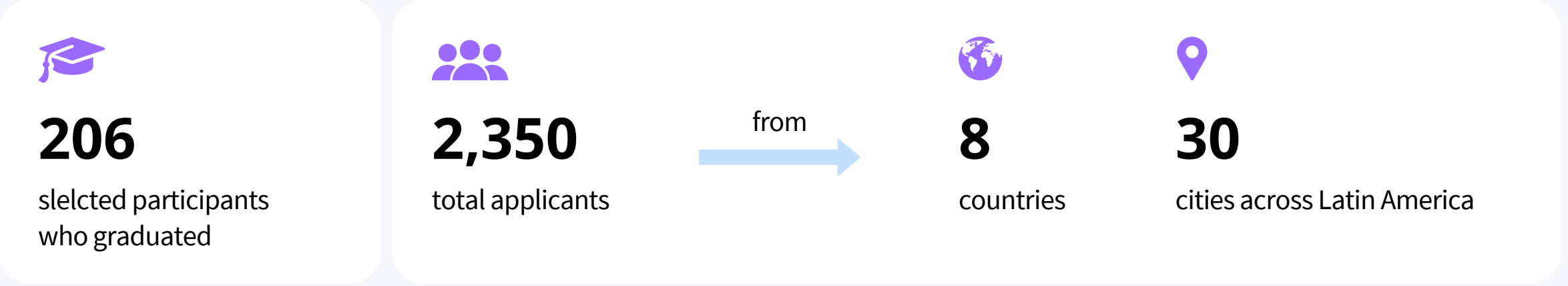**SoftBank**

Building an AI talent pipeline in Latin America

while cutting **$24M** in annual cost

Introduction

From March to June of 2020, Correlation One deployed its Data Science For All / Latin America ("DS4A / LATAM") training program in partnership with SoftBank Group International.

206
slelcted participants who graduated

2,350
total applicants

from

8
countries

30
cities across Latin America

Graduates completed 375 hours of coursework in data science and AI following a curriculum that Correlation One tailored for the region. Participants worked on real-world AI challenges, unlocking millions of dollars of value for local employers. Employers received not only business value, but also access to a pool of vetted AI talent they could hire.

The DS4A / LATAM program provided a novel structure customized to solve Softbank's specific data science needs. We pioneered an "Employer-Integrated" training approach that has become the cornerstone of how we deliver effective, results-driven workforce development solutions.

≡ SoftBank

About SoftBank and its portfolio companies

SoftBank Group is the largest and most influential financial investor in LATAM, operating a **$5 billion innovation fund** for technology companies in the region.

In this engagement, the team worked with the SoftBank operations team as a conduit to addressing pain points and needs across portfolio companies.

Identifying a shortage in AI talent

SoftBank's operations team and CEOs / CTOs of portfolio companies identified a key pain point across portfolio companies: unlocking the power of AI remained a challenge — not due to a lack of data or technology, but because of a shortage of the right talent. Specifically they struggled to:

- ✓ Find external AI talent that also possesses strong business sense
- ✓ Identify external, mid-level AI talent with 3-7 years of experience
- ✓ Upskill internal employees who know the business but do not know enough AI

Softbank needed a practical, high-impact solution that could be implemented quickly to address these shortcomings.

> " *DS4A was a hands-on practical course that dramatically improved the strategic thinking of the team and resulted in an applicable technology that will transform our company.*
>
> **Jose Luiz Orozco**
> Co-CEO of Alphacredit

> " *Great program with very applicable cases for Portfolio Companies. I really appreciated the quality of the final project!*
>
> **Bruno Martins**
> CTO at Olist

Building a tailored talent solution

To equip Softbank's portfolio companies with the AI talent needed to remain competitive, Correlation One curated a custom workforce development strategy with the following objectives:

✓ Establish a diverse AI talent ecosystem in LATAM   ✓ Equip talent with relevant AI skills

✓ Unlock new business potential

The program has the following three distinct components:

1 AI vetted talent pipeline

We launched mixed cohorts that combined portfolio company employees with top external talent from across Latin America. Leveraging our assessment capabilities, we evaluated over 2,350 applicants from eight countries and 30 cities across Latin America on data skills and selected only the top 150. These candidates were placed in blended teams alongside 60 portfolio company employees—creating a built-in talent pipeline, where companies could hire individuals they had already collaborated with closely.

Scholarships

To ensure equal access, especially for participants with family or financial constraints, we proposed a joint Correlation One / SoftBank scholarship initiative. We funded 10 full scholarships and SoftBank encouraged three program sponsors —IDB Lab, Google and iNNpulsa—to contribute two each, bringing the total to 16—covering 8% of the class.

Aligned with our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we prioritized scholarships for women and underrepresented minorities. Nearly 40% of recipients were women, compared to just 14% of applicants. This initiative helped attract top talent regardless of financial background and gave portfolio companies access to a broader, high-potential talent pool.

16 full scholarships funded	**8%** of the class covered by sponsorships	**40%** shcolarship recipients were women
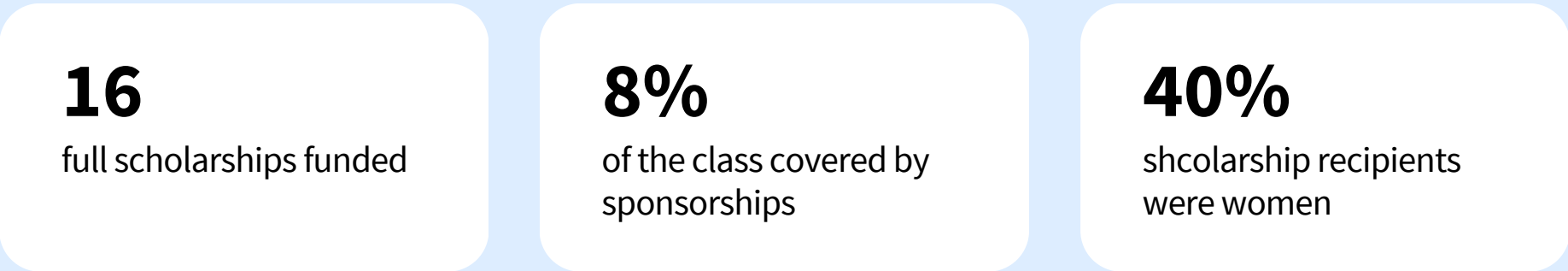
2 AI skills training

We designed a tailored, case-based curriculum shaped directly by the needs of our portfolio companies. Each module tackled real-world business challenges—such as "How can I optimally place promotions on my eCommerce site?"—to build both technical capabilities and commercial acumen in tandem.

"

One of the main reasons I chose DS4A was the close interaction with the stellar staff and top AI talent in LATAM ... The quality of the content matched with the frequent personal interaction with the staff made the experience incredible.

Aside from the extensive course work, which is 100% case based, the additional resources and discussions with the staff gave a whole new depth to the course. And of course, the project was the ultimate opportunity to put the new skills to the test in real-world problems.

Looking back, I've built a network of AI enthusiasts from the best LATAM companies, I've gained hundreds of hours of tackling real-world Data Science challenges, and overall I feel much more prepared to tackle a full Data Science role. DS4A was a true career changing experience.

Gilberto Cybaum
DS4A finalist from Brazil

3 New AI-driven business opportunities

We embedded real AI challenges from portfolio companies into the program as capstone projects. Drawing on our data science consulting expertise, we worked with companies to translate business opportunities into well-defined AI problems. Participants, working in teams, applied what they learned throughout the course to tackle these challenges—ultimately presenting their solutions to the companies, all under the guidance of expert Correlation One instructors.

Training highlights

Duration

The program **spanned 11 weeks**, with classes held on Fridays and Saturdays to accommodate the schedules of working professionals. Participants dedicated a total of 375 hours to lectures, homework, and project work.

Lead instructor

All lectures were delivered by our head instructor, Professor Natesh Pillai, a fully tenured statistics professor at Harvard University.

Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Each student was paired with a dedicated TA, who each held advanced degrees from prestigious institutions such as Stanford, Princeton, MIT, and Waterloo, and brought extensive industry experience as leading data scientists. Classes were structured with one TA for every 30 students, ensuring personalized support throughout the program.

Covid safe

The course began on March 6, 2020 and was planned to be in-person. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we seamlessly transitioned to our Live Online format in the second week.

> "
>
> *Our final project not only saved a considerable amount of money to the company, but I've also think it changed how leadership looks at applied research and data science.*
>
> **Gabriela Surita**
> Loggi employee

Portfolio companies involved

loft Rappi inter OYO madeiramadeira

ualá buser KAVAK Loggi volanty

clip creditas Gympass Uber

konfio olist VTEX QUINTOANDAR

Delivering impactful results

### 1   AI vetted talent pipeline

Correlation One created a database of candidates with analytics, including performance on assessments and their knowledge of tools and skills. When asked whether they would hire DS4A graduates for open positions related to data science, portfolio companies gave an average score of 9.2 out of 10. SoftBank and Correlation One organized a virtual Career Fair to help portfolio companies recruit program graduates.
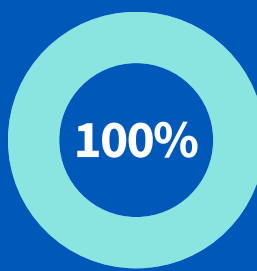
9.8/10 ★

Knowledge employees gained is valuable / applicable

2   AI skills training

Our success implementing a digital learning experience blending the best of live in-person training and online modalities is shown in our results.

97%
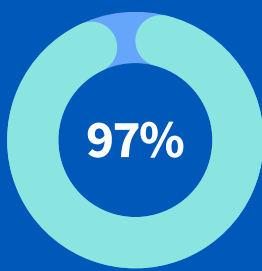
Learner retention

100%

Project completion rate

100%

Work completion rate

DS4A graduates highly rated the program:

9.5/10 ★
Instructor

9.4/10 ★
Teaching Assistants

10/10 ★
My learning will be helpful on the job

3   New AI-driven business opportunities

We worked with Portfolio Companies to scope 24 AI challenges that mattered for their businesses. Participant teams worked on these (and other) AI challenges as their final projects.

Each team delivered a 30 page report, a 10 minute recorded presentation, all their code and models, and a one page summary of their results in a proprietary Correlation One format called a DataFolio. Team deliverables were judged by an expert panel to identify the top 8 teams. These teams competed in a "Grand Finale" virtual event, where they presented their work to SoftBank's Judging committee, consisting of senior managers across investing, operations, and talent. The Judging committee selected the top 3.

Employer branding tool

The DS4A program garnered over 50 pieces of press coverage highlighting SoftBank's role in building regional AI talent. These stories reinforced the company's position as the world's leading investor in AI.

1st place team

$17M
estimated annual savings

The first place team developed a novel routing algorithm that is estimated to save the associated portfolio company $17 million USD per year – a superb result.

2nd place team

$7M
estimated annual savings

The second place team developed a credit model that is expected to save the associated portfolio company $7 million USD per year, and dramatically reduce the amount of time taken to extend a loan.

3rd place team

AI model
developed, that can price millions of products intantaneouly

The third place team developed an automated pricing model that can price millions of products instantaneously; currently only 0.4% of the e-commerce company's products are dynamically priced by a team of 7 humans.

"

This program had a huge impact to develop a data science culture on the company based on the knowledge shared on the course and how it permeated to the whole Company. Our employees' feedback was amazing and it was also an amazing place to find new resources for the company. We highly recommend working with Correlation One, not only because of their technical knowledge but also a great business sense.

Andres Contreras
Head of Growth at Kavak

"

The quality and thoroughness of the projects were astounding. We are truly creating a new talent infrastructure for AI in Latin America. The AI tools built by the students will have immediate business impact generating economic opportunities and accelerating the transformation of the region.

Laura Gaviria Halaby
Head of Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives

correlation.one

About **Correlation One**

20+
Countries

1,000+
Industry experts
Coaches, teaching assistants, and mentors

30,000+
Program graduates
Professional adult learners

Correlation One develops workforce skills for the AI economy.

Enterprises and public sector organizations work with us to develop talent and close critical data, digital, and technology skills gaps. We also help organizations build career pathways, transitioning workers via training programs to in-demand roles.

Our learning experiences are human-led, AI assisted, and social by design, achieving industry-leading business impact and employee engagement. Our expert-supported programs are entirely tailored to our customers' unique strategic objectives, data, and technologies. This enables us to apply project work to our training curriculum for an immediate, hands-on experience that improves employee performance and return on investment.

Our clients include industry-leading companies and public sector organizations, including Amazon, Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

Contact us →