



Stevens
Initiative



International Education and Resource Network

Call for U.S. School Partners:

iEARN-USA is looking for U.S. high schools to join an exciting new international virtual exchange program. Virtual exchange connects young people from diverse places using everyday technology for collaborative learning and interaction through sustained and facilitated engagement. Your students will have the opportunity to collaborate with peers around the world and develop global competencies and 21st century skills.

iEARN Storytelling for Social Change Virtual Exchange: Program Overview

We are so excited to share about the Storytelling for Social Change Virtual Exchange! Through this 7-week virtual exchange, youth (ages 15-18) will connect with other young people in the U.S., Algeria, and Tunisia.

Storytelling for Social Change is implemented by iEARN-USA and is supported by the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI). [JCSVEI](#) is a U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program administered by the Aspen Institute.

The Stevens Initiative is an international effort to enhance global understanding by connecting young people through virtual exchange, giving them critical skills for prosperity and encouraging friendships along the way.

[iEARN-USA's Storytelling for Social Change](#) will build global leaders by engaging youth (ages 15-18) in the **United States, Middle East, and North Africa** in global collaboration to examine real-world issues in their local communities using storytelling techniques.

Taking the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as their inspiration and focus, youth will work collaboratively with international partners to explore the power of storytelling as they choose a local/global issue and examine their personal connections. The virtual exchange will culminate in a virtual festival to celebrate the participants' stories and their impact. By working collaboratively with peers around the world, youth gain 21st Century Skills and develop Global Competencies as they learn with and about one another - skills that are critical to academic success and success in today's workforce.

Through iEARN's unique project model, youth develop a deeper understanding of global issues from different social and cultural perspectives, as they ultimately create a more peaceful and equitable society and become active global citizens.

Features of the Storytelling for Social Change Virtual Exchange include:

- Program orientation and training for educators
- 7-week, facilitated virtual exchange for students including:
 - Virtual exchange orientation for youth
 - 30 - 45 min video conference session, 1 morning every week
 - Weekly asynchronous exchange activities for youth
 - Closing festival to showcase youth projects

- Program evaluation and impact sharing
- Alumni opportunities for continued exchange through the United States Department of State
- Teachers/Schools may be eligible for a stipend*

Participant Commitment

Each teacher, educator, and/or school leader will commit to the following:

- Engage a minimum of 25 high school youth (ages 15-18) during:
 - Fall 2024 - September 30 - November 15
- Dedicate up to 1.5 hours of class time with students per week (30 - 45 min synchronous, with international partners; 30 min asynchronous activities with students in the classroom, supporting students to complete asynchronous exchange activities).
- Attend orientation and teacher training before each session (for teachers/adult leaders).
- Meet with the project facilitator 3 times during the exchange (45 min each)
- Support closing festival activities and sharing program photos and highlights.
- Provide feedback on virtual exchange activities and the platform.

*Specific details are subject to change. Hours are best estimates and may vary.

iEARN-USA will provide:

- Virtual exchange platform - iEARN's Collaboration Centre.
- Orientation for the students.
- Orientation and training for the teacher/adult leader.
- The project curriculum and virtual exchange facilitators.
- Providing ongoing monitoring and support for participating teachers and students.
- Partnerships with students and teachers participants in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Ongoing support for students and teachers in the U.S.
- One-year iEARN-USA membership for participating teachers and students.
- Teacher/adult leaders may receive a stipend upon completion.

Through participation in the Storytelling for Social Change Virtual Exchange Program, youth will:

- Gain an understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and connect them with local issues.
- Develop and use communication skills to connect with diverse audiences.
- Develop openness and respect towards people from other cultures and perspectives.
- Take collaborative action to make meaningful contributions to local and global communities.
- Employ storytelling as a tool for social change and community development.
- Effectively use storytelling skills to share the impact of their projects.

If interested, reach out to Christen Maguire, christen@us.iearn.org