

Dear Friend

The Rockefeller Institute of Government of SUNY and the United Nations Academic Impact invite you to a forum on ***MOOCs in the Developing World: Democratization of knowledge or academic hype?*** on Thursday, June 19, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the United Nations in New York City. (Please note-Attendees must report to the UN Visitor's Center entrance located at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Street 45 minutes prior for security screening and escort to the conference venue.) The event is also sponsored by the Institute for International Education (IIE).

Will massive open online courses provide worldwide access to quality higher education, as advocates maintain? Or will MOOCs, as critics fear, foster Western academic dominance, fail to serve those most in need, and undermine local institutions? These questions and more will be considered in a probing conversation featuring prominent global thought leaders offering a range of views on the pros and cons of MOOCs

Moderating the conversation will be Ben Wildavsky, director of higher education studies at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, policy professor at the University at Albany (State University of New York) and author of the award-winning book *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World*.

Panelists include:

Anant Agarwal-CEO of [edX](#), the high-profile MOOC founded by Harvard and MIT. Anant will begin the forum with short remarks making the case for the benefits of MOOC in the developing world. Anant taught the first edX course on circuits and electronics from MIT, which drew 155,000 students from 162 countries. He has served as the director of [CSAIL](#), MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, and is a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at [MIT](#). His work on Organic Computing was selected by *Scientific American* as one of 10 World-Changing Ideas in 2011, and he was named in Forbes' list of top 15 education innovators in 2012.

Philip G. Altbach- Research professor and director of the Center for International Higher Education in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. He has been a senior associate of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and served as editor of the *Review of Higher Education*, *Comparative Education Review*, and as an editor of *Educational Policy*. He is author of *Turmoil and Transition: The International Imperative in Higher Education*, *Comparative Higher Education*, *Student Politics in America*, *The Road to Academic Excellence: The Making of World-Class Research Universities*, *Leadership for World-Class Universities: Challenges for Developing Countries*, and (with Jorge Balan) *World Class Worldwide: Transforming Research Universities in Asia and Latin America*.

Sita Sataraman-Senior vice president of the Ritnand Balved Educational Foundation, Secretary General of the Amity Synergy Forums, and senior vice president of Amity, a top universities synergy forum. Possessing global experience in management, Sitamaran has served on the faculty at leading higher education institutions throughout India and has lectured on the subjects of management and economics globally.

To RSVP, please contact Michele Charbonneau at the Rockefeller Institute at (518) 443-5258 or by e-mail at [michele.charbonneau@rockinst.suny.edu](mailto:michele.charbonneau@rockinst.suny.edu) by June 10<sup>th</sup>.

For those not able to attend, the event will be webcast simultaneously on UN Web TV.

Sincerely,

Thomas Gais  
Director

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### **Rough forum schedule**

4 – 4:10 p.m. (10 mins)

Welcome and opening remarks

- Ben Wildavsky (or Tom, do you want to say something to open the forum?). Also, a brief welcome here from a UNAI person?

4:10 – 4:15 pm. (5 mins)

Speaker/panelist introductions

- Ben Wildavsky

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (15 mins)

The case for MOOCs – short comments

- Anant Agarwal

4:30 – 5:15 p.m. (45 mins)

Moderated discussion

Agarwal joins in, questions from BW

- reaction from Altbach and Sataraman,

5:15 – 5:45 p.m. (30 mins)

Audience questions and panelist responses

- moderated by BW