

What is Virtual Exchange?

Virtual exchange uses technology to enable young people from diverse places and circumstances to have powerful cross-cultural learning experiences and cultivate meaningful relationships.

Why Engage in Virtual Exchange?

Virtual exchange creates cross-cultural experiences that build real-world job skills – including communication, collaboration, empathy, language, and problem-solving. Participants gain self-awareness, self-confidence, and the start of a global network of peers. It's also cost-effective, scalable, and uniquely capable of reaching diverse populations that might otherwise not have global experiences.

- **Young people like virtual exchange:** Over 80% of participants agree that they would recommend their virtual exchange program to others.
- **Virtual exchange is inclusive:** Over 80% of participants feel they can be their true selves, are valued by their peers, are included in all aspects of programming, and belong in their virtual exchange.
- **Virtual exchange broadens horizons:** Over 75% of U.S. participants had not previously engaged in an international exchange.
- **Virtual exchange has a huge impact on worldview:** Participants in K-12 programs showed growth in areas that are important at a young age, including knowledge of other people and cultures.



“ 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] 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

“ This experience had a profound influence on me. It fostered a process of self-examination for me, in which I challenged my assumptions, recognized my personal triggers, and learned to actively listen. It widened my perspective of the world, made me open-minded and predisposed to accept different opinions.”

– Hanan, a Libyan university student

Get Involved

There are many ways to bring virtual exchange to young people in your community. The Stevens Initiative, a global leader in virtual exchange, invests in virtual exchange programs, shares research and resources, and provides pathways for low-cost, low-burden adoption of programs. Learn more [here](#).

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Sample Programs

During [Amideast's Qisasna](#), college students in the U.S. and Yemen produce podcasts on current events impacting their local and global communities. Throughout the exchange, their efforts are complemented by mentorship from podcast experts. Qisasna can be launched in classrooms, as well as organizations that engage undergraduate students and young adults.

[World Learning's The Experiment Digital Leadership in STEM](#) empowers high school-aged youth to refine digital skills, explore career paths in STEM, and develop leadership competencies. A highlight of The Experiment Digital program is that young people are placed in virtual homestays, giving them a greater sense of community with their peers in the U.S. and Middle East and North Africa and furthering their cultural immersion.

[iEARN-USA's Compañeros de Clase Globales](#) gives elementary and high school aged youth from the United States and Guatemala the opportunity to explore real world issues and consider ways to make a positive difference in the world. The program includes distinct tracks that all engage young people in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and educators can choose one that is best suited for their existing social studies, creative and language arts, or STEM lessons.

In [IREX's Global Solutions Sustainability Challenge](#), higher education students in the United States, Jordan, and Iraq engage in conversations about problems in their local and global communities that reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Binational teams work together to define a problem in their local communities and then brainstorm, research, design, and test an innovative solution. The program culminates in a joint session engaging all participants to celebrate their innovative ideas and share lessons learned.

