50+ EdGE Mentors. Here are 4:

**Alexis Kallen**
Rhodes Scholar
Stanford's 127th Convocation Speaker
Researches accessibility in the registration process in Greek refugee camps

**Marc Anthony Branch**
Served in Peace Corps (Peru) for 4 years
Emory University Master's in Development Practice ('19)
Studied social movements and human rights in Argentina

**Tyrell Kahan**
USAID Fellow in Bureau for Food Security
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Emory University Master's in Development Practice ('16)

**Méliissa Godin**
Rhodes Scholar
National Geographic Explorer
Multi-media journalist and GroundTruth Project Fellow
The EdGE Logistics section provides a customizable list of tasks for students to complete before departing for field positions. Common tasks in the list include uploading a copy of one's passport and visa, entering flight and preventative health information, completing surveys, and more.

Your Logistics To Do List:

- Global Engagement Grant due 4 months ago
- Concentration due 4 months ago
- Flights
- Payment
- 10 Questions to Ask due 2 months ago
- Visa Pre-Survey due a month ago
- STEP Confirmation due a month ago
- Emergency Info due a month ago
- Visa due 11 days ago
- Field Position Confirmation
- Passport
- Waiver
- Health History
- Mentor

Passport:

Upload a scan/photocopy/photo of your passport. We need to see the photo AND signature pages. We should see something like this:

![Passport Image]

Passport Info

Please upload a picture of your passport's main photo/info page

[Upload]

[Submit]
An EdGE classroom provides rich content and space for dialogue between students, mentors, and admins. Our standard pre-departure curriculum is a twelve-week introduction to the history, ethics, and economics of international development, and we offer custom content for different cohorts.

The Great Convergence, The Great Divergence

In an effort to reconcile notions of 'progress' with the stark inequalities that persist in our world, it may be helpful to think about the historical context of modern inequality. Has it always existed? Is it inevitable? To help us with these questions, we'll first read an excerpt from the introduction of economist Angus Deaton's 2013 book, "The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality."

Inequality is often a consequence of progress. Not everyone gets rich at the same time, and not everyone gets immediate access to the latest life-saving measures, whether access to clean water, to vaccines, or to new drugs for preventing heart disease. Inequalities in turn affect progress.[...]

Many of the great episodes of human progress, including those that are usually described as being entirely good, have left behind them a legacy of inequality. The Industrial Revolution, beginning in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, initiated the economic growth that has been responsible for hundreds of millions of people escaping from material deprivation. The other side of the
The EdGE Roundtable is the classroom's forum, providing a space for students and mentors to browse and engage with each other's end-of-unit responses. Unlike most online-learning platforms, EdGE is purpose-built to facilitate authentic user-to-user exchange, rather than uni-directional content delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Unit</th>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Thread activity</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Unit 1 Comment</td>
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</table>
The EdGE Mentee Manager allows program mentors and admins to track student participation, logistics, field position planning, performance evaluations, and more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 FSU Global Scholars</th>
<th>2017 MAO Kenya</th>
<th>2017 Omprakash EdGE</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Admin to 48 students</td>
<td>Admin to 6 students</td>
<td>Admin to 633 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Alvarado</td>
<td>Shannon Robins</td>
<td>Eilee Lindbergh</td>
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<td>2 days ago</td>
<td>7 days ago</td>
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<td>Last login</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Carre</td>
<td>Danny McNeil</td>
<td>Jasmine Donald</td>
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<td>3 days ago</td>
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<td>Last login</td>
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<td>U8 R</td>
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<td>Most recent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameron Canton</td>
<td>Marissa Kleiman</td>
<td>Maimunas Abdullahi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 days ago</td>
<td>10 days ago</td>
<td>3 hours ago</td>
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<td>Most recent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savannah C</td>
<td>Brianna B</td>
<td>Eliza N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 hours ago</td>
<td>10 days ago</td>
<td>10 hours ago</td>
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<td>Last login</td>
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Overview & Expectations
About Me
My name is Caitlin Dunn, I am 27 years old, and my passion is working with and advocating for people who need support. I have worked in many different fields such as being the head coach of the Tallahassee Synchronized Swimming team (non-profit), I have been a cook for 9 years specializing in sushi and vegan cuisine, and I have volunteered with WWOOF in 2009. I hope to master the Spanish language to help communities here in the United States. I am now currently a student at Florida State University majoring in Spanish and minoring in social work, and plan to apply for the Peace Corps when I graduate. I am committed, hard-working.

Transforming lives through education, health, and community strengthening!
Proyecto Horizonte

$150.00  |  $20.00
CAMPAIGN GOAL  |  RAISED SO FAR

An EdGE student's profile showcases their work for friends, family, & the general public. Omprakash offers blogging and crowdfunding tools to all EdGE students, and student profiles aggregate all blog posts and active crowdfunding campaigns.
Donate to Christina Armes's Campaign

Empowering Women and Strengthening the Community in Ollantaytambo, Peru

$2,000.00
CAMPAIGN GOAL

$1,255.60
RAISED BY 15 PEOPLE IN 759 DAYS

Share this campaign on

Donate today!

This Is a Personal Campaign | 95% of the money raised will be earmarked for Christina Armes for approved expenses related to their EdGE participation. 5% of the money raised will be earmarked for Awamaki.

Hello, and thank you for stopping by my funding page! I’m deeply honored to be serving with Awamaki in Ollantaytambo this summer as a tour guide practicing and promoting sustainable tourism in addition to empowering women in their local communities. Awamaki provides skills training in knitting, sewing, weaving, and other creative skills, as well as technical and administrative training. In addition, Awamaki promotes sustainable tourism by facilitating valuable cultural experiences for tourists and promoting appreciation for Andean way of life.

EdGE students are able to crowdfund via 'Partner campaigns' in which 100% of the money is earmarked for their host; or 'Personal Campaigns' in which 5% is earmarked for their host and 95% for the student's approved trip-related expenses. Omprakash Partners are also able to crowdfund for themselves.
No eres Nicaraguanse? (You’re not Nicaraguan?) is one of my favorite phrases to hear. Looking like the majority is a feeling I didn’t know that I didn’t know. There is a comfort in blending in, in the sense of invisibility when I pass by a loud group of American tourists, when street vendors ignore me, when people on my walk to work look like me. I didn’t know that I carried a weight or a self-consciousness until suddenly I don’t have it anymore; I’m just a Brown girl in a Brown country. And that’s kind of cool.
Honestly, at the beginning, I wasn't sure whether or not to take EdGE. I'd already spent almost 3 years working in the rainforests of South America, so I thought "what more could this course teach me?" But call it instinct, intuition, or whatever you want to call it, I realized that there is always something new to learn, and to open your mind and heart to. So I enrolled. I can tell you that this was one of the best calls I've made regarding my own education and self-learning process.
Case Study: Global Scholars @ Florida State

**Fall:** FSU chooses their "Global Scholars" cohort. Many low-income and first-generation college students are able to take part due to our low-cost model and financial aid.

**Winter:** The cohort gets enrolled in EdGE. Students independently research our Partners and apply to their favorites. Over the course of several weeks, they dialogue with our Partners and confirm field positions in the network.

**Spring:** Students engage in our one-of-a-kind EdGE online classroom, learning from each other and their EdGE Mentors. Students begin developing ideas for their Capstone Projects.

**Summer:** Students spend at least 2 months at their field position. They use the Omprakash platform to blog and post Capstone Project updates.

**Fall:** Students return to campus and join a post-trip EdGE classroom to reflect and workshop Capstones before final submission and dissemination of Capstone Projects.

"The insights EdGE offered, but more importantly, the questions it asked, for so many of us, opened life-altering doors of reflection, dialogue, and action. To me, these doors represent just how formative and transformative the experience has been from the very first week of EdGE to now."

Inam Sakinah  
FSU '18
Case Study: Bailey Scholars @ UIUC

In this collaboration with UIUC, EdGE increases students' learning, impact, and accountability within an externally funded university-based grant program aimed at promoting service and action.

"The best part of my overall EdGE experience was the curriculum and the mentorship. The curriculum was incredibly thought out, which I felt prepared me to go abroad as a trained volunteer rather than just a student. The mentorship opportunity provided me with support throughout the curriculum and with an ally that I can utilize throughout my time abroad, and hopefully further in the future.

Madisen Hockett
UIUC '20

"Every unit taught me something. I never would have thought about some things this course brought up, and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to take this course knowing I would like to travel a lot of my life. I will use this information for the rest of my life no matter where I travel to, and I think everyone should take a course like this because it really opens up your mind about the world.

Vanessa Cahill
UIUC '22
Case Study: **Global Service Fellows @ Stanford**

Based out of the Haas Center for Public Service

15-20 students engage in the EdGE curriculum during spring quarter (receiving 1-unit of credit)

Students work 1-on-1 with an EdGE Mentor

Students have the option of finding a service position inside or outside of the Omprakash network during the summer for 9+ weeks

“"My mentor Melissa was incredibly accessible and had so much to offer from her own work, which I greatly appreciated.

Isabela Bumanlag
Stanford '19

""The classroom I've found to be enormously enlightening. This classroom does a wonderful job of forcing its students to engage with questions of enormous importance that they would not deal with in any other context.

Rodolfo Isaac Arocha
Stanford '21
Some of the universities currently running accredited EdGE-based programs with us:

Stanford University

Claremont McKenna College

William & Mary

Colby

University of Washington

University of Michigan

Florida State University

Mount Holyoke
Dear Donor,
I have so many reasons to say thank you! Taking the EdGE course has been a transformative experience, and I'm humbled to know that your donation helped me reach the person I am...Thanks to Omprakash, and thanks to you, I spent two and a half months in Peru, working with an organization called Seeds of Hope...I'm going to college in just under two weeks, and though I'm a little disappointed that I can't take a second gap year, I'm hopeful that my future will involve more travel and more of Omprakash! Thank you for assisting me in this first step!
Partner Development Grants

Omprakash's expertise supporting Partners' goals in areas such as:

- Web Presence Improvement
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Showcasing Impact
- Accessing External Grants
- Org Strategy & Systems Thinking
- Curriculum Development

“...The PDG was helpful in that it clarified how our organization should structure its grants, donors and other partners within its strategy. It was very helpful with strategic planning. We are very grateful for having awarded our organization this grant!”

-Chewe Konkola
Sani Foundation
Zambia
It's About Time: Making Sense of Volunteers' Time-related Frustrations

Of all the exciting, disorienting, and jarring differences volunteers may perceive in a new place, one of the hardest to understand -- yet also perhaps one of the most profound -- is how people diverge in their perceptions and experiences of time. Even seasoned travelers find themselves irked by differences in timekeeping or changes of pace, and

A 'South'-facing space for reflection, collaboration, resource sharing & action planning for people — teachers, students, activists, professionals & organizations — involved in global development, social change & critical pedagogy.
We also host conferences for our Partners, on their turf.
It's such an incredible resource for organizations and for individual volunteers. Firstly, Omprakash is about fostering educational experiences.

-College Uncensored
Contact:

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Omprakash is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization
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