Stevens Initiative

Virtual Exchange Makes an Impact

Virtual exchange connects young people from diverse places for collaborative learning and meaningful peer connections, using technology that can range from common to cutting-edge.

Young People

- Creates awareness of different perspectives, broadening worldviews
- Builds self-confidence, self-awareness, and leadership ability
- Sparks interest in international experiences and careers
- Reaches those who would not otherwise have <u>access</u> to international exchange
- Helps <u>achieve</u> foreign language proficiency

"My virtual exchange experience was life changing. It opened my eyes to an entirely new world of thought and to a whole other set of friends I never would've been able to meet otherwise."

– Cassie, an Iowa community college student

"The [Stevens Initiative] gave us the perfect opportunity to connect students and lecturers. It boosted the students' confidence as they opened up about their culture and private lives, and made friends along the way they continuously tell me about... The zest I saw in my students was inspiring."

– a Nebraska university professor

Education and Exchange Leaders

- Introduces an adaptable, low-cost, and engaging learning tool in and out of the classroom
- Provides a meaningful professional development opportunity and access to a professional network
- Meets existing learning goals

Communities Everywhere

- Prepares young people with the <u>skills</u> to contribute to their local and global communities
- Addresses real-life issues that participants and their regions face, from sourcing clean water to entrepreneurial opportunities

"With international exchanges, you learn about different cultures, places, and people. It is a great opportunity."

– a high school student in Jalisco, Mexico

The Business Sector

- Prepares a new generation to thrive as professionals and global citizens with <u>competencies</u> in cross-cultural communication, digital literacy, collaboration, open-mindedness, and empathy
- Narrows the skills gap and creates a workforce equipped to collaborate with anyone and in any setting, making businesses and economies more <u>prosperous</u>

"If you're globally competent, you're able to understand people much, much better. As an engineer, that really plays a big role in a STEM career, because the ability to empathize with the client or a customer goes a long way in the design process, and that just leads to better overall performance."

– Mohammed, a United Arab Emirates university student

International Relations Today and in the Future

- Fosters collaboration on finding solutions to common global challenges
- Builds relationships that humanize people from different backgrounds and less-often visited places
- Empowers anyone to represent their community, build bridges with places around the world, and help shape a more peaceful future, making diplomacy an opportunity any young person can engage in

"I think that doing something internationally or working as a diplomat would be so amazing, just so that I can connect with people from all over the world. This really gave me the confidence to think that I could do something like that with people from anywhere.

– Eleanor, a Texas high school student

The Stevens Initiative is an international leader in virtual exchange, which brings young people from diverse places together to collaborate and connect through everyday technology. Created in 2015 as a lasting tribute to Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, the Initiative invests in virtual exchange programs; shares research, resources, and promising practices to improve impact; and advocates for broader adoption.

The Stevens Initiative is housed at the Aspen Institute and is supported by the Bezos Family Foundation and the governments of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. The J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative is a U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program administered by the Aspen Institute.

Scan here to view the Stevens Initiative 2023 Impact Report