

AUSSEN WIRTSCHAFT BRANCHENREPORT CHINA, HONGKONG

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (EDTECH) IN HONGKONG UND IN DER GREATER BAY AREA

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1 BACKGROUND

Education Technology (EdTech) covers a wide spectrum of software, hardware and digital solutions that help to deliver and manage learning in a more effective and efficient way, from early childhood education to corporate and lifelong learning. With recent advancements in mobile technologies, AI, data analytics, reality technologies, Internet of Things and robotics, EdTech will play an increasingly important role in enabling, motivating, empowering, customizing and democratizing learning.

COVID-19 has put EdTech even in a brighter spotlight. At the peak of the pandemic, over 90% of education institutes around the world had switched to remote learning. Whilst technology cannot replace the in-person learning experience, it is set to become an increasingly important part of post-pandemic education.

With a predicted market value close to EUR 212 billion, EdTech startups are on the rise all over the world. Among the 1,385 EdTech start-ups around the world, 43% have their headquarters in the United States, followed by India (327), Brazil (275), the United Kingdom (245), and China (101), according to [RS Component's EdTech Report 2019/20](#).

Herman Tse, Head of business and professional services, [InvestHK](#), sees a trend in more EdTech companies and start-ups settling in Hong Kong with the aim to expand their reach into the neighbouring Greater Bay Area (which includes next to Hong Kong also Macau and major cities in the province Guandong) and others parts of mainland Chinese market. Instead of investing in physical schools, more investors are focusing on EdTech because they can have a bigger impact and can reach out to a larger number of children and students.

Hong Kong's advantages are rooted in its free economic system and abundance of talent, which are crucial factors for EdTech start-ups that hope to develop their businesses in mainland China and the rest of Asia.

2 EDTECH IN HONG KONG

E-learning is very popular in Hong Kong. Some kindergarten and primary schools have already incorporated iPads or computers into their teaching. Many schools use [eClass](#), [Edmodo](#), [google classroom](#), [Microsoft Teams](#) for communication between the school, teachers and parents. There are also private platforms that offer online courses to enable local and time-independent learning. Universities are also following this trend. Some offer entire online courses while others offer hybrid learning which combines face-to-face and online teaching into one cohesive experience. The number of users is constantly increasing.

Established in 2000 with the support of the Quality Education Fund, the public body [Hong Kong Education City](#) (EdCity) aims to enable better adaptation to changed curriculum initiatives through technology. EdCity is dedicated to develop high-quality online services, to facilitate the exchange of educational resources and information among schools, teachers and to build a professional teachers' community. It also encourages students to use eLearning resources as part of self-directed learning.

[CoolThink@JC](#) is created and funded by [The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust](#) and in partnership with [The Education University of Hong Kong](#), [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#), and [City University of Hong Kong](#). CoolThink@JC strives to inspire students to apply digital creativity in their daily lives and to nurture their proactive use of technologies for social good from a young age on. Following the successful implementation of the four-year pilot, the second phase of the CoolThink@JC was launched in 2020, with the aim of mainstreaming computational thinking education.

2.1 Major players in Hong Kong

Cyberport

Cyberport is an innovative digital community with around 1,600 start-ups and technology companies. It is managed by the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, which is wholly owned by the Hong Kong SAR Government. With the vision of being the hub for digital technology thereby creating a new economic driver for Hong Kong, Cyberport is committed to nurturing a vibrant tech ecosystem by cultivating talent, promoting entrepreneurship among youth, supporting start-ups on their growth journey, fostering industry development by promoting strategic collaboration with local and international partners, and integrating new and traditional economies by accelerating digital transformation in the public and private sectors.

Cyberport also organises different tech events with EdTech relevance: In January 2021, Cyberport STEM+E Consortium jointly organised the “**STEM+E Summit X EdTech Demo Day**” with around 70 teachers participating. 23 start-ups introduced their most advanced EdTech solutions, among them

STEM education	Avatech Innovation Limited
	Farmacy
	iSTEM Limited
	MakeOmnia Limited
	Peanut King Solution
	Printact Limited
Game-based and immersive learning	Smarthon Limited
	AESIR Limited
	ConnectAR Limited
	e2Sports Limited
	Formula Square
E-learning solutions and school management	Softmind Ltd
	ESG Matters Limited
	Find Solution AI Limited
	Hidden Boss Limited
	IOT Solution Limited
	MommyDaddyMe Limited
	Snaildy Education Limited

For the EdTech Demo Day booklet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s_Gbxg006CdAzJvIG4r7MjW0A7fr9vhw/view

Cyberport also organized a Jan. 2021 webinar titled “**Do Good and Do Well with EdTech Ventures**” in January 2021 together with **Esperanza**.

As of Jan 2021, there were more than 120 EdTech Startups within the Cyberport community covering major areas including STEM teaching, e-learning solutions, game-based and immersive learning, interactive technology, and school management systems.

Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks Corporation

Since 2002, Hong Kong Science & Technology Parks have started to cultivate successful Innovation and Technology (I&T) companies, formed strong local and international partnership networks and created a thriving community within HKSTP. Currently, there are over 1,000 technology companies from 23 countries setting up in HKSTP.

AIR@InnoHK is a research cluster in HKSTP that brings together top minds from local and overseas universities and scientific research institutions to support global collaborations in artificial intelligence and robotics technologies. The new technologies could be applied in education and other areas such as financial services, manufacturing, smart city etc.

The Education University of Hong Kong

The Education University of Hong Kong is a publicly funded tertiary institution dedicated to the advancement of learning and teaching, through a diverse offering of academic and research programs on teacher education and complementary social sciences and humanities disciplines. They have developed different online tools for students in Hong Kong to learn interactively.

Projects include:

- [Animated way to learn Chinese project](#)
- [Animated Chinese history for curious minds project](#)
- [Animated singalong mathematics project](#)
- [Take a SIP \(Science-Informed Parenting\) Project](#)

In 2020, the University received a donation of EUR 540,000 from the Li Ka Shing Foundation in support of the Education University's Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology to develop e-learning materials for mathematics learning and to cultivate AI literacy for its students and secondary school children. The donation will be used to help students to understand how AI can be applied to areas such as arts, languages, physical education and psychology. It adopts learning and teaching materials from one of the world's leading AI solution providers.

Chinese University of Hong Kong

Founded in 2016, [the Centre for eLearning Innovation and Technology \(ELITE\)](#) serves as a central hub for advanced eLearning implementation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. ELITE aims to increase the adoption of technology used at the university through different courseware developments such as [massive open online courses](#), small private online courses, and micro-modules. It also provides technical support for teachers to enhance their e-teaching approach. Methodologies used include eLearning analytics, VR/AR/MR, gamification & geolocation and technology integration.

University of Hong Kong

The **e-Learning Development Laboratory** is a unit of the **Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering** at the **University of Hong Kong** specialized in the development of the latest technology for e-learning, mobile learning and other ICT tools for teaching and assessment. The objectives of the Laboratory are:

- Conducting applied research and developing applications to use ICT technologies for teaching and learning at the university and in education sectors
- Providing a platform to promote more collaborations with internal and external parties
- Evaluating the effectiveness of e-learning to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Exchanging knowledge about the application of e-learning technologies with internal and external users.

The **e-Learning Development Laboratory** has developed an **iClass** system that can be used at universities, as well as secondary and primary schools. It also consistently holds different e-learning competitions and presents awards in Hong Kong.

Esperanza

Founded by the former Financial Secretary John Tsang and co-founder Rachel Chan, **Esperanza** works together with businesses, non-profit organizations, universities, philanthropists, public and quasi-public organizations to seek solutions both locally and globally to tackle challenges in education & learning. It actively collaborates with **Cyberport, InvestHK**, startups, investors, and incubators in Hong Kong to organize e-learning webinars and activities in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

One of the signature events of **Esperanza** in partnership with **Cyberport** is the **EdVentures Global Business Acceleration (GBA) Fellowship** program. It consists of a series of events to assist EdTech ventures in going international through the Greater Bay Area. Program highlights of the 2020 program included:

- Virtual Global Edventures Expo for the Selected Fellows (Oct – Nov 2020)
- **Virtual Global Edventures GBA Summit @ Cyberport Venture Capital Forum (4 Nov 2020)**
- Virtual presentations, business matching and advisory services (Nov 2020 onwards)
- An all-expenses-paid trip to Greater Bay Area (2021/2022)

Some EdTech webinars that were supported by Esperanza:

- Oct 27, 2020: ISTE Standards and EdTech Support ([watch the recording](#))
- Nov 5, 2020: Hong Kong Law: Keeping the Field Level for Startups ([watch the recording](#))
- Support for EdTech Startups at Cyberport ([watch the recording](#))
- Doing business in GBA: A start-up perspective ([watch the recording](#))
- Growth opportunities in Hong Kong and Greater Bay Area ([watch the recording](#))
- COVID-19 Accelerates the Digital Transformation of China's Education Space ([watch the recording](#))

Here are the selected 2020 fellows:

Awardee	Company Name	Country	Product	
	Beyond Labz	USA	Virtual science lab	Introduction
	Beyond Tablet	China	Screen free STEM learning device	Introduction
V	CoderZ Technology	Israel	Virtual STEM and robotics learning platform	Introduction
V	Cybint	Israel, USA	Cyber security education	Introduction
V	Mandarin Matrix	Hong Kong	Online Mandarin learning classroom	Introduction
V	MEL Science	United Kingdom	Science education platform with hands-on experiment and interactive simulation	Introduction
	Reactored	Finland	Digital and interactive language learning platform	Introduction
	Story2	USA	Learning communication skills online	Introduction
	Xccelerate Global Holdings Ltd	Hong Kong	4th Industrial Revolution Skills Training	Introduction
	Zzish	United Kingdom	Personalised learning	Introduction

Another event is the [EdTech Investment Webinar: WHAT, WHY & HOW](#) which connects venture capitalists, angel investors, fund managers, and investors with EdTech startups.

In Aug 2021, they will start to accept nominations from startups to:

- meet Hong Kong's investor's community
- present solutions at the Learning and Teaching Expo 2021
- present solutions to talent development professionals
- work with Esperanza and their partners on introducing the solutions in Hong Kong.

6 startups will be chosen. To express interests, please send an email to hi@esperanza.life

Past activities can be found [here](#).

Mandarin Matrix

[Mandarin Matrix](#), which is based in Hong Kong, is an interactive online classroom designed for children to learn Mandarin as a second language. According to the CEO Mr. David Tait, the platform is currently teaching Mandarin to around 85,000 children every day, globally. Mandarin Matrix claims to have 350,000 learners worldwide from 25+ countries. The learning materials use Chinese characters and content common to curricula worldwide, including NCSSFL-ACTFL, AP, SAT, IB (PYP and MYP), YCT, Common Core, IGCSE, GCSE, and NCEA.

Dalton Foundation

The Dalton Foundation is the sponsoring body of the **Dalton School Hong Kong (DSHK)**, a school that strives to offer a progressive child-centred education while nurturing self-paced and self-directed learning. The foundation board is led by a 9 members team consisting of renowned educators, top business leaders and its own founding directors, all of whom aspire to develop a new school that will further elevate Hong Kong as a leading city in quality education.

One of the board members is Mr. Yat Siu. He was born and raised in Austria and currently lives in Hong Kong. He is the founder of an internet provider in Hong Kong, the CEO and founder of a game company called **Outblaze** and the co-founder of unicorn **Animoca**.

Dalton Learning Lab is a joint-venture between **Outblaze** and the two Dalton School co-founders. Founded in 2017, the Lab offers after-school educational courses in a variety of areas such as Science, Technology Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) for children aged 4-13, with an emphasis on fostering divergent thinking and developing useful, future-ready skills applicable to the real world. All courses at the Dalton Learning Lab are taught by real professionals under the guidance of professional educators.

Pearson

Established in 1958, Pearson is a globally active leading learning company. Traditionally a textbook publisher, Pearson in recent years has transitioned to provide all-around educational services. Nowadays, Pearson already has a significant footprint across China. It has opened free AI learning resources on its Longman English Plus WeChat Platform, known as “Longman Xiaoying” and provided free digital supplementary learning resources for end-users with a certified Pearson textbook. As of 2020, more than 100,000 copies of original readers and supplementary exercises had been released, across nearly 160 books, to the benefit of almost 200,000 users.

Fresco Capital

Fresco Capital with its managing director Tytus Michalski is an early-stage venture capital firm that invests at the intersection of people and technology including in EdTech.

Some of the projects they invested in include:

Yellowbrick – empowering young adults through online learning

Make School – the school for founders and developers

NoRedInk – Online, adaptive grammar tool and analytics

Showbie – Software for the paperless classroom

Gowell Education – Preparing Chinese students for overseas education

Swivl – Video for teachers and students

3 SNAPSHOT: EDTECH IN CHINA

Online education tools have been a natural progression for China, as over 800 million Chinese citizens are internet users, with impressive fibre, broadband, and internet coverage, even in many remote regions. STEAM education (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics) along with K-12 education, constitutes the largest segment of China's EdTech market.

In 2019, China published a detailed blueprint for "modernising" education by 2035, including plans to support the use of information technology and digitalisation to construct "smart campuses" and improve learning. China has provided a huge opportunity for overseas EdTech ventures which are looking to grow beyond their home markets.

Many Chinese schools use e-learning. Even courses in creative arts, music, drama and physical education (including swimming!) are conducted online and there is a strong demand for pre-school education materials. The most popular softwares used in mainland China's schools are **Zoom**, **Tencent Meeting** and **DingDing**.

For EdTech startups, although the highest funded companies are US-based, two (**Yuanfundao** and **Zhangmen**) of the top 3 most funded companies worldwide are from China:

Founded in 2012 with over 30,000 employees, **Yuanfundao**, a homework-tutoring app has become the world's most valuable private EdTech company according to PitchBook data. Tencent and DST Global are among Yuanfundao's backers. This Beijing-based company has raised EUR 1.85 billion from investors and is now worth EUR 13 billion. With a focus on K-12 learning, Yuanfundao's products include artificial intelligence-enabled virtual classes, live tutoring and apps for arithmetic questions and homework support. The company claims to have over 400 million users on its platforms.

Zhangmen, a Shanghai-based company, was founded in 2005 with an initial focus on afterschool tutoring in classrooms. In 2014, the company shifted its business model to online one-on-one tutoring for students from kindergarten to high schools. The group's online platform has enrolled more than 40 million students from more than 600 cities in China with a renewal rate of over 80 percent. The firm has 30,000 educators and expects its revenue for 2021 to be more than EUR 153 million.

Greater Bay Area

China also puts a big focus on building Asia's Silicon Valley, also known as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). It is a cluster of 11 massive, hyper-connected, prosperous cities in South China and home to three of the world top 50 universities and tech giants like Tencent, Huawei and DJI. With its 71 million people and a GDP of USD \$1.7 trillion, the GBA is one of the most prosperous regions of China. It is a thriving education market, a launch pad to the global market, a fundraising centre, a R&D test bed for Asia and a global supply chain management centre. To attract EdTech startups the GBA promotes many initiatives including **the EdVentures GBA Fellowship** which is organized by **Esperanza** and **Cyberport**. The program offers rapidly growing EdTech startups the opportunity to globally expand by leveraging the phenomenal concentration of human resources, capital, and spirit of innovation in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

The government invests a lot to boost the Innovation and Technology (I&T) development in the GBA including: increasing resources for R&D, pooling together technology talent, providing investment funding, providing technological research infrastructure, reviewing existing legislations and regulations, opening up government data, enhancing procurement arrangements, and strengthening popular science education.

To facilitate technological development many **funding programs and incentives** are offered by the Guangdong provincial administration, both by the Department of Science and Technology (mainly for research and innovation projects) and the Department of Industry and Information Technology (mainly for technological upgrading, digitalisation, etc.). Other programs are also offered by municipal administrations all across the province. Under this project, a total of 28 funding programs were analysed at the provincial level and in the municipalities of Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dongguan. Startups in the EdTech sector should keep these funding schemes in mind.

4 OTHER MAJOR EDTECH STARTUPS WORLDWIDE

The below mentioned international EdTech startups are widely recognized and their tools are used in Hong Kong.

Coursea partners with more than 200 leading universities and companies to bring flexible, affordable, job-relevant online learning to individuals and organizations worldwide. They offer a range of learning opportunities, from hands-on projects and courses to job-ready certificates and degree programs. With 77 million learners, 100+ fortune 500 companies, and more than 6,000 campuses, businesses, and governments coming to Coursea, it has a market capitalisation of EUR 5 billion.

Kahoot! is a global learning platform company that wants to empower everyone, including children, students, and employees, to unlock their full learning potential. Their learning platform makes it easy for any individual or corporation to create, share, and play learning games that drive compelling engagement. In the last 12 months, more than 250 million games have been played on the Kahoot! platform with over 1.5 billion participating players in 200 countries. With headquarters in Norway, backed by SoftBank, Microsoft, Disney, and the venture capital firms Creandum and Northzone, Kahoot racked up revenue of EUR 38 million in 2020, 247% up from 2019.

Indian EdTech **Quizizz** has built a learning platform that helps teachers turn homework and tests into self-paced games. With markets in India and the US, in 2021, the EdTech startup announced a EUR 10.5 million series-A funding round led by Eight Roads Ventures, with participation from GSV Ventures, Rocketship VC and so on. Now, the learning platform supports more than 60 million people a month and is used in over 65% of the schools in the US.

Duolingo is a free science-based language education platform that has organically become the most popular way to learn languages online. Currently, they have over 300 million users. They provide free, bite-size lessons to learn different languages including the most common ones like Spanish, French, Japanese, German as well as others like Esperanto, Navajo and Yiddish. The company is worth around EUR 2 billion.

5 LOCAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER THE HONG KONG / GBA MARKET

5.1 By AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA

If Austrian institutions or companies are interested in providing products and services in the education sector in mainland China or Hong Kong, AußenwirtschaftsCenter Hongkong can assist with a range of services including:

- Market overview and feedback on offer/marketing
- Information on Potential partners and introductions
- Information on suitable events, platforms

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5.2 By other local organizations

InvestHK

InvestHK's vision is to strengthen Hong Kong's status as the leading international business location in Asia. Their mission is to attract and retain foreign direct investment, which is of strategic importance to the economic development of Hong Kong. They work with overseas and Mainland entrepreneurs, SMEs and multinationals that wish to set up an office or expand their existing business in Hong Kong. They offer free advice and services to support companies from the planning stage right through to the launch and expansion of their business. InvestHK also has an **office in Berlin**.

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Re-Watch the April 22, 2021 webinar: „EdTech in Hong Kong”

<https://www.investhk.gov.hk/en/events/webinar-edtech-hong-kong-join-education-revolution-asia.html>

- Opening Remarks --- Paula Kant, Head of InvestHK Brussels
- Esperanza Life ---- Ms. Rachel Chan, Co-founder
- Online Education Partnership, OEP, Asia --- Ms. Rebecca Merrett, Managing Director
- MEL Science (UK) ---- Mr. Kai Liang, Business Development Director,
- Emys (Poland) ----Mr. Jan Kedzierski, Co-founder
- Closing Remarks --- Mr. Wingin Chung, Head of InvestHK Berlin

WHub

WHub is Hong Kong's biggest startup community and power connector. It is a platform showcasing startups to accelerate their business through meaningful connections to the resources they need to grow. They help startups to connect to key industry players and to empower recruitment and education through insights and events. EdTech companies in Hong Kong can be found [here](#). WHub also published a [Hong Kong startup ecosystem toolbox](#).

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Cyberport

Cyberport is an innovative digital community with around 1,600 start-ups and technology companies. It is managed by the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, which is wholly owned by the Hong Kong SAR Government. With a vision to be the hub for digital technology thereby creating a new economic driver for Hong Kong, Cyberport is committed to nurturing a vibrant tech ecosystem by cultivating talent, promoting entrepreneurship among youth, supporting start-ups on their growth journey, fostering industry development by promoting strategic collaboration with local and international partners, and integrating new and traditional economies by accelerating digital transformation in the public and private sectors.

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6 APPENDIX

6.1 Government Departments

HKSAR Census and Statistics Department:

<http://www.censtatd.gov.hk>

Education Bureau

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=92&langno=1>

Macau Education and Youth Affairs Bureau

https://portal.dsej.gov.mo/webdsejspace/internet/Inter_main_page.jsp

Chinese Ministry of Education

<http://en.moe.gov.cn/>

6.2 Education Fairs

China Education Expo

<http://www.chinaeducationexpo.com/english/>

China International Education Exhibition Tour

<http://www.cieet.com/>

HKTDC Education & Careers Expo

<http://m.hktdc.com/fair/hkeducationexpo-en/HKTDC-Education-and-Careers-Expo.html>

6.3 Upcoming EdTech Events

21st Century Learning Conference Online

Date: Nov 22 – Dec 4, 2021

The conference connects innovative international school educators worldwide with EdTech startups.

Website: <https://www.21clhk.org/>

Learning and Teaching Expo

Date: Dec 8-10, 2021

The Expo aims to provide a professional platform for all stakeholders to explore the latest development trends of educational resources and technology.

Website: <https://www.ltexpo.com.hk/LTE/announcement2021/>

EdTech competition and presentation organized by Esperanza

Date: nomination will start in August 2021

- meet Hong Kong's investor's community
- present solutions at the Learning and Teaching Expo 2021
- present solutions to talent development professionals
- work with Esperanza and their partners in introducing the solutions in Hong Kong.

To express interests or if you would like to know more details, please send an email to hi@esperanza.life.

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